Qualitative Impact Assessment of the Joint UN Resilience Project in Malawi:

*Implemented in Phalombe District in Southern Malawi- 2014 to 2016.*

Draft Report

Case no. GCP/MLW/064/MUL

Submitted to the Resident Representative, FAO Malawi by Centre for Development Management (CDM)

28th November 2016
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronyms</th>
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<tr>
<td>ADRA</td>
<td>Adventist Development and Relief Agency</td>
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<td>AEDC</td>
<td>Agricultural Extension Development Coordinator</td>
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<td>AEDO</td>
<td>Agricultural Extension Development Officer</td>
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<td>CADECOM</td>
<td>Catholic Development Commission in Malawi</td>
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<td>CG</td>
<td>Care Group</td>
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<td>FFA</td>
<td>Food for Assets</td>
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<td>FFS</td>
<td>Farmer Field School</td>
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<td>HH</td>
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<td>Integrated Pest Management</td>
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<td>Public Works Programme</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<td>Village Savings and Loans</td>
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<td>World Food Programme</td>
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<td>ASWAp</td>
<td>Agricultural Sector-Wide Approach</td>
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<td>CAADP</td>
<td>Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme</td>
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<td>NEPAD</td>
<td>New Partnership for Africa’s Development</td>
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<td>MVAC</td>
<td>Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee</td>
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<td>MFERP</td>
<td>Malawi Floods Emergency Recovery Project</td>
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Acknowledgements

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The study team is also indebted to officials from implementing partners CADECOM, ADRA and Save the Children for all the support received. We also appreciated the support from the UN agencies that were involved in the project.

There are many other important stakeholders, including but not limited to beneficiaries of the project, extension workers, local leaders, that were instrumental in providing information for the study, but we are not able to individually acknowledge everyone. We say thank you for your various roles played in this assessment.

The assessment team takes full responsibility for any typographical errors, omissions or misrepresentation of facts in this report.

Bright B. Sibale, Peter Mbiko Jere (PhD) and Abel Shaba

28 November 2016
Executive Summary

Introduction

In September, 2016, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Malawi contracted the Centre for Development Management (CDM) to conduct a qualitative impact assessment of the joint UN Resilience Project implemented in Phalombe District, Malawi. This document is a report of this assessment. The overall objective of the project was to increase the capacity of the most vulnerable households in Phalombe district to meet their basic needs and withstand climatic and natural shocks. The project had the following objectives:

a) Building, restoring or maintaining community/livelihood assets by targeted households and communities;
b) Supporting and implementing resilience programmes in coordination with humanitarian assistance;
c) Strengthening the capacity of service providers, vulnerable households and at risk communities;
d) Creating and/or supporting Risk Reduction/Resilience Capacity; and
e) Implementing community-based nutrition education and communication programmes.

Methodology

In terms of methodology, the main approach used in the study was theory of change. This approach (theory of change) was applied to help the assessment team establish whether the approach which was envisaged at the design stage was working (i.e. whether interventions implemented through public works programmes, care groups or farmer field school were contributing to improved resilience at household and community level). Data collection was done though literature review, key informant interviews and focus groups discussions. The team conducted interviews at national, district and community level.

Findings

The findings showed that under objective 1 of the project, the World Food Programme (WFP) supported the implementation of disaster risk reduction infrastructure and catchment rehabilitation in selected hot spots of the two Traditional Authorities (TAs) of Chiwalo and Jenala using the Food for Assets approach. The idea was that communities, who have been affected by climatic shocks such as drought, should be supported with food but they should participate in
building, restoring or maintaining community/livelihood assets. This would in medium and long-term enhance the protection of their livelihoods thereby enhancing resilience against the same shocks. The team confirmed that the assets created, have contributed communities’ resilience to climate change. The team noted that the project focussed more on rehabilitating, or maintenance of community assets, which is good, but most participants preferred that in future the project should focus first on creating or rehabilitating household assets.

Under objective 2 of the project, the assessment found limited linkages between the project with social protection programmes. The objective 2 aimed at supporting and harmonizing and/or coordinating community level, targeting of resilience building interventions with humanitarian or emergency assistance. Only about 3% of all beneficiaries have benefitted from the Farmer Field School (FFS), Food for Assets (FFA) and CG, which were the main approaches that the project was delivered through. It further noted that implementing partners did not really adopt a harmonised approach to targeting and general implementation of the programme. This was basically because they were not properly guided by the Project Team at national level.

Perhaps the most successful component of the project was objective 3, which was implemented through the FFSs. The project used the FFSs approach as the main entry and capacity building strategy to build community resilience to climate change shocks. The approach targeted knowledge, skills and attitude change with specific enterprises selected carefully for resilience building based on participatory testing and experimentation. There were 56 FFSs in the project area in total established at GVH level with an average membership of 30 each including women which constituted a bigger proportion of participants at 58%.

Project objective 4 was the responsibility of the UNDP. According to FAO, UNDP did not actively participate in the project as a result the activity was implemented by FAO, its implementing partners and the Phalombe District Council. The project has implemented a number of activities with the objective of building resilience capacities of communities and individual households in the project impacts areas. These included but not limited to involved planting of trees, building of dykes, marker ridges and contour bands. It has also constructed watering points for livestock, since livestock is an important source of livelihoods in the project areas. The project has also introduced new varieties of crops, such as Irish potatoes, onions, tomatoes and some vegetables. These crops were traditionally not grown in the
areas. The objective has been to diversify food and income sources to enable households spread risk of crop failure. All this contributed to building resilience at household level.

Project objective 5 included activities on community-based nutrition education and communication programmes. The objective has mainly been the responsibility of UNICEF and was implemented through Save the Children. The two have been working through Community Care Groups (CGs) which has supported communities to address malnutrition through a series of activities. These activities aimed at changing nutrition and hygiene behaviours and focusing on dietary diversification, optimal maternal nutrition including iron-folic acid supplementation as well as infant and young child optimal feeding and hygiene practices. These behaviour change communication interventions were balanced with interventions that support improving quality of community identification and treatment of acute malnutrition as well as improving intake of vitamins and minerals among pregnant and lactating women as well as children aged 6-23 months. The team found that the CG model was working very well in terms of increasing nutrition and health education and knowledge amongst the community, which is helping in increasing health outcomes, which contribute to increased resilience at household and community level.

The main challenges the project faced was delayed start for some component due to delayed signing of partnership agreements, the focus of community assess was reported to be demotivating and not sustainable, the communities were also sharing food transfers, which reduced overall effectiveness of food aid, the drought negatively affected adoption of some technologies, especially those fully dependent on availability of water.

**Recommendations**

In future, the project needs to improve coordination, especially at national level and ensure that all participating UN agencies have a harmonised work-plan, same level of commitment and that implementing partners at district level are properly briefed on the joint approach and methods of implementing the project. At implementation level, the project should ensure that targeting is harmonised and that FFS, FFA and CG target the same beneficiaries, so as to deepen impact and improve efficiency of implementation. Important components such as provision of water, should be added. Monitoring and evaluation systems need to be taken seriously and implemented to ensure accountability to donors, government and beneficiaries.
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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Malawi, with a population of approximately 17 million people, is perennially susceptible to several natural and economic shocks which include prolonged dry spells, floods, pest and diseases and high food prices. The country is one of the poorest in the world, ranking 173 out of 188 countries in the Human Development Index 2015. Per capita incomes are very low, at US$255\(^1\), and 70.9 per cent of the population lives on less than U.S $1.90 per day\(^2\). The economy is primarily based on agriculture: in 2014 agriculture accounted for 33 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 90 per cent of exports\(^3\). In addition to this, the large majority of the population lives in rural areas (83.9 per cent in 2014\(^4\)) and is reliant on rain-fed agriculture for their livelihood. This makes the population and the economy very susceptible to variable weather patterns and climate change.

The country experiences high levels of weather variability and suffers major and frequent extremes, with major floods and droughts occurring every few years\(^5\). During the period from 1970 to 2008, Malawi experienced more than 40 weather-related disasters, and major events are common (over this time, there have been ten major flood or drought events, affecting an average of 2.3 million people each\(^6\)).

As well as the fatalities and losses experienced, these events lock the country into a continued cycle of poverty, and lead to continued requests for humanitarian assistance (which have been particularly large during the major flood events of 2015 and the El Nino of 2016). The 2015 floods directly affected 15 districts, with an estimated 1,101,364 people directly affected, 230,000 displaced, 106 killed and 172 reported missing\(^10\). These events affect poor people the most, especially rural women and marginalised groups.

In general, there has been an increasing trend in the number of food insecure people (from an annual average of 350,000 over 2007-2011 to more than 6.5 million in 2016). The lack of differentiation between chronic and acute food insecurity has resulted in use of humanitarian

\(^1\) 2014 Current prices, World Development Indicators
\(^2\) 2010, at 2011 PPP, World Development Indicators
\(^3\) Malawi economic stats, NationMaster
\(^4\) World Bank
\(^5\) Government of Malawi (2011) Second National Communication of the Republic of Malawi under the Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC.
Qualitative Impact Assessment of the Joint Resilience Project Implemented by FAO in Phalombe District in Southern Malawi
responses to address chronic problems, resulting in significant humanitarian spending each year and undermining longer term development efforts.

To address the problem of frequent shocks, humanitarian response, other recovery and resilience building interventions are being implemented in the country. However, while resilience interventions have been effective, they have rarely brought about the changes that are required primarily due to scattered efforts around the country in a piecemeal manner. There is also limited coordination in implementation leading to lack of synergies. In addition, limited time and capacity has reduced government’s ability to lead and implement the interventions, meaning that the expected maximum and sustainable impact has not been achieved.

1.2 The Joint Project

In response to the above challenges, FAO Malawi with financial support from the Africa Solidarity Trust Fund has for the past two years implemented a project aimed at strengthening resilience to and preparedness for disasters and shocks through participation of the most vulnerable communities in the southern region district of Phalombe. The project was jointly being implemented by UNDP, UNICEF, and WFP to support the national and decentralized structures of the government to implement a comprehensive resilience building programme in the district. The two-year project was designed to improve the methods of supporting successful recovery/resilience building initiatives that have been implemented in the country in an integrated approach in order to maximize their impact, ensure sustainability of results, and strengthen the government in implementing its policies and programmes.

The overall objective of the project was to increase the capacity of the most vulnerable households in Phalombe district to meet their basic needs and withstand climatic and natural shocks. This was achieved through:

f) Building, restoring or maintaining community/livelihood assets by targeted households and communities;

The targeted district for this project, is amongst those areas most affected by climatic risks. It is also where the four contributing UN agencies have existing resilience-related interventions on which to build in order to have a greater impact.

Qualitative Impact Assessment of the Joint Resilience Project Implemented by FAO in Phalombe District in Southern Malawi
h) Strengthening the capacity of service providers, vulnerable households and at risk communities;

i) Creating and/or supporting Risk Reduction/Resilience Capacity; and

j) Implementing community-based nutrition education and communication programmes.

The interventions were, therefore, inter-sectoral in nature and recognised the complexity of solutions required to strengthen resilience to and preparedness for disasters and shocks. The four UN agencies contributed to the project through implementation of activities based on their respective comparative advantage.

1.3 Objectives of the assessment

According to the terms of reference, the objective of the assessment was to carry out a qualitative research and examine how the project has influenced or brought about change in knowledge, attitudes perceptions and practice among the targeted communities and how this change has contributed in enabling them to meet their basic needs and withstand climatic and natural shocks.

1.4 Assessment Limitations

The main challenge was that the assessment was done after the project had already closed, hence it was difficult to get some key members of staff of implementing partners for interviews because they had relocated from Phalombe.

In addition, the assessment team felt that the terms of reference did not provide adequate guidance on how the study should be done, the framework to be used and what key issues needed to be addressed. The assessment team addressed this challenge by regular contacts with FAO Malawi and Rome to provide ongoing guidance on the study.
2 Literature Review

2.1 Concept and Definition of Resilience

While resilience is now a commonly used term and objective in development and humanitarian sector, the concept is not relatively new, however. It originated outside humanitarian and development sectors where it had been used in relation to the ability of individuals, households, communities or systems to withstand and recover from shocks and stresses. There are different definitions of resilience but it has been found that in general resilience encompasses three common elements. These are:

i. the capacity to bounce back after a shock
ii. the capacity to adapt to a changing environment and
iii. the transformative capacity of enabling institutional environment (Food and Agriculture of the United Nations [FAO], United Nations Children Fund [UNICEF] and World Food Programme [WFP]).

Resilience is defined as: “the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions.” In the context of flood risk management, one characteristic of resilient communities is the ability to reduce, prevent and cope with the flood risk (Schelfaut, et al., 2011).

According to Lawler (2009) a resilient system will change in response to external forces but will return to its original state while less resilient systems will likely undergo messy transitions to new states, resulting in the loss of ecosystem functioning, populations, or even species. The individuals must, therefore, have the options, knowledge and skills to cope during and after shocks. If they cannot cope, mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that the less resilient recover from shocks.

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Qualitative Impact Assessment of the Joint Resilience Project Implemented by FAO in Phalombe District in Southern Malawi
2.2 Why build resilience?

Literature shows that the world is facing unprecedented climate change related challenges. Africa tops the list of continents that are most affected. For example, in the last thirty years, seven out of the 10 worst drought disasters in the world have taken place in sub-Saharan Africa. Malawi happens to be one of the countries affected. Ten years after the adoption of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, disasters continue to undermine efforts to achieve sustainable development. The society has experienced loss of human life as well economic losses. For example, over the same 10-year time of the Hyogo Framework for Action, disasters led to death of over 700 thousand people, over 1.4 million were left injured and approximately 23 million have been made homeless globally. The disasters have resulted into $1.3 trillion total economic loss. Disasters, many of which are exacerbated by climate change and which are increasing in frequency and intensity, significantly impede progress towards sustainable development (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2015).

In Malawi, flooding in southern districts followed by a countrywide drought resulted in a contraction in agricultural production. Maize production registered year-on-year drop of 30.2% percent as a result, an estimated 2.8 million people, representing 17% of the population, were unable to meet their 2015/16 food requirements (The World Bank, 2016). The Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC) reported that 6.5 million Malawians, 39% of the population, were in need of food aid. FAO recognises that people who rely on agriculture for their livelihoods are often the worst affected when a crisis or a disaster strikes, potentially putting their food and nutrition security at serious risk. The livelihoods of more than 80% of the total population depend on agriculture which is hugely affected by natural disasters. The occurrence of El Niño in 2015 resulted in droughts causing a significant drop in food production at household and national levels. At the seasonal to inter-annual timescale, the El Niño Southern Oscillation phenomenon (both El Niño and La Niña) is the most significant natural driver of variability in the climate system. Recurring every 2–7 years, ENSO events bring predictable drought or floods to many regions of the world (Figures 2 and 3) and increase temperatures across the tropics. El Niño

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Qualitative Impact Assessment of the Joint Resilience Project Implemented by FAO in Phalombe District in Southern Malawi
events are also associated with a short-term dramatic increase in global temperatures around the tropics\textsuperscript{11}.

Climate change related natural disasters such as drought and floods are highly correlated with poverty if not well addressed. Disasters have generally long-term effects on poor and vulnerable households. By 2030, there could be 325 million people trapped in poverty and exposed to the full range of natural hazards and climate extremes particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia (Shepherd, et al., 2013). The World Bank (2016) estimated that in the period from 2008 to 2012, the Government of Malawi spent an average of US$ 100 million annually on food aid. With proper investment in resilience the number of people in dire need of humanitarian aid, should decrease. The disasters can push one household into deep poverty by destroying or destabilising the asset base – financial, social, environmental and physical assets, while having only a transient impact on the welfare of another household. Households with a large asset base are more likely to recover from calamities than poor households with a narrow asset base (Shepherd, et al., 2013). Households affected by disasters face shortage of food and income resulting in multifaceted problems. The affected households lose assets and their children suffer from malnutrition.

2.3 Assessment of similar programmes

Integration of financial, economic, social and technical strategies are promoted in order to reinforce or improve the ability to cope with weather related stresses due to climate change and minimise the losses that come along with the hazards. In Mozambique, six UN agencies in collaboration with Mozambican government institutions implemented a three year (2008-2011) UN Joint Programme on Environmental Mainstreaming and Adaptation to Climate change in Gaza Province. The programme implemented water harvesting and catchment management technologies such as drilling of boreholes (around 100 meters deep) equipped with solar pumps, expanding irrigated areas, installing rainwater harvesting tank-and gutter systems, enlarging existing water catchment structures (ponds and dams) and promoting runoff and erosion control measures (building gabions and planting vetiver grass). The programme expanded 2 irrigation schemes resulting in production of over 60 tonnes of vegetables compared to no production the year before. The

\textsuperscript{11} \url{http://www.karger.com/Article/Pdf/452382}
intervention provided income to farmers and fresh produce in an area where vegetables (especially greens) were not widely available (Mattick & Manjata, 2011). The authors also noted that the Joint Programme and its government partners had different planning, budgeting and implementation cycles which made implementation of a truly joint initiative and exploitation of synergies difficult.

Farmer Field Schools (FFS) have been used to reach to farmers with climate change messages and technologies. In Uganda, between 1999 and 2009, FAO projects addressed climate change indirectly by establishing about 2,300 FFSs that had benefitted 414,000 individuals, many of them in drought and flood-affected areas of the country (Igbokwe, 2011). In Bangladesh, FAO project piloted Climate Field Schools (CFS) based on FFS with regular sessions for more than 18 months to around 100 selected beneficiaries in drought-prone and saline-prone areas. The project disseminated knowledge about climate change, its causes, potential impact on livelihoods and local coping strategies. The project reached 12,500 farmers through agricultural activities such as farmer field days, individual demonstrations and joint learning session (Alacevich, 2011). To reduce farmer vulnerability to climate-related stresses, the project found that there was a need to combine adaptation options (diversification) rather than focusing on single actions.

The Phalombe UN joint resilience building approach was also similar to the Concern Worldwide Graduation Model implemented in Burundi under Terintambwe programme which was adapted from an approach first developed and championed by BRAC in Bangladesh. The Graduation model had five components: Comprehensive targeting to ensure that extremely poor households are targeted; Consumption/income support through cash transfer; Provision of skills training and regular coaching; Facilitating access to saving facilities; and an asset or capital transfer. Just like the Phalombe Project, the programme had positive impact on income measured by change in primary occupancy and diversification of income. By the end of the programme reliance on casual labour decreased from 68% to 12.9% amongst beneficiaries. Programme participants also diversified their sources of revenue, with 17.8% involved in income generating activities (IGAs) as their primary occupation and 40% as their secondary occupation while non-participants recorded only a marginal involvement in IGAs while highly reliant on casual labour (Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe, 2016).
Elsewhere, use of the FFS has also shown positive impact in terms of knowledge acquisition amongst beneficiaries. Impact evaluation of a pilot farmer field-school (FFS) program on farmers’ knowledge of integrated pest management (IPM) in the Peruvian Andes showed positive impact. Using regression analysis controlling for participation and the propensity score matching approach found that farmers who participated in the program had significantly more knowledge about IPM practices than those in the non-participants (Godtland, Sadoulet, de Janvry, Murgai, & Ortiz, 2004).
3 Methodology for the Assessment

3.1 Overview of the approach

The main approach used for the study was the use of theory of change, where the assessment team interrogated whether the theory of change that was envisaged at the design was working (i.e. whether interventions implemented through public works programmes, care groups or farmer field school were contributing to improved resilience at household and community level).

3.2 Data collection methods

CDM used the following data collection methods:

- Document reviews of project reports and publications: baseline report, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) document,
- Key informant interviews with key project stakeholders at national, district and community level;
- Focus group discussions with beneficiaries in Phalombe and non-beneficiaries in another community in the same project area. A range of PRA impact evaluation tools such as trend lines, scoring and matrices, institutional roles analysis, SWOT and rankings will be used to collect data.
- Analysis of case studies using approved international criteria for identifying and documenting best practices
- The team met every day in the evening during the entire week in Phalombe culminating into a one team meeting on Saturday.

The team conducted interviews at national, district and community level. At national level, the team met FAO, WFP, UNICEF (as joint UN agencies implementing the project), and assessed if the “joint approach” worked, the achievements the approach delivered, the challenges and lessons learnt that can be used to improve the programme in future.

At district level, the meeting started the data collection process with an entry meeting with implementing partners. Through that meeting, the team teased out the
theory of change process to examine whether resilience was being delivered by the project, through the interventions implemented by the project.

After the entry meeting, the team conducted interviews with DEC members as well as focus groups discussions and key informant interviews at community level as indicated in the table below.

### 3.3 Sampling and Sample Size

The following table shows the type, mode and numbers of interviews done for the qualitative assessment.

Table 1: Numbers of interviews done for the assessment

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<th>Type of interviews</th>
<th>Mode of interview</th>
<th>Numbers done</th>
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<tr>
<td>National Level interviews</td>
<td>Focus Groups and Key informants</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Districts Council Officials</td>
<td>Key Informant Interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Implementers</td>
<td>Key Informant Interviews</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care Workers</td>
<td>Key Informant Interviews</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Success stories</td>
<td>Home visits</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government extension workers</td>
<td>Key Informant Interviews</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiaries</td>
<td>Focus group discussions</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-beneficiaries</td>
<td>Focus group discussions</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local leaders</td>
<td>Key Informant Interviews</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Development Committee</td>
<td>Focus group discussions</td>
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Key participatory assessment tools employed during the assessment included document review, mapping, seasonality calendars, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, wealth ranking, and historical timelines. In order to identify...
impacts of the project at beneficiary level, comparison groups were identified communities within the project impact areas in both TAs-Chiwalо and Jenala. The impact assessment also used the before and after method in order to compare project outcomes before and after project implementation.

Further, cross-checking or triangulating of information and numbers from participatory methods was done using various approaches such as revisiting the initial project document to assess if the proposed inputs were likely to lead to the stated changes. In other words, was the ‘causal framework’ technically sound? This was done through reviewing the project monitoring reports, or holding discussions with project staff to understand what was implemented and where; reading secondary reports, statistics and literature related to the project area, and similar, past projects; and analysis of case studies was done using approved international criteria for identifying and documenting best practices.
4 Assessment Findings

As has been indicated in the methodology section, the assessment was based on interrogating the achievement of or contribution of the project to resilience. This was done by investigating whether the project achieved resilience through its interventions and result areas. The findings are, therefore, presented by each project result/objective.

4.1 Project Objective 1: Building, restoring or maintaining community/livelihood assets by targeted households and communities

4.1.1 Types of activities implemented

Under this output, the WFP supported implementation of disaster risk reduction infrastructure and catchment rehabilitation in selected hot spots of the two TAs of Chiwalo and Jenala using the Food for Assets approach. The idea was that communities, who have been affected by climatic shocks such as drought, should be supported with food but they should participate in building, restoring or maintaining community/livelihood assets. This would in medium and long-term enhance the protection of their livelihoods thereby enhancing resilience against the same shocks.

Interviews with stakeholders and beneficiaries and also observations and sites visits by the assessment team found that indeed communities participated in rehabilitating a number of assets, some of which are described below. Under land resources/catchment management component, the project has managed to implement a number of soil, water and fertility improvement technologies amongst the targeted communities and beneficiaries. These have included making of contour ridges, planting agroforestry trees, training of catchment conservation committees, vetiver planting, gully reclamation and manure making.

An innovation in the manure making is the introduction of mbeya manure, which is locally made mature that combines compost, farmyard and limited amounts of...
inorganic fertiliser to produce a product that is fairly cheap but effective and farmers use it for their fields, including those under irrigation. Land resources intervention implemented have both short-term and long-term resilience benefits. The short-term ones include protection of crop and household assets wash-aways from heavy runoff, protection of the soil from erosion, water retention while long-term ones are improved soil fertility and therefore better yields and income, which strengthen household resilience against livelihood shocks.

Under forestry, the project has planted many trees, with a survival rates of 62% which is higher than the national average of 60% in most years. The project conducted a hotshot analysis to determine where planting trees would contribute most to resilience against floods. As a result, trees were planted around hills to reduce speed of runoff and control soil erosion and flooding. In addition, trees were planted along river banks to stabilise river banks and thereby protect communities from floods in the long term. The project also managed to facilitate management of some existing village forest areas. The only challenge which will affect management of the trees to sustain resilience is time. There was no adequate time for the project to fully capacitate a village natural resources management committee (VNRMC) and implement a participatory forest management process, which would determine who best to manage village forest areas.

Under irrigation, the project managed to do some rehabilitation by excavating 15 wells and five canals in five irrigation schemes, to ensure that the schemes are fully functional and farmers use them to grow crops. This helped to reduce dependence on rained agriculture which is dependent on availability and quality of rainfall that year. The review team noted that those farmers who have benefitted from irrigation had much better food and income security as they grew maize more than once a year and some sold green maize and earned income to support their livelihoods needs.

Under DRR related infrastructure, the project has planted trees along river banks, constructed dykes and planted vetiver grass to protect villages from floods. In both TAs, the assessment teams visited sites that are flood prone and saw houses that have been covered by the length (which we can say have been now protected from floods) of the dyke. To ensure that the dyke is strong and long lasting, they have also been supported or planted with vetiver grass, which is known for having strong roots that protect the soil from being washed off their base. In Tamani EPA, there is
Phalombe River which has a completely silted bed and because of its flat bed, it floods almost every year, even without too much rains. Community members, through the project mobilised themselves and constructed part of a dyke. However, it was noted that the dyke, was already planned to be supported by a World Bank funded project, the Malawi Floods Emergency Recovery Project (MFERP). Hence, only a part was done by the community through FFA. In some areas, the project has excavated river beds and conducted some gully reclamation, which have also protected the community from floods, in addition to reducing soil erosion.

The assessment noted that the current drought has affected adoption of many interventions of the project that are dependent on availability of water. These included both tree planting and irrigation because most water sources have dried up. This was also noted under FFS interventions where some boreholes and other water sources have also dried and communities have difficulties to irrigate their home gardens. The drought has resulted into high competition for water between user and use, resulting into some conflicts at community level.

### 4.1.2 Project contribution and impact on resilience

Using the definitions of resilience presented in the literature review section of this report, the assessment noted that the project objective is generally being met. There is evidence that the above interventions are contributing to both resilience at household and community level. For example, in addition to protecting communities against floods by reducing run-off, land resources/catchment management activities protect the soil from being washed away, which will result into improved soil fertility, soil structure and better water infiltration into the ground. All these elements will lead to better yields, better income from farming which will also improve food security of farmers. This then enhances the “ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions” which is resilience.
The project contributed to the construction and rehabilitation of dykes which are expected to protect some communities in both TA Jenala and TA Chiwalo areas from the perennial flooding which destroys household assets thereby perpetuating food insecurity and poverty in general. If well managed, it was reported that the dykes, would also store water and allow more seepage, which could later be used for winter cropping and/or irrigation, which could improve food security at household level, thereby enhancing resilience to food shocks.

The rehabilitated infrastructures such as canals which have contributed to improved farmers’ participation in irrigation activities and subsequent increase in food and income security by enabling farmers to grow maize and other crops more than once a year. This has contributed to supporting efforts to improve income, food and nutrition security in the impact areas, which is directly related to or contributing to ability of farmers to cope with drought or bounce back from the same if it happens. The team visited a number of farmers who are practising irrigation and challenged that they did not need food aid. For example, Mr. Luke Mandasi and his household of eight members of Mlambe Village in TA Chiwalo was affected by flooding in 2015 which resulted in his inclusion in the project. Luke was involved in community afforestation initiatives at the foot of Makuwa mountain along Mikundi River. For his household, he received 25 tree seedlings to plant of which only 8 survived due to harsh hot weather conditions. He was also involved in planting of vetiver on his farm which helped him in controlling the force of rainfall

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water so that it does not wash away the crops or soil fertility. Lastly, he was involved with rehabilitation of an irrigation scheme as a result of flooding through excavation of sand from canals. His participation in irrigation farming has enabled him to grow maize, tomatoes, egg plants, irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, and onions last year. He reported that when he sold his tomatoes this year, he managed to get K85,000 (about $116) in cash in three months which he used to buy land where he has set up a building for a tea room. This has contributed to achievement of his household resilience to cope with drought, flood as well as other related climate shocks.

Planting of trees and vetiver along the rivers and on farms was very important in addressing flooding in the medium to long term, as long as the trees are managed effectively. This was further complemented by initiatives such as construction of water and soil conservation structures such as marker ridges and community drainage systems. These initiatives have accrued medium to long-term benefits of reducing soil erosion and flooding caused by rivers such as Phalombe. On the other hand, construction and rehabilitation of community feeder roads has contributed to easing of communication among the communities while construction of water troughs has improved access to water by livestock and use of waste water from water points. This has to some degree contributed to building of resilience to climate shocks.

Another contribution to resilience came from water and soil conservation structures which have contributed to reduction in soil erosion and river siltation which will subsequently reduce the risk and effects of flooding in the project areas. Typical examples of structures that were reported included dykes, agro-forestry trees, and contour ridges. Interventions such as livestock pass-on and VSL have enabled households to sell and buy food thereby increasing adaptation to climatic risks. In TA Jenala for example, VSL members have collectively contributed K15,280,000 in shares in VSL groups comprising a membership of 657 members (211 male and 446 male).
females) which is on average K23,000 per member. The savings have enabled members to borrow and address household issues including investing in small businesses. With a larger proportion of women (about 60%) in VSL groups, it means that the VSL program is economically empowering women who are often considered more vulnerable and less resilient to shocks.

Table 2: Summary of the results chain under objective one, as explained by the stakeholders interviewed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Impact (Resilience)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What activities have implemented under the following project objectives?</td>
<td>What the main outputs you have achieved? Don’t worry about numbers?</td>
<td>What have you observed in terms of knowledge, attitudes and practices amongst your beneficiaries/stakeholders?</td>
<td>How does this contribute to resilience building?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Construction of watering points and water troughs for livestock (FFA)</td>
<td>1. Farmers are now able to process foods using 56 solar dryers</td>
<td>1. Through activities implemented farmers are able to plant twice a year and hence food secure</td>
<td>1. Food security has enabled farmers to cope with disasters and food insecurity, reduced migration,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Irrigation of (rehab of wells and canals) (FFA)</td>
<td>2. Adoption of new technologies (manure, solar, irrigation)</td>
<td>2. Increased income from many sources of income</td>
<td>2. Food diversification has increased ability of families to cope with food shortages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Agroforestry (nursery establishment)</td>
<td>3. Previously schemes that were not working are working now</td>
<td>3. Farmers are now able to use more food sources, some of which were being destroyed. Reduced food losses. Food and dietary diversification</td>
<td>3. With improved food availability, there is improved food consumption and reduced nutritional problems leading to better health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Field days FFS</td>
<td>4. Currently farmers are serious with irrigation as a commercial activity especially where that is feasible</td>
<td>4. Introduction on new crops (beans, irish potatoes, garlic, carrot, cabbages) - people were saying they cannot grow in their areas</td>
<td>4. Assets bought from IGAs can be sold during food shortages to buy food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Exchange visits</td>
<td>5. Farmers have skills to do agroforestry (10000 seedlings planted, 62%SR)</td>
<td>5. More land put into cultivation</td>
<td>5. Some people who have adopted irrigation have challenged that he can no longer be a receiver of handout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Food distribution FFA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. Household protected from floods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Crop production (as part of AESA) FFA+FFS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Conservation agriculture (FFS+FFA)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Dyke rehabilitation/construction (FFA)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Livestock production (includes khola production, pass on schemes)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Energy saving stoves (selected Solar dryers have been constructed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.3 Challenges faced and lessons learnt

The challenge that affected achievement of objective 1 of the project was the tendency to share food that was distributed to participants. This weakens the impact of the food distributed at household level, although it is perceived by the community as something that strengthens them. Local leaders, particularly chiefs reported that the practice of sharing food to non-beneficiaries, helps them to reduce conflicts and complaints of exclusion in the community.

As can be observed from the interventions and assets promoted implemented under the FFA, most of the assets restored, maintained or rehabilitated are community assets, which means the type of FFA promoted is the food for community assets programme other than a food for household assets, which is often most preferred and have more shorter term benefits to the community. The food for community assets (FFCA) approach is quite important for promoting community level residence, but it is weak or takes much longer for households to enjoy household level benefits arising from the interventions. While the food for household assets (FFHA) has both immediate (food transfers, food produced through irrigation, income from income generating activities) and long-term benefits (similar to FFCA). It cannot be argued that during drought and food insecurity, most households are focussed on short-term needs (i.e. getting food on the table or income for their household members). This short-term need can be or has been supported through FFA food transfers, however food aid and in general humanitarian assistance is not sustainable, hence the need to strike a balance between FFCA and FFHA, so as to empower households to be resilience at household level and hence break the cycle of humanitarian support.

The team also noted that the food provided is either not enough to meet household needs or it is delayed. And worse still, all beneficiaries are required to share it with those not selected, regardless of whether they participated in the actual works or not. Again, this suggests the need to strike a proper balance in terms of programming between FFCA and FFHA, with potentially sequencing the FFHA first, followed by FFCA.

Additionally, many beneficiaries of FFA complained of delayed food transfers, to the extent that sometimes after communities complete their works, they could be paid months past the most critical food shortage months. There was also a problem of water scarcity, therefore, communities who participated in tree planting FFA could not get adequate water to water their seedlings, leading to high rates of death of seedlings.

4.2 Project Objective 2: Supporting and harmonizing and/or coordinating community level targeting of resilience
building interventions with humanitarian or emergency assistance

4.2.1 Types of activities implemented

The Government of Malawi has developed the National Social Support Programme (NSSP) to operationalize the National Social Support Policy approved in 2012. The NSSP is composed of five components: social cash transfer (SCTP), public works programme (PWP), school meals programme, village savings and loans (VSL), and micro-finance. Each component is implemented by several government and non-government implementers. The aim of the NSSP is to maximize impact of the key social protection interventions by enhanced coordination and harmonization. In Phalombe, the project was linked to three components of the NSSP, namely: the SCTP, the PWP, and VSL. The project was also linked to efforts to pilot a unified registry of eligible households for implementation of the NSSP.

The district wide Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP) which targets the ultra-poor and labour constrained households is managed by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare and implemented by the District with support from UNICEF which provided technical support to the Ministry and the District Councils for effective and efficient implementation and scale up of the Programme. The support which is implemented within the framework of the project included building evidence around resilience capability of beneficiary households and impact of SCTP on household coping behaviours. However, the study found that the SCTP did not benefit FFS members most of whom do not fit the criteria of the program which focuses on the ultra-poor and labour constrained. Suffice to say the linkage with the project improved access to income for the affected which empowered them through the cash benefits and involvement in VSL to provide a market for products produced by members of FFSs such as potatoes, green maize, and vegetables. The linkage also allowed the trained FFS members to act as lead farmers and trainers of their colleagues. The major challenge affecting the program is that it does not have a graduation strategy for its beneficiaries which is a recipe for building dependency. The assessment found that some of the beneficiaries have been on the program since 2008. However, the VSL provides a potential exit strategy that would benefit the project more effectively in improving incomes.
The assessment further found that the Food or Cash for public works programme targeted most vulnerable households with access to labour. The project through WFP attempted to link the PWP to other social protection schemes and agricultural investment activities, in order to maximize its impact. The focus of the project was on FFA which included catchment management initiatives intended to restore the natural resource base, protect the environment, reclaim marginal or wasted land to provide productive assets to land poor and food insecure households, assist marginalized groups and women to improve and diversify income sources and promote skill transfers especially in agriculture. Specific activities supported included tree planting, construction of dykes, marker ridges, irrigation canals, natural tree regeneration and afforestation, including community based management of reforested areas. Linkage between the project and the PWP was primarily in terms of incomes for beneficiaries which opened up market space for FFS products as well as provision of lead farmers who supported those involved in farming activities from PWP benefits. Through catchment management initiatives, the project was complemented in promoting climate smart agriculture as well as protection against land degradation. FFS members were also largely excluded from the program as chiefs felt they were already benefiting from the FAO project.

As part of the NSSP, households benefiting from FFS, PWP and SCTP were also linked to VSL programmes to promote saving, investment and building of assets. FFS members, households and groups were trained on Village Savings and Loans schemes (VSLs) as a means to facilitate access to improved inputs over the years. Initial capital support was also provided to support mobilization of VSL groups. By linking the beneficiaries to VSL, the initiative improved people’s savings culture and subsequent access to capital and income which supported investments in irrigation, livestock and farming technology. With women dominating membership of VSL groups, the initiative meant that more women have improved their access to and control of income which is a significant contribution towards impact on gender.
disparities related to access and control of incomes. The FFS also benefited in terms of improved market environment for their products.

Related to this, the assessment found that government with UNICEF support is piloting a unified registry of eligible households for implementation of the NSSP. This began with expansion of the SCTP MIS to cover PWP in five districts which includes Phalombe and intend to broaden the scope to include a humanitarian assistance targeting component. This flexible social protection system is intended to allow for rapid scale up of social protection programmes to additional target populations in need of temporary humanitarian assistance. A comprehensive household registry at district level is intended to include household demographic and poverty data for all households in the district, enabling rapid benefit assignment and implementation of humanitarian intervention in times of emergency. Limited progress has been achieved at district level in this regard. However, the setting up of the District Social Support Committee at the district level points to improved coordination in terms of targeting beneficiaries which is an essential input into addressing effectiveness of monitoring and tracking social support project beneficiaries. The initiative has also got the potential to guide efforts towards addressing issues surrounding graduation of beneficiaries from some social support projects.

Figure 1: Interaction between Care Groups, FFA and FFS in Phalombe

There were few households that belonged to all the three groups – care groups, FFA and FFS. According to the joint resilience households were expected to participate in all the three groups which contained together formed the core pillars of resilience
building. There was less overlap between care groups, FFS and FFA. With a combination of interventions, the beneficiaries would have more coping mechanisms to cope with shocks but also make transformative resilience building. The project under the FFS implemented livelihood interventions such as CSA, irrigation, crop diversification and VSL which in combination contributed towards household food and income security. For example, beneficiaries in the project areas reported achieving significant yields from crops such as maize and sweet potatoes which are staple foods as a result of winter cropping and use of conservation farming. Care group beneficiaries were very knowledgeable in issues of WASH and food preparation and dietary diversification. The FFA supported households with food or cash at the most critical time of the lean season while also creating community assets. Beneficiaries of all the three project components were able to explain the linkages between the FFA, Care Groups and FFS in relation to resilience building, but were also quick to say that they do not benefit from all the interventions.

4.2.2 Project contribution and impacts on resilience

A. Reduced dependence on ganyu

The food has provided short-term livelihood needs as a result of drought and floods while the assets created by the FFA, FISP and the livestock program have long-term resilience capacity. Through the FFA, beneficiaries reported that they have been able to reduce time spent on ganyu and used the time to invest in more productive livelihood activities. Others reported to have not migrated to Mozambique to fetch economic opportunities, because of opportunities provided by the project. This means they spent more time at their homes and in their farms which would also increase the likelihood that they worked on their farms.

B. VSL supporting income diversification

The project VSLs beneficiaries reported that they have been able to access small loans. VSLs are informal savings and loan groups in which members agree to make weekly savings into a group fund, which is community based and members managed. The weekly savings are guided by an agreed share value, with each member only allowed to make a certain number of maximum shares per week. As weeks pass and make savings, the fund grows and members are allowed to borrow from the fund, based on how many shares they have in the fund and at the agreed interest rate. Interviews with members of VSL groups reported that they were able to...
access small loans, with which they finance small-scale business, thereby diversifying their income sources, which increases household resilience. A traditional leader has this to say, “Due to adverse effects of climate change in the area, most households [HH] are food insecure hence throughout the year depend on ganyu (casual labour) to feed themselves and buy other household needs. This takes away the labour from the household leading to continuous cycle of poverty and vulnerability. Even though the effects of climate change affect everyone in my area, we can see that those participating VSL and FFS are affected less than those not participating. Because of VSL, beneficiaries have bought HH assets such as bicycles, livestock and some have built better houses.”

C. Harmonisation of social support programme at district level
As part of the ongoing efforts to support implementation of the National Social Support Programmes, the assessment found that the project has been instrumental in facilitating dialogue at district level to streamline coordination of all resilience programmes through efforts towards establishment of the Pilot District Unified Beneficiary Registry (UBR). In particular, the project has been able to influence a decision towards collapsing of the numerous district level committees that often have a duplication role into one resilience committee, the District Social Support Committee, which will focus on all social protection programmes, namely Public Works, School Meals, Social Cash transfer, Microfinance, and Village Savings and Lending Schemes and eventually the Farm Input Subsidy Programme. Currently all the five programmes have their own committees, most of who are attended by the same people, which is inefficient.

A key milestone to-date, is that the District Council in Phalombe has agreed to the idea of one committee, which is positive, draft terms of reference for the committee have been developed and approved by the Government. What remains is to launch and provide the capacity required to make the committee functional. The registry is also intended to provide an automated single platform for storing and sharing information about potential beneficiaries of all social protection programmes. This is a significant milestone towards supporting and harmonizing and/or coordinating community level targeting of resilience building interventions with humanitarian or emergency assistance. However, significant work remains to be undertaken to operationalize the mechanism.

D. Effect of combination of interventions
According to beneficiaries, those that have benefited from all interventions at the same time are more resilient than their counterparts who only participate in a single intervention or grouping. Further, the assessment team observed that the FFA (WFP) and CG (UNICEF) are more or less community wide interventions while FFS usually targets a household, therefore linking all the three together helps the farmer to scale-up benefits to the household level and make resilience happen. As individual interventions, however, the review found that FFS beneficiaries were more satisfied with their interventions than FFA and CG beneficiaries, primarily because of the immediate economic benefits to the households. It was also noted that food aid received from FFA is further shared with non-participating households which encourages social cohesion but it reduces the intended effects. The assessment noted that food aid received by one beneficiary was shared among 2 to 5 additional households. This is one community initiated strategy intended to keep everyone “happy” but evidently at the expense of expected impacts.

Table 3: Summary of the results chain under objective one, as explained by the stakeholders interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Impact (Resilience)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Income generating activities (bakeries, irrigation, poultry)</td>
<td>1. VSLs are still operational and saving money and borrowing (MK20 million)</td>
<td>1. People have bought assets, such as bikes, livestock, pay schools fees, building houses</td>
<td>1. Food security has enabled farmers to cope with disasters and food insecurity, reduced migration,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Training (VSL, conservation agriculture agroforestry, postharvest, farm business),</td>
<td>2. Capacity of farmers-people are able to take action, responsible leadership</td>
<td>2. People have been able to get money from various sources</td>
<td>2. Less dependence on humanitarian support and instead they are using multiple sources of food and income to support their families without migrating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Field days</td>
<td>3. Farmers are doing things different from the past, they have developed new skills</td>
<td>3. Increased income from many sources of income</td>
<td>3. Families are more cohesive because of reduced migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Exchange visits</td>
<td>4. Adoption of new technologies (manure, solar, irrigation)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Food diversification has increased ability of families to cope with food shortages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Livestock production (includes khola production, pass on schemes)FFA+FFS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Livelihood diversification, - farmers have</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Qualitative Impact Assessment of the Joint Resilience Project Implemented by FAO in Phalombe District in Southern Malawi
4.2.3 Challenges faced and lessons learnt

The assessment team found that because of project coordination challenges at national level, the timescale for implementing the project between the four UN partners was not harmonised. As a result, starting times were different and work-plans were also different. Implementing partners were not jointly briefed about the approach and started implementing their components at different times. Due to these variations, it became difficult to achieve a harmonised approach to targeting. Hence, implementing structures at community level were different and very few beneficiaries benefited from all the interventions. It was estimated that less than less than 5% may have benefited concurrently from FFS, FFA and CG. However, the important achievement is that the process of harmonized targeting has started. It is expected that with the development of the universal beneficiary register (UBR), the process of harmonised beneficiary targeting will be strengthened.

4.3 Project Objective 3: Strengthening the capacity of service providers, vulnerable households and at risk communities

4.3.1 Activities implemented

The project used the Farmer Field School (FFS) approach as the main entry and capacity building strategy to build community resilience to climate change shocks. The approach targeted knowledge, skills and attitude change with specific enterprises selected carefully for resilience building based on participatory testing and experimentation. There were 56 FFSs in the project area in total established at GVH level with an average membership of 30 each including women which constituted a bigger proportion of participants at 58%.
The FFS which was implemented through agriculture sector structures including Extension Planning Areas (EPAs) adopted an integration approach with activities falling under four categories: 1) Natural Resources Management (NRM); 2) Crop diversification; 3) Livestock Production (small stock); and, 4) Village Savings and Loans (VSL). This was done with a view to deepen impact of the project on resilience building.

Under category 1, FFSs conducted awareness meetings on climate change and NRM, undertook tree nursery production, conducted tree planting (indigenous and exotic trees on communal and household woodlots), planted fruit trees (such as pawpaws, mangoes around homesteads), and set up NRM by-laws to govern management and utilization of natural resources such as village forest areas.
Under category 2, FFS acted as an education and learning center to build farmers’ capacity and skills in crop diversification and management using an experimental approach conducted on a fortnightly basis with the support of EPA agricultural staff and IP staff. The approach was chosen with a view to deepen learning and adoption of new technologies related to climate smart agriculture. The initiative focused on development of a learning curriculum for both winter and rain fed crops as well as choice of study enterprises. The experiments were based on farmer needs, Village Action Plans (VAPs) and Group Action Plans (GAPs). Topics included plant spacing of different crops, nutrient management trials, variety trials, etc. Through the FFS, the project was also able to introduce new high value crops such as onion, tomato, garlic, carrot, sweet and Irish potatoes with a view to develop farming as a business to support incomes. This was enhanced by introduction of improved irrigation farming to enhance harvest through winter production and Integrated Pest Management techniques to manage pests and diseases.

Under category 3, FFS implemented the small stock livestock production activities through the pass-on scheme through linkage with the FAO funded Disaster Recovery Project. The focus was on goat and poultry production. Goats and poultry were selected because they are easier to feed, are disease resistant and have a ready market. Under this category, FFS members were taught goat rearing, construction of improved livestock housing, and conducted experiments to see the efficacy of traditional and improved livestock housing. Each FFS received 8 goats which have since multiplied through second and third generations of the pass-on scheme.
Under category 4, the FFS implemented VSL groups in each FFS aimed to build a savings and investment culture among FFS members. Membership of VSL groups was open to all members of FFS groups but was not mandatory. FFS groups were supported with training in VSL management and starter packs (cash boxes and pass books).

According to the District Agricultural Office, most FFS were also located in hotspot for environmental degradation, which was also deliberately done to strengthen farmers’ adoption of good agricultural practices in areas which are prone to soil erosion. In the case of the project, a needs assessment was done to find out what farmers required to build their resilience. These needs assessment results were incorporated into the training curriculum of the FFS. At a later stage the project also introduced VSLs into the FFS.

### 4.3.2 Project contribution and impacts on resilience

#### A. Improved knowledge and learning through FFS

Overall, the assessment found that by adopting a well guided and school based capacity building approach through the FFS, the project has been able to achieve significant and more sustainable change in terms of knowledge, skills and adoption of new technologies. Beneficiaries reported that the approach has enabled deeper learning and attitude change which are important ingredients in the promotion of real change. This is in sharp contrast with the traditional extension approach which focuses on extending knowledge to farmers from outside. The farmer field schools acted as demonstration and education hubs involving about 30 farmers per club who met on a fortnightly rolling basis showcasing various farming technologies. In total, there were 56 FFSs in the project area.

#### B. Increased awareness of the effects and impacts of climate change

In the area of NRM, the FFS has enabled improved knowledge of the effects of climate change on NRM. This has resulted in local leaders mobilizing their communities to engage more in tree planting and riverine conservation. In some communities, communities have developed by-laws which were approved by Councils to be used as tools to guide formation of NRM committees, tree planting, and enforcement of rules against cutting of stumps. This has resulted in the mushrooming of communal/household woodlots as well as improved hill cover. The
FFS also trained its members to adopt alternative sources of income and energy such as the improved cook stoves.

C. Farming as a business, better decision making amongst farmers

Apart from benefiting in capacity and technology adoption, the schools also generated a business approach to farming which has contributed to more sustainable management of soil including increased benefits from farming. For example, some farmers are able to do gross margin analysis to guide their decision, making pertaining to cropping and management decisions. Further, the integration of VSL, irrigation and the livestock pass-on program to the FFS approach has enabled the building of savings and investment culture including strengthening capacity for resilience. For example, some farmers reported that they were able to borrow from VSL to finance farming activities through purchase of inputs. The manure from livestock has also been used extensively to do conservation farming. And by using the FFS approach the project has been able to develop lead farmers some of whom have now become mentors to their folks which is has increased potential for replication of the project impacts.

D. Improved capacity of extension workers

The assessment also found that the training of extension workers, HSAs, FFSs and CGs through the project has increased capacity of the community in many aspects. For example, extension workers and FFS members received training in Climate Smart Agriculture technologies, nutrition, VSL and business management which has enabled them to gain vital knowledge to improve agricultural production, nutrition practices, savings and investment culture. Consultants observed visible evidence of conservation farming taking place in farmers’ gardens including backyard gardens. Communities also know how to raise vertiver nursery, fertilizer multiplication known as mbeya (mixture of ash, husks, inorganic fertilizer, animal dung) including use of
improved cooking stoves which is a crucial input into efforts to ensure sustainable of environmental resources such as trees. The training has further enabled the introduction of new high value crops and varieties such as onions, garlic, carrots, sweet potatoes which point to improved capacity for resilience. Communities are practicing water and soil conservation technologies which they learned through FFA activities.

The training extended to HSAs and CGs members. They were trained in scaling up nutrition i.e. nutrition screening, family planning, safe motherhood, sanitation, marriage counselling etc which are crucial ingredients to efforts towards resilience building. This has enabled CG members embrace improved food preparation practices, safe motherhood and sanitation practices.

Respondents also acknowledged that the FFS design has contributed significant improvements to extension delivery. Through the FFS, farmers are able to validate technologies which has improved learning. As a result, most graduates from the FFSs are more equipped than the normal lead farmers under the generic agriculture extension system which seems to be more theoretical. This has enabled production of more lead farmers in the project areas which points to improved resilience capacity in the long term as government extension services are becoming more and more constrained.

E. Improved adoption of technologies

With improved extension, the assessment team observed significant adoption of CA, Sasakawa maize planting technology, soil and water conservation practices using marker ridges and vetiver grass which is evidence of learning that has taken place. There has also been an improvement in overall management of crops through more knowledge of IPM, use of improved seed, use of gross margin in farming decisions,
adoption of kitchen gardens to produce vegetables for food and income, and adoption of high value crops.

By adopting irrigation (see box below for the case of Mr. Patrick Naminga, aka Che Khoviwa), the project has transformed farmers from over reliance on fishing using available water bodies such as Mpoto lagoon and Lake Chilwa. This has enabled farmers to grow crops over three times in a year thereby improving their incomes and food security.

Beneficiaries further reported that the use of hybrid seed has improved yield resulting in improved food and nutritional security. This was enhanced by the introduction of new high value crops which has contributed to achievement of commercial oriented farming which has resulted in improved income security. Beneficiaries reported that they were able to do gross margin analysis which

- Patrick Naminga, aka Che Khoviwa is a serious irrigation farmer who is growing maize on approximately 2.25 acres of land along Phalombe River. He used to do irrigation at a very small scale and was not benefiting from his effort. When he saw the FFS field he got interested and asked them to advise on how best he could grow his maize. The FFS members have been advising him since and now is one of the large-scale irrigation farmers in the area. He also trains other farmers and receives a lot of visitors to his field.
- He owns a motorised pump which he was not using before he acquired knowledge from the FFS farmers. He instead used the treadle pump. With a treadle pump he harvested one bag of maize. Now with a motorised pump and the use of the knowledge gained his yields have increased to over 10 bags. His livelihood has greatly improved as a result of this: from green maize sales, he has managed to buy 5 goats, 15 chickens, and 3 sheep; he is also able to employ a lot of people to work in his fields. He no longer need any food or inputs subsidies as he has broken the cycle of dependence on humanitarian and social protection support.
improved their cropping and farm management decision making. Record keeping was also reported to have improved which has enhanced the farmers’ planning capabilities.

Lastly, the use of energy saving stoves has contributed to reduced carbon emissions by reducing deforestation and degradation. It has also resulted in women spending less time and energy to cook and gather firewood which enable them to participate more in economic and resilience. Beneficiaries reported that the stoves take little wood and allow three cooking activities to take place at a time which improves efficiency. It also points to the progress towards addressing environmental degradation which used to be rampant in the project area partly because of increasing demand for fuelwood in a time of limited replanting efforts.

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F. **Financial inclusion**

In the area of savings and loans, the FFS has been able to train its members in developing a savings and investment culture. This has been observed with the increase in group savings overall and borrowing to invest/buy assets and solve family issues which points to improved resilience capacity. Through the livestock pass-on
scheme, farmers have been able to produce manure which are complimenting farming activities especially through production of Mbeya fertilizer. It has also helped with improvements in farmer ability to solve urgent issues through sell of the goats to address household needs.

G. Improved synergies

Overall, the integration approach adopted by the FFS has enabled improved achievement of impact because of the synergies that came with the different activities. For example, livestock management has enabled implementation of conservation agriculture through improved use of compost and animal manure in crops. It has also enabled farmers to sell their livestock to invest in related activities and addressing household issues. The VSL on the other hand has improved farmers’ access to financial resources to invest in farming as well as create savings for other uses including addressing household issues. These kinds of synergies have contributed to improved resilience capacity of the farmers.

On the downside, however, the FFS was designed without consideration of access to water resources for the field schools. Since the project started, the schools have been relying on boreholes constructed for household water in different communities. Due to the prevailing drought, water has been in short supply in most boreholes to the extent that some FFSs have not been allowed to continue with watering their fields in order to give priority to household use. Consultants also noted that most individual back yard gardens have curtailed activities due to the same issue of lack of access to water.

A damaged tomato field belonging to Gift Jalifu in Phelele Village TA Chiwalo as a result of water conflicts which stopped him from drawing water for his backyard garden

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4.3.3 Challenges faced and lessons learnt

The FFS was, however, not without challenges. The assessment team observed that dropout rate for members from FFS groups was quite significant at about 15% with limited demonstrated efforts to replace them, which denied those who were left out earlier a chance to benefit from the initiative. The dropout is largely attributed to member “short term expectations” not being met. The project identified FFS members from all over the GHV, thus some travel long distances to the FFS, which also contributed to dropout.

Additionally, the two-year period of project implementation meant that some of the activities did not come to full implementation. A typical example was the livestock pass-on scheme. Some farmers reported that they had not yet benefited from the scheme as the cycle had not yet run in full to get them a share of the livestock.

The assessment team was told and also found that FFS members were often segregated from accessing other social support programs such as FISP and the FFA by chiefs and other people arguing they had sufficient benefits from their involvement in FFS. This denied most FFS members a chance to access other support to augment the FFS support. Data also showed there was significant drop out from the FFSs due to unmet expectations including pressure from trying to address the problems of food shortage in their families. Ironically, those who dropped out were not replaced because of applying FFS membership guidelines with rigidity which denied those who were willing to join from benefiting from the FFS. Gift Jalifu, a farmer in the picture above is one of those farmers who was denied entry into an FFS but thankfully embarked on a parallel initiative to replicate the FFS knowledge through enquiring and learning from those that participated.
4.4 Project objective 4: Creating and/or supporting Risk Reduction/Resilience Capacity

Activities under this objective were to be implemented by UNDP because of their comparative advantage in disaster risk reduction programming. However, according to FAO, UNDP had not actively taken part in the project so eventually the activity was implemented by FAO, its implementing partners and the Phalombe District Council.

4.4.1 Activities implemented

The project has implemented a number of activities with the objective of building resilience capacities of communities and individual households in the project impacts areas. These included but not limited to involved planting of trees, building of dykes, marker ridges and contour bands. It has also constructed watering points for livestock, since livestock is an important source of livelihoods in the project areas. The project has also introduced new varieties of crops, such as Irish potatoes, onions, tomatoes and some vegetables. These crops were traditionally not grown in the areas. The objective has been to diversify food and income sources to enable households spread risk of crop failure.

4.4.2 Project contribution and impacts on resilience

The approach has enabled implementation of structures based on a catchment scope of coverage thereby improving risk reduction and enhancing resilience capacity. Further, food diversification approach has reduced dependency on maize as the main staple food. Beneficiaries reported that they are now able to eat potatoes as main meals unlike in the past which also points to resilience and risk reduction capacity building. In the same regard, crop diversification approach has enabled beneficiaries to have more crop options to grow such as drought resistant and high value crops.
which has improved their income and food security potential. This has been achieved through the introduction of new crops and training in food preparation under FFSs and CGs.

Other initiatives that have contributed towards risk reduction and resilience building include the livestock pass-on scheme which among others has started yielding benefits of manure and income which has to some extent improved people’s adaptability to shocks through conservation farming. Income diversification has also come about through VSL which has contributed to improved savings culture and improved access to financial services through loans especially among women who form the hub of VSL group membership; through income from selling kitchen/backyard garden products.

4.4.1 Challenges faced and lessons learnt

The factors that have negatively affected the achievement of this objective is scarcity of kitchen/backyard garden construction materials such as poles. Even where they have been found, it was reported that they have contributed to environmental degradation through deforestation. Within the irrigation sector the main challenge has been the drying of rivers, due to the drought that the country has faced. In addition, UNDP did not an active participant in implementing activities under this objective. The project lost an opportunity of utilising UNDP capacity with DRR programming. Another challenge was there was limited coordination with other projects, particularly the MFERP, which is a project funded by the World Bank to rehabilitate livelihoods and infrastructure that was damaged by the 2015 floods. As a result of the limited coordination, some dikes were targeted by both the MFERP and FAO project.
4.5 Project objective 5: Implementing community-based nutrition education and communication programmes.

4.5.1 Activities implemented

The objective has mainly been the responsibility of UNICEF and was implemented through Save the Children. The two have been working through Community Care Groups (CGs) which has supported communities to address malnutrition through a series of activities. These activities aimed at changing nutrition and hygiene behaviours and focusing on dietary diversification. It also focused on optimal maternal nutrition which include iron-folic acid supplementation as well as infant and young child optimal feeding and hygiene practices. These behaviour change communication interventions were balanced with interventions that support improving quality of community identification and treatment of acute malnutrition as well as improving intake of vitamins and minerals among pregnant and lactating women as well as children aged 6-23 months.

The Care Group (CG) model approach was used to implement the objective. A care group model involves a network of volunteers who represent their clans in a CG group. One CG has about 10 to 12 members. Each member represents about 10 to 12 members of his/her clan or relations. CGs are trained in a range of nutritional education topics, based on the scaled-up nutrition (SUN) guidelines from UNICEF. The members the implement their training through community outreach, child growth monitoring activities and referral systems. The CG approach was the main initiative undertaken to implement community based nutrition education and communication programmes. Through the Care Groups who were trained and

Community initiated and sponsored IEC messages
mented through a comprehensive training program, the project was able to conduct cooking demonstrations, provide door to door health care advice, promote good hygiene and sanitation, promote use of bed nets, encourage Aids drug taking, and regular ante natal clinics. To ensure long term impact on behavior change including prevention and treatment of acute malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies, the project built its implementation strategy around such areas as communication for development; bringing nutrition interventions at the community level and making malnutrition visible for early action; building capacities at community and household level to find solutions to improve maternal and infant and young child nutrition; joint interventions with other government sectors (local government, agriculture, gender, education, health) and civil society for comprehensive participatory planning and implementation and evaluation; community identification and treatment of acute malnutrition; and, improving intake of vitamins and minerals among children aged 6-23 months as well as pregnant and lactating women (diets as well as supplementation and fortifications).

4.5.2 Project contribution and impacts on resilience

A. Improved uptake of health and nutrition messages

Overall, the assessment team found that the CG approach is a community led nutrition initiative which has contributed to enhanced ownership at community level. CGs interviewed in both TAs Chiwalo and Jenala reported significant progress towards achievement of open defecation free (ODF) status in the area as a result of the IEC work that has taken root in the area initiated by CGs which work very closely with HSAs and health facilities. The assessment team observed that the work of CGs is guided by implementation manuals on scaling up nutrition an effort that has made it easier for the groups to implement their activities such as nutrition screening and antenatal promotion even in the absence of HSAs. HSAs indicated that many times CG members have been entrusted by the health facilities to undertake assignments to support government activities at various times.

B. Better linkages between community and service providers

The CGs have demonstrated strong linkages with government HSAs and health facilities which ensures good quality supervision and logistics support in doing their work. It was also reported that the CG members use locally available food stuffs.
which contributes to sustainability. The approach has also improved efficiency in delivery of some critical community based activities. Respondents confirmed that CGs have enabled faster response to community activities. The approach has further managed to develop role models in WASH, nutrition, safe motherhood, sanitation, etc. Caseloads of malnutrition have been reported to be decreasing, although it cannot all be attributed to the project.

C. Improver health outcomes

According to HSAs interviewed, the Care Group approach has contributed towards reducing maternal deaths, increased use of bed nets, reduced child malnutrition, more women delivering at the hospital, improved attendance of both men and women at ante natal clinics, improved demand for nor-plant family planning method and more knowledge in nutrition assessment. The impact is largely a result of increasing numbers of Care Group volunteers doing what was normally work associated with HSAs. In terms of contribution to resilience, the Care Groups have contributed to improved decision making in addressing critical livelihood issues such as aids treatment, reduced maternal deaths due to increased hospital deliveries including improved access to information and advice at community level on issues of care and support.

4.5.1 Challenges faced and lessons learnt

Despite the impressive work done by CGs, the assessment found that overall, the survival rate of Care Groups was generally low. In GVH Nambazo of TA Chiwalo for example, out of 15 Care Groups which were started in the area, only three (3) are functional. The trend extended to other areas as well with some Care Groups losing significant levels of membership. The assessment found that although the situation partly points to weak incentive mechanisms to sustain the groups, the biggest challenge, however, seems to revolve largely around the fact that the model “overloaded” the groups who work as volunteers with responsibilities which saw them doing work which was almost equal to the work of HSAs or NGO facilitators who are employed. The assessment found evidence of Care Group members contributing own cash and equipment to do cooking demonstrations, compiling nutrition assessments including reporting on a regular basis, doing door to door advisory work including IEC activities, etc.
They reported that a small compensation is provided whenever they are supporting government nutrition assessment activities but this is often spent on transport to collect the money from the health facilities. By engaging the Care Groups with so much work, the project runs the risk of divorcing them from livelihoods activities which works in conflict with the project objectives of supporting the building of community and household assets to improve resilience. To address this, it will be essential for the project to remodel the concept of Care Groups by reducing to a reasonable scale, the responsibilities of Care Groups. The current work undertaken by the groups can better be executed through formal CBOs which can be facilitated in the communities. This will address burn out and reduce turnover of both the groups and its members.

In addition, we the team noted that CGs are not integrated with FFS, hence excluding CGs of important skills in agricultural production learned from FFS while excluding FFS from important nutritional information that is required for them to effectively utilise the food produced from improved knowledge from FFS.
5 Assessment of coordination

5.1 National level

5.1.1 Project management

The project was jointly being implemented with FAO, UNDP, UNICEF, and WFP to support the national and decentralized structures of the government to implement a comprehensive resilience building programme in Phalombe district. An International Project Coordinator (PC) who was recruited under FAO was responsible for coordination and implementation of the project and the supervision and monitoring of progress made towards achieving project objectives in the first year according to the project design. He worked for one year on the project. He was supported by a National Project Manager (PM) who was located at district level and he worked closely with the three IPs and district officials. The PM later assumed national coordination role for the project. The recruitment of both coordinators took some time and this consumed project implementation time.

5.1.2 Planning and project initiation

One of the main weaknesses of the previous and other on-going resilience-related initiatives occurred at the planning stage when coordination with relevant sectors was not clearly spelt out. As a result of this weakness the joint project devoted much time of the initial project phase to activities aimed at addressing the bottlenecks that usually occur in the planning phase. As such, the main activities under the project in the preliminary phase centered on planning and coordination meetings both at national and district levels. The meetings were undertaken involving six ministries, Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare, Department of Nutrition in the Office of the President, Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development. The meetings resulted in strong buy in from the government on the resilience building approach. The early activities also included formulating Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) between the implementing UN agencies and FAO. This is what took long to conclude and consumed a lot of project implementation time. UN partners interviewed reported that the delays affected the start dates of activities because it also meant that they could not contract implementing partners in good time. It also meant that
implementation between various partners started at different dates, some very late, which resulted into weak harmonisation of planning and implementation at district level. Although the project was a joint UN project, it had no joint work-plan, which was surprising.

5.1.3 Collaboration with Government

At national level, the project mainly worked with Government through the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development (MoFEPD) and the National Task Force team on the Unified Beneficiary Registry (UBR). In order to build capacities of Government in the implementation of Social Support Programmes, the project supported the National Task Force team on the Unified Beneficiary Registry (UBR) with resources to conduct a data collection tool validation workshop. The data collection tool was later on adopted by the National Task Force team on UBR for national use.

However, there was generally slow progress on development of a single registry and establishment of a common coordination committee by government players owing to the multi-level nature of stakeholders although the guidelines have now cascaded to district level with the formation of appropriate structures to support UBR. There has also been increased significant consensus building and cross learning on the subject among the stakeholders which is a positive development.

A key milestone to-date, is that the project has contributed to the establishment of a District Social Support Committee and terms of reference for the same have been approved (although this also took too long to complete) and should be launched soon. The District Council in Phalombe has agreed to the idea of one committee, which is positive development. Draft terms of reference for the committee have been developed and approved by the Government. What remains is the launch and provision of the capacity required to make the committee functional.

In summary coordination of the project at national level was generally weak and ineffective and unfortunately it affected operations at district level, where coordination was quite strong.

5.2 District level

According to the project design, district level coordination was to be implemented by district project staff under the overall guidance of the DEC leadership with close involvement of District Social Protection Committee, District Civil Protection Committee, District Agriculture Committee, District Climate Change Committee, and
District Disaster Risk Reduction Committee. UNICEF, WFP, UNDP and any other selected partners were expected to participate in this planning process. In practice, the project largely followed the design. The project was implemented through CADECOM, ADRA and Save the Children (Care Groups only) as direct district implementing partners (IPs) within the framework of district development structures such as DEC, and other relevant committees. The District Agriculture Office was taking the lead in coordinating with the IPs on behalf of the District Council using District Stakeholders Forum. UNICEF, WFP and UNDP participated in the coordination processes through their supporting and technical support role.

Overall, coordination was generally effective at district level between the project coordinator, the IPs and district level structures such as DEC which contributed significantly to progress in project implementation. The assessment found that the agriculture office in collaboration with the IPs and funders conducted a number of joint monitoring visits to sites with direct reporting and feedback loops to the DEC. The joint monitoring visits which focused mainly on the performance of FFSs, helped with improved decision making on issues affecting the project. The agriculture office also provided technical support from the district level which coordinated with the field level technical support to support the three project IPs.

The assessment further found that all different players coordinated through the District Civil Protection Committee, the District Climate Change Committee, and the District Disaster Risk Reduction Committee to support the project with other initiatives including VSL, fertilizer input subsidy, nutrition support, FISP and PWP. This coordination enabled the project to benefit to some extent from the attendant synergies to support effective implementation although communities showed significant unwillingness to allow project beneficiaries to benefit from other projects.

The coordination also saw the establishment of the District Social Support Committee which is entrusted with the role of facilitating the Unified Beneficiary Registry (UBR) mechanism at district level. The assessment found that the committee, much as it had not yet been launched, not oriented on its roles and had not yet received its approved terms of reference from MoFEPD, was functional as it has been meeting as scheduled to transact business. The UBR mechanism has however not yet been commissioned at district level despite the strides made.
5.3 Community level

The project was envisaged to be implemented through the district development planning structures such as the Village Development Committees, Areas Development Committees and Area Stakeholder Forums with the IPs leading implementation with technical support from Agriculture Extension Planning Areas (EPAs).

At community level, coordination was generally strong, with IPs and most Government officers, where they are available, being involved in planning and implementation of programme activities. The main limitation, however, was that Government extension workers are quite few and poorly resourced, with very high vacancy rates at EPA level. Project activities were coordinated through development of Village Action Plans which resulted from the process of hazard mapping. This allowed villagers to develop action plans based on issues that they thoroughly analysed and understood. The community based participatory planning process was intended to ensure that there was better coordination, partnerships and convergence of different stakeholder support that would yield positive synergies for maximum outcomes. It built on an Integrated Context Analysis (ICA) and a Seasonal Livelihood Programming (SLP) exercises carried out by the WFP earlier which led to identification of response gaps which also guided the planning process.

Technical support towards the management of the FFSs was provided for by extension workers from Agriculture EPAs. FAO and the IPs provided the capacity building support to the agriculture staff to enable them provide extension services on an ongoing basis at the FFSs. By using the existing agriculture extension delivery mechanism, the project has enabled capacity building of the extension workers and the approach has begun to influence the government extension system to adopt the new methodology used in the FFSs. People interviewed in the agriculture office reported that the AESA approach used has improved extension delivery in the areas in that farmers in FFS are now able to validate technologies that have improved learning and technology adoption levels. They alluded to the fact that the FFS was a farmer owned and managed approach which enhanced sustainability of the schools as facilities for collaborative learning and technology adoption in the two TAs. However, the coordination link between FFS and Care Groups remained significantly weak. This poses a risk to sustainability of the Care Groups. It also weakens the integration objective of the implementation approach of the project to strengthen synergies between the interventions.
6 Assessment of monitoring and evaluation systems

According to the project design, the M&E function for the project was the responsibility of the Project Coordinator in close collaboration with the DEC and with support from the Project Manager. This was guided by a comprehensive M&E Plan with a clear logical framework which was developed through a highly consultative process. The project planned to record process and impact indicators at project inception and at the end. The M&E Plan was premised on the understanding that the programme would have a functional M&E Team (M&E Expert/Officer plus data clerks) responsible for facilitating M&E activities including data analysis, storage and reporting based on scheduled frequencies coordinated overall by the Project Coordinator.

The assessment found that the Project Coordinator was responsible for preparing six-monthly technical reports, in close consultation with the DEC and project partners as well as annual financial statements. Several national and district level review meetings were held over the project period as part of the M&E process. Apart from contributing to improved quality of project implementation in the targeted areas, the review meetings have led to improved coordination among all the stakeholders. However, despite having a concrete M&E plan, the baseline study was not conducted due to logistical delays. This created a data gap which resulted in monitoring and evaluation challenges as indicators were not quantified. The assessment also found that at district and community level, the IPs’ monitoring role was hampered significantly by capacity constraints partly because plans to engage specific M&E officers did not fully materialize as envisaged. Similarly, the plan to link the programme MIS to other MIS at district and national level such as NSSP did not fully materialize due to lack of the baseline data and capacity limitations. This was a missed opportunity for the project to contribute towards data generation efforts to guide national and district level operational and policy level decision making.
7 Main conclusions and recommendations

7.1 Main conclusions

The qualitative research was aimed at examining how the project has influenced or brought about change in knowledge, attitudes perceptions and practice among the targeted communities and how this change has contributed in enabling them to meet their basic needs and withstand climatic and natural shocks.

7.1.1 Evidence towards addressing resilience

The project had a very short lifespan to derive significant impacts from its interventions. The short period was even shorter because of delays in starting the project. However, there are considerable pointers/ evidence that the project interventions are contributing to resilience both in the short and long term. With the introduction of the FFS for example, farmers have been imparted with skills in irrigation farming, business management, food diversification which has helped to bring in food security.

FFSs have also improved extension worker to farmer contact which has resulted in improved knowledge in CSA techniques such as CA and manure use. Although some farmers have begun to adopt these technologies, the period of the project has been short for adoption. Backyard gardens are helping HH to be more resilient even though the poles used for construction are not sustainably sourced/harvested with some of them using indigenous wood which threatens deforestation.

On the other hand, the FFA approach used in the project has been effective in building community level resilience assets although it has not been effective in building assets required for building household resilience. While the food for community assets (FFCA) approach is quite important for promoting community level residence, it is weaker or takes much longer for households to enjoy household level benefits arising from the interventions. The project should ensure that there is a proper balance between FFCA and FFHA to ensure that a participating household has access to both immediate economic benefits (food transfers, food produced through
irrigation, income from income generating activities) and long-term benefits (similar to FFCA).

The team also noted that the food provided is either not enough to meet household needs or it is delayed. And worse still, all beneficiaries are required to share it with those not selected, regardless of whether they participated in the actual works or not. Again, this suggests the need to strike a proper balance in terms of programming between FFCA and FFHA, with potentially sequencing the FFHA first, followed by FFCA. Additionally, many beneficiaries of FFA complained of delayed food transfers, to the extent that sometimes after communities complete their works, payment took months and where possible they were paid after the most crucial months of food shortage have gone. In future, the project should ensure that transfers are provided or remitted to beneficiaries as soon as the complete their tasks.

Despite the impressive work done by CGs, the assessment found that overall, the survival rate of Care Groups was generally low.

### 7.1.2 Empowering FFS approach to resilience building

The FFS approach to resilience building has inherent attributes that are empowering to smallholder farmers and as a result it was more effective in promoting technology adoption and subsequently building people’s resilience to withstand climatic shocks. This is evident in its ability to develop stronger lead farmers compared to the generic government extension approach. It would be good if future programmes can adopt the FFS as the main entry point for all other interventions.

### 7.1.3 Resilience without water is a challenge

The project design did not consider provision of water for FFSs and backyard gardens which posed a serious challenge that led to most FFSs and backyard gardens curtailing operations because of water shortage due to competition for domestic water in the boreholes. As we think about resilience in future, it is important to consider water provision for the sustainability of FFSs and backyard gardens. All technologies being promoted in the FFSs and backyard gardens depend on water.

### 7.1.4 Joint targeting not so effective

Project has not been effective in joint targeting where all the interventions support the same beneficiary who has been identified through a joint beneficiary targeting.
process. Yet there is growing recognition and movement towards this approach amongst stakeholders. However, this is against the backdrop of resistance from communities who feel a few may be benefiting more than others. The challenge however, is that this is a political hot potato that poses a challenge to address especially with the prevailing situation of hunger and dependency

7.1.5 Effective coordination at national level

The assessment team found that because of project coordination challenges at national level, the timescale for implementing the project between the four UN partners was not harmonised. In future, the project should ensure that the project coordinating team at national level is functional and that appropriate guides and standards operating procedures are prepared to guide implementation at district and community. The project should ensure that all project implementation structures are properly organised, harmonised and supported to function. Starting dates for the project should be harmonised. In summary, coordination has been more effective at district and at community level but needs to be strengthened at national level especially among the UN agencies in the areas of partnership development, work planning, monitoring and evaluation, joint targeting and capacity building for implementation.

7.1.6 Combination of interventions has been effective

Although not a common approach in the project, combination of interventions through the FFS has been effective and contributes to household resilience and community resilience. Although it is obvious from the assessment that the approach can be stronger if the FFA and CG can be integrated a bit more in the package

7.2 Recommendations and strategies for scaling up good practices

The following recommendations are made based on the analysis and interpretation in the report. The recommendations are grouped by key themes as follows:

7.2.1 Improved project design

- Future similar resilience programmes should be longer especially those that use a farmer field school approach. The period of the project was quite short to expect a lot of farmers to adopt technologies and realize impact
• Scale up the project while at the same time deepening impact by strengthening adoption of various technologies. The project will need to pay more attention to deepening impact with beneficiaries in the just ended project, given that the project period was short for them to achieve significant adoption of technologies.
• Future programmes should ensure that there is a balance between Food for Community Assets (FFCA) and Food for Household Assets (FFHA) interventions for effective resilience building.
• The FFS approach can be stronger if the Food for Assets (FFA) and Care Groups (CG) initiatives were integrated more into the package. The project should ensure that FFS are established at village level and not at GVH level to reduce distance between FFS and farmers. This will reduce dropout rate and also encourage more farmers, particularly women and youth to join. Again, the project need to ensure that targeting is harmonised, where beneficiaries benefit from all the three interventions at the same time. This will also reduce drop-out and deepen impact of the project on resilience. This will also minimise segregation of FFS from FFA and CG.
• Future similar projects should ensure that they include a component of water, as water is scarce in most communities and yet it is required in agricultural, food production as well as in nutrition. It becomes an irony if a project promotes good nutrition and sanitation without providing water, more so in areas such as Phalombe, which are drought prone. This can also be done if coordination with other projects is strengthened, especially at district level.
• There is a need for a much stronger river catchment management approach to sustain adequate water levels for all year-round irrigation.
• The project should encourage woodlots where the community could sustainably source/harvest poles for backyard gardens to reduce deforestation and support resilience building.
  7.2.2 Enhanced coordination and management
• National level partners should work together more effectively and provide technical guidance required at the district and community levels. There is need for time to allow partners to negotiate MoUs. The main implementing partner, in this case FAO, needs to have adequate capacity if they have to take up the role of coordinating other UN agencies.
• There is a need for all FFS members to be able to participate in exchange visits. This builds exposure to enhance learning through inspiration.
• Integrate stronger entrepreneurship into the project to build an investment and enterprise culture among the farmers. This will enhance the irrigation and VSL initiatives.

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7.2.3 Harmonisation of approaches

- In future, this can be improved by ensuring that FFS is used as an entry point for all other interventions (FFA and CG), so that CG and FFA members are also involved in FFS activities, so that they can all also access all benefits and capacities at the same time which can speed achievement of resilience.

7.2.4 Monitoring and evaluation

- In future monitoring of the project needs to be taken more seriously. There is need to implement the M+E plan by undertaking all M+E activities including but not limited to baseline, midline and end line studies to actualize the project M&E framework and support future efforts to effectively account for the project investment. This aspect was very weak in this project and it was as if this was a pilot project. This project was expected to have a strong M+E system so that future projects can learn from it.
Annex 1: Some case studies

CASE STUDY – MR. Geoffrey Nkomadzinja, Lomwani FFS

“I have benefited a lot from my involvement with the project. I have been trained in choosing crops to plant, undertake crop husbandry, integrated pest management, irrigation farming technology, tree planting, VSL and livestock management. I now use Mbeya fertilizer which has significantly reduced my costs for inputs. I have learnt record keeping which has resulted in my improved abilities to understand cost benefit analysis. I used to sell dry maize but now I am selling green maize because I have learnt that it takes 14-15 shelled maize to make 1kg which sells at K250/kg at Admarc currently. In contrast, I am able to sell a single cob of green maize at K80 or K100 which makes me over K1,000 more money for the same 14-15 cobs of maize. One day, I am able to sell over K20,000 worth of green maize which I can use to buy bags of dry shelled maize for food at home. Record keeping has also enabled me to monitor expenditure and keep my costs under control. With proceeds from my farming business focused on tomato, maize and onion production, I have been able to build a house at K650,000, buy three cattle at K450,000, bought a treadle pump at K65,000, and build a khola for goats in preparation for the livestock pass-on scheme cycle next year. I have also contributed 20,000 tree seedlings bought with proceeds from farming to the GVH to plant a community forest along a flooding river nearby. Related to resilience, I was able to support my late mum who had TB for 6 months at Holy Ghost Hospital and the bill came to K450,000 and also paid K150,000 funeral costs during her burial ceremony. I also assisted my mother-in-law (my wife’s mother) who stays in Nsanje with K75,000 cash after she called us and reported she had HIV and needed urgent assistance. She is much better now because of the nutrition and medical help she received. Finally, I grew tobacco last year. Due to drought, it all dried up. I quickly shifted to grow early maturing maize variety on the same land and harvested quite well. Without my farming business, this would not have been possible.”

| Type of Interview | FFA case study |

Qualitative Impact Assessment of the Joint Resilience Project Implemented by FAO in Phalombe District in Southern Malawi
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Belita Kamawa</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Interview</td>
<td>06/10/16</td>
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<td>District</td>
<td>Phalombe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programme</td>
<td>Joint resilience</td>
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<td>Interviewers</td>
<td>Gilbert Chintokoma</td>
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<td>Village</td>
<td>Mtemanyama</td>
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<td>TA</td>
<td>Chiwalo</td>
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**DISCUSSION NOTES**

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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<td>1. Introduction</td>
<td>Beatrice is married and her household has 6 members. Her house lays on the foot of several hills. She was selected for the FFA after she was heavily affected by heavy rains as such the GVH identified her household as vulnerable and was selected for the FFA. When Beatrice was asked to explain what FFA is, She replied “It’s an organization formed to make manure, marker ridges, dykes, irrigation canals and plant trees”</td>
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</table>
| 2. Environmental problems in the area | • Drought: Little or no rainfall leads to poverty and hunger as there is usually crop failure and no crops (harvest) to eat or sell.  
• Run-off water from the hills tend to wash away and destroy crops and sometimes houses and other household property. |
| 3. Activities             | Beatrice has been involved in the following activities with her FFA;  
• Afforestation where they raised a nursery and later planted the trees in the hills.  
• Constructing and re-orienting ridges on her farm to follow the marker ridge farm which helps in controlling the force of rainfall runoff water so that it does not wash away the crops and soil leading to gully erosion.  
• Rehabilitation of scheme: as a result of flooding, the canals of the scheme which they use in the community were filled with sand, the FFA group excavated the sand from the canals |
| 4. Changes/Benefits       | • Have been able to replicate marker ridges and ridges following the contour at home. Yet to see how the running waters will behave on her farm this coming |
rainy season. But believes the markers ridge and the new ridges at her home field would be able to hold water from going down the slope. Once water is retained on the farm, there would be enough moisture to allow for bumper harvests hence the household will be more resilient.

- Also doing some serious irrigation along SONGANI River where she grows maize at-least twice during the winter season. She uses the harvest for food as the dry spells and running water from the hills usually leave her home both food and income insecure.
- The compost manure assists in improving the soil fertility which enables high crop production. The compost manure also helps to improve the soil structure thereby preventing soil erosion.

- Through the FFA she has also learnt the “sasakawa” farming. The practice is very productive and helps the family to be food secure. She practices sasakawa on her maize irrigation plot.
### Beatrice on her irrigated maize field

| 5. Challenges      | • Working until 10am on FFA activities limits the time for Beatrice to do her own household activities including working on her farm  
                      • Sometimes the food that they were given for doing FFA activities delayed and affected their many other duties. |
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<tr>
<td>6. What would you drop out or scale up if project was to be implemented again</td>
<td>• Wouldn’t work until 10 am on FFA activities. Would appreciate if works on FFA activities are fished by 9am so that she can have enough time to work on her own farm and household. She shouldn’t work beyond 9 am in the morning</td>
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</table>
| 7. Recommendations  | • The project should introduce VSL groups and Livestock pass-on scheme. These are sustainable and have worked elsewhere and they should also be implemented here so that “we can see a really change”.  
                      • Would appreciate if we work on FFA activities are fished by 9am so that we can have enough time to work on our farms. We shouldn’t work until 10 am in the morning. We can also agree to shift back the starting time of the activities.  
                      • More irrigation materials are needed. The treadle pumps are not enough for the whole village. We need also motorized pumps. |
### Template for notes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Interview</th>
<th>KII with Madalitso FFS chairperson, Case Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Number of participants | Male 1 with a household of 4 members  
Female |
| Date of Interview | 04.10.16 |
| District | Phalombe |
| Programme | Joint resilience Project |
| Interviewers | Bright Sibale, David Mtekateka |
| Contacts for respondents | NA |
| Village | Mmina village, GVH Tamani |
| TA | Jenala |

### DISCUSSION NOTES

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Topic (use topics in the checklist)</th>
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<td>8. demography</td>
<td>Felix Kajombo has been a member and the chairperson of Madalitso FFS since April 2015 and has just graduated with a certificate in September 2016. He is married to Rose Malata and also live with their two children, a three year old boy and a two year old girl.</td>
</tr>
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<td>9. Beneficiary involvement in the project</td>
<td>Madalitso FFS started with 30 members (11 men) but had only 18 (6 men) members at time of graduation, one of whom has not been awarded a certificate due to excessive absenteeism. Some of the initial members dropped out due to unmet expectations whilst a few travelled to the north in search of employment</td>
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</table>
Through the farmer field school, Felix has managed to acquire new agricultural skills and knowledge on different crop husbandry practices, which include but are not limited to sasakawa, ridge alignment, production of other crops like onions and sweet potatoes, development of tree nursery and kitchen gardens, post-harvest handling, among other things. He has also received training in cookery, the 6 food groups, and hygienic practices, just to mention a few. Through FFS, Felix is also a member of a village loan and savings group.

In addition, Felix received a goat in the goat pass-on scheme which has just reproduced 10.

10. Case of increase in hh income and access to food

Through this project, Felix has managed to develop a kitchen garden which has made vegetables to be readily available for household consumption. Just last week he sold onions from his kitchen garden for MK2,300, which he used to buy mustard seed (MK500), two basins of sorghum (1000), soap(250), beans (400) and salt (150).
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<th>Case of increased resilience</th>
<th>Earlier this year, he sold onions from his garden for the first time worth MK17,450. He also managed to harvest more pigeon peas from his field after following instructions from FFS, and sold some for MK41,000. With the money earned from both the onion sales and pigeon pea sales he has managed to reconstruct a better house (using cement, burnt bricks and iron sheets,) after his previous house (thatched with burnt bricks) had been partly damaged by floods.</th>
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<td>Case of diversified income sources</td>
<td>As a member of a VSL group, the most recent loan Felix got from the group was MK10,000, of which MK5,000 he gave to his son (who has his own household) to maintain his bicycle, whilst the remaining MK5,000 he used to buy raw materials (reeds) for making mates. He managed to make MK48,000 from the mate sales and paid back MK15,000 to the VSL group.</td>
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</table>
|   | What contributed negatively | - Many FFS members dropped out due to unmet expectations and others immigrated to the north for employment  
- Unreliable rainfall pattern/ droughts  
- Environmental degradation/ soil erosion  
- Floods  
- Only three members of the 18 have functioning kitchen gardens. Other members claim not to have access to irrigation water, while other just do not have the interest to implement what they have learnt |
| 15. other issues | Felix considers himself very able to train 30 other farmers in the things that he has learned through FFS.

This growing season he plans to cultivate onions on a larger portion of land together with FFS members who will be willing to join him.

Currently he is developing 2000 tree seedlings as per instruction from ADRA field officers but is not aware whether there is already a market for these seedlings considering that 2000 seedlings are too many to be planted in one’s field |
Other Success Stories in pictures

Filesi Jackson of Tawanga Village, GVH Tamani in T/A Jenala is a member of FFS. Through her participating in the project she has learnt how to make composed manure (1), developed a kitchen garden (2); through her VSL savings she has managed to construct two more permanent houses than the one she had previously (3 & 4). She used materials from her previous house to construct her kitchen garden.
Gusto Kachepa of Mmini village GHV Tamani, and a member of Madalitso FFS, is able to provide vegetables to three households (with a combine membership of 17 people) from his kitchen garden. Before the project, they used to buy vegetables and sometimes could not even afford to. In the picture, he is holding the certificate he has received upon graduation; to his right is his wife who helps him cultivated and irrigate the kitchen garden, and to his left is Bright Sibale of Centre for Development Management.
### Annex 2: Overall theory of change achieved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What activities have implemented under the following project objectives?</th>
<th>What the main outputs you have achieved?</th>
<th>What have you observed in terms of knowledge, attitudes and practices amongst your beneficiaries/stakeholders?</th>
<th>How does this contribute to resilience building?</th>
<th>What factors facilitated change?</th>
<th>What factors negatively affected change?</th>
<th>If we were to implement again, drop</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Agroecosystem analysis (FFS)</strong></td>
<td>People have bought assets, such as bikes, livestock, pay schools fees, building houses</td>
<td>Food security has enabled farmers to cope with disasters and food insecurity, reduced migration,</td>
<td>1. Availability of resources in good time and right amount s (jointness is working)</td>
<td>1. Livestock damaged crops in study fields</td>
<td>1. Community assets need less attention under FFA because ownership is a problem and sustainability is a problem. But we should focus more on household and individual assets which are preferred and more sustainable.</td>
<td><strong>1. FFS farmers should not graduate in one year, the graduation cycle is short.</strong></td>
<td><strong>2. Targeting resources should be channelled to one beneficiaries. We had different beneficiaries.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>2. Nutritional education (FFS + CG)</strong></td>
<td>Farmers are now able to process foods using 56 solar driers</td>
<td>We have seen that because were have given them capacity they are not as dependent on humanitarian support and instead they are using multiple sources of food and income to support their families without migrating</td>
<td>2. Training provide d to farmers</td>
<td>2. Theft from study fields by surrounding communities</td>
<td><strong>2. In the project farmers used to travel long distances to FFS, now we need to form FFS per village to reduce distances.</strong></td>
<td><strong>3. Period of 21 months is too short for resilience.</strong></td>
<td><strong>4. Most farmers are very poor and do not have anything to start with, they need some capital start pack. Some booster, kick or jump start.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>3. Income generating activities (bakeries, irrigation, poultry) (FFS)</strong></td>
<td>Farmers are doing things different from the past, they have developed new skills</td>
<td>Families are more cohesive because of reduced migration</td>
<td>3. Willingness of farmers to participate and adopt</td>
<td>3. Poor road network, hence some areas were not reached</td>
<td><strong>3. Most men dropped out FFS and were not as active, also migrated to Mozambique to fetch food because the two years have been very bad in terms of food production. The lesson is that we can just focus on women on ensure that resilience programmes should be long term.</strong></td>
<td><strong>5. FFS farmers are very poor and do not have anything to start with, they need some capital start pack. Some booster, kick or jump start.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>4. Training (VSL, conservation agriculture, agroforestry, postharvest, farm business), (FFS)</strong></td>
<td>Farmers are doing things different from the past, they have developed new skills</td>
<td>Families are more cohesive because of reduced migration</td>
<td>4. Good coordination between farmers to participate and adopt</td>
<td>4. Some farmers were expecting to receive free things and when they noted that there was no distributions they were pulling other behind</td>
<td><strong>4. It also means that we could also possible</strong></td>
<td><strong>5. FFS farmers should not graduate in one year, the graduation cycle is short.</strong></td>
<td><strong>2. Targeting resources should be channelled to one beneficiaries. We had different beneficiaries.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>5. Construction of watering points and water troughs for livestock (FFA)</strong></td>
<td>Farmers are doing things different from the past, they have developed new skills</td>
<td>Families are more cohesive because of reduced migration</td>
<td><strong>5. Most men dropped out FFS and were not as active, also migrated to Mozambique to fetch food because the two years have been very bad in terms of food production. The lesson is that we can just focus on women on ensure that resilience programmes should be long term.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>5. FFS farmers should not graduate in one year, the graduation cycle is short.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>6. Irrigation of (rehab of wells and canals) (FFA)</strong></td>
<td>Farmers are doing things different from the past, they have developed new skills</td>
<td>Families are more cohesive because of reduced migration</td>
<td>5. With improved food availability, there is improved food constitution</td>
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<td><strong>7. Agroforestry (nursery establishment (FFS + FFA)</strong></td>
<td>Farmers are doing things different from the past, they have developed new skills</td>
<td>Families are more cohesive because of reduced migration</td>
<td>6. Adoption of new technologies (manure, solar, irrigation)</td>
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<td><strong>2. In the project farmers used to travel long distances to FFS, now we need to form FFS per village to reduce distances.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>8. Field days FFS</strong></td>
<td>Farmers are doing things different from the past, they have developed new skills</td>
<td>Families are more cohesive because of reduced migration</td>
<td>7. Previously schemes that were</td>
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<td>9. Exchange visits FFS</td>
<td>not working are working now</td>
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<td>10. Food distribution FFA</td>
<td>Introduction of new crops (beans, irish potatoes, garlic, carrot, cabbages)-people were saying thy cannot grow in their areas</td>
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<td>11. Crop production (as part of AESA) FFA+FFS</td>
<td>Currently farmers are serious with irrigation as a commercial activity especially where that is feasible</td>
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<td>12. Conservation agric (FFS+FFA)</td>
<td>Farmers have skills to do agroforestry (10000 seedlings planted, 62%SR)</td>
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<td>13. Dyke rehab/construct on (FFA)</td>
<td>More land put into cultivation</td>
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<td>14. Livestock production (includes khola production, pass-on schemes) FFA+FFS</td>
<td>Farmers are now able to use more food sources, some of which were being destroyed. Reduced food losses. Food and dietary diversification</td>
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<td>15. Energy saving stoves (selected farmer field, one FFS from each) FFS</td>
<td>and reduced nutritional problems leading to better health.</td>
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<td>16. Manure making (compost, Mbeya-combination of fert and manure) FFS</td>
<td>Assets bought from IGAs can be sold during food shortages to buy food</td>
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<td>17. Solar driers have been constructed FFS</td>
<td>Some people who have adopted irrigation have challenged that he can no longer be a receiver of handout</td>
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5. Farmers are now able to use more food sources, some of which were being destroyed. Reduced food losses. Food and dietary diversification

- Farmers are now able to use more food sources, some of which were being destroyed. Reduced food losses. Food and dietary diversification
- and reduced nutritional problems leading to better health.
- Assets bought from IGAs can be sold during food shortages to buy food
- Some people who have adopted irrigation have challenged that he can no longer be a receiver of handout
- Farmers are now relying on other foods other than maize, which remains they can rely on other crops
- **Livelihood diversification.** Farmers have diversified livelihoods sources from IGAS, agric, stoves etc
- Farmers are able to use income earned to pay for various HH expenses
- who participated in FFS without receiving anything
- Drought and floods
- FFS located in upland areas (part of Jenala and Chiwalo)
- Safety of Field Officers (not training and not safety clothing). Many FO were involved in bike accident. Need to customize motorcycles according to users. some were too big in terms of cc. Risk is high. Not gender. 3 cases. sensitive.
- Inter AIDE was also implementing a WAH programme in TA Chiwalo but they were not part of the resilience

6. **Drought and floods**
7. FFS located in upland areas (part of Jenala and Chiwalo)
8. Safety of Field Officers (not training and not safety clothing). Many FO were involved in bike accident. Need to customize motorcycles according to users. some were too big in terms of cc. Risk is high. Not gender. 3 cases. sensitive.
9. Inter AIDE was also implementing a WAH programme in TA Chiwalo but they were not part of the resilience
Annex 3: List of people consulted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (in full)</th>
<th>Organisation/Institution</th>
<th>Title/Position</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Hastings Chitengu</td>
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<td>Field Coordinator</td>
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<td>0888703697/099952582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pemphero Mulimba</td>
<td>ADRA</td>
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Annex 4: References


http://www.karger.com/Article/Pdf/452382