



SOILS, FOOD AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES ORGANIZATION

SFHC ANNUAL REPORT



January 2021 -December 2021

Agroecological approaches to Sustainable Agriculture that enhance Food and nutrition security

January 2021- December 2021

OBJECTIVE

Supporting farmers to conduct agroecological research and adopt appropriate techniques, Strengthening research infrastructure and resources for farmers, sharing and disseminating farmer-led innovation.

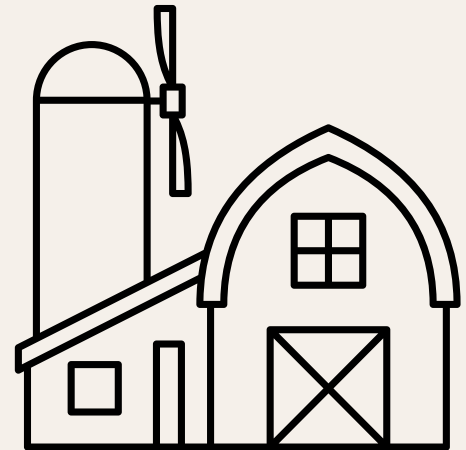
INTERVENTION AREAS

- Bwabwa
- Edundu,
- chimbongondo
- Kabanda
- Chidiklal
- Chisangano
- kaluholo,Kavula
- Mdolo
- Jombo
- Kamwe
- Luzi

Target Beneficiaries: 2000 farmers (1000 female and 1000 male)

Activities achieved under this project:

- 954 (50kg bags) of bokashi manure produced at the centre and the project intervention areas'
- 2000 (1000 female and 1000 male) farmers attended training in different agroecological practices
- 1634 (841 female and 793 male) farmers attended the field days from the 8 that were organised
- 2000 farmers trained in bokashi. Liquid manure and compost manure making
- 1600 (810 male and 790 female) farmers were trained in recipe preparation and nutrition.
- 1478 (801 female and 677 male attended gender training
- 1 dormitory with 13 rooms with a total of 26 beds is roofed, and 3 rooms are now being used
- 11 organisations visited the farmer training centre to learn about agroecology
- 1450 farmers (727 female and 723 male) farmers attended the food and seed fairs organised both at the farmers training centre and in the communities
- 2000 Brochures distributed to the communities
- 1 newsletter has been produced
- Purchase and installation of 4 solar panels
- Installation of a water tank



Seed distribution to 2000 farmers:

- 3,660 kgs of soya beans
- 3,255kgs of groundnuts
- 2000 kgs pigeon pea
- 200kgs cow-peas
- 4,000 kgs of local orange maize
- 800kgs sorghum
- 600kgs Bambara nuts

Scaling out agroecological pest management & gender equity (SAGE) through farmer-centered approaches

OPERATING DISTRICTS

- Lobi EPA in Dedza and Zombwe, Bwengu
- Engutwin EPAs in Mzimba

INTERVENTION AREAS

- Edundu
- Chibongondo
- Kabanda
- Jombo
- Luzi
- Kamwe

OBJECTIVE

- i) To broaden smallholder farmers' knowledge and use of agroecological methods for pest management, with a focus on pesticidal plant extracts, but including other methods such as intercropping and hedgerows.
- ii) To enable smallholder farmers to map and quantify forests in their communities, and identify land management strategies to conserve remaining forests and restore degraded landscapes.
- iii) To test gender-transformative training as an effective mechanism to change persistent gender inequities in agriculture, including those related to uneven access to resources, unequal labour sharing and decision-making arrangements, and gender-based violence.

Target Beneficiaries: 500 (250 male and 250 female)

Activities achieved under this project:

- 250 female and 250 male) farmers attended 10 participatory awareness meetings and selection of participating farmers done in 10 villages. (5 villages in Dedza and 5 villages in Mzimba)
- Baseline survey done both in Dedza and Mzimba districts 500 beneficiaries interviewed
- 30 participatory trials of agroecological pest management established 15 in Dedza and 15 in Mzimba
- 250 farmers in Dedza trained in agroecological practices including pest management practices
- Seed and sprayers purchased for farmers experimenters purchased

Innovations in Technology, Institution and Extension Approaches towards Sustainable Agriculture and Food and Nutrition Security in Africa enhanced (INNOVA-AFRICA)

January 2021- July 2021

OBJECTIVE

In this project 50 farmers were reached this year. This was the final year for this project.

INTERVENTION AREA

- Kacheche

Target Beneficiaries: 500 (250 male and 250 female)

Activities achieved under this project:

- 50 farmers trained on different innovations using a training manual that was developed by INNOVA AFRICA
- Analysis of on -farm farmer led experimentation data that was collected in 2020-2021 cropping season



FARMERS GETTING TRAINED IN BOKASHI MANURE MAKING

Seed and Knowledge Initiative – SKI

Improving food security, nutrition security through increased seed diversity and agro-ecological practices.

January-December 2021

OBJECTIVE

- I. Improve food security and crop resilience by increasing seed and agro-biodiversity
- II. Establish a seed bank at the SFHC Farmer Research and Training Centre in Ekwendeni

INTERVENTION AREAS

- Jombo
- Bwabwa
- Chidikalala
- Kabwanda
- Edundu
- Chisangano



Target Beneficiaries: 300 farmers

Activities achieved under this project:

- 200 (100 male and 100 female) farmers attended refresher trainings on agroecology practices
- 200 (100 male and 100 female) farmers attended gender training
- 200(100 male and 100 female) farmers attended crop diversification training
- 300 (300 male and 300 female)farmers participated in field days
- 40 (20 male and 20 female) farmers attended seed multiplication training and multiplied seed
- 50 (25 male and 25 female) farmers attended the leadership training
- 300 (150 male and 150 female) farmers participated in exchange visits
- 16 people (5 female and 11 male) project staff attended the 4 on-line training sessions that were organised and facilitated by John Nzira and the following topics were covered: Water management, pest management, forestry, beekeeping and agroecology in general.
- Different seed types were purchased and distributed to 500 farmers (250 female and 250 male).
- 2 demonstration plots were established in two primary schools, Kabanda and Chimbongondo. 88 pupils (46 girls and 42 boys)

SFHC staff attended

- i) Gender webinar— Literature review on gender equity issues.
- ii) On-line refresher course on biofertiliser and compost making

Farmer-led Agroecological Research in Malawi (FARM) for Biodiversity

January- July, 2021

This project was in its second and final year. SFHC was working with PhD students from university of Germany, Western and Cornell under the supervision of Dr Jinfei Wang, Dr Ingolf Steffan Dewenter, Dr. Isaac Luginaah and Dr. Rachel Bezner Kerr, with input from the rest of the project team members.

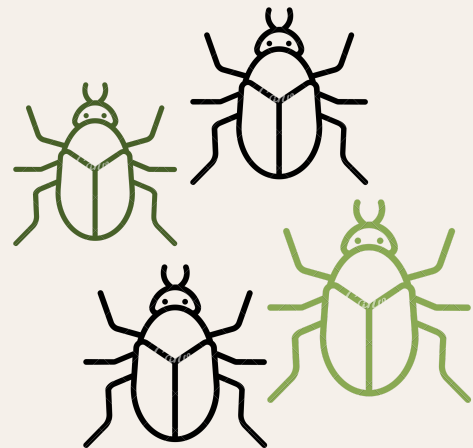
INTERVENTION AREAS

- Edundu
- Mwenje
- Mlimo
- Emtyani
- Chimbongondo
- Kabwanda
- Kafulufulu
- Kabanda
- Chiskombe
- Chigando
- Thimalala
- Baula

Activities achieved under this project:

Collection of biodiversity data by use of:

- I) Malaise nets
 - II) Pen traps
 - III) Pitfall traps
 - IV) Bird survey
 - V) Sweeping nets
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- Provision of COVID-19 awareness education
 - Collection of GPS coordinates



Dak explaining about sorghum to the board members about sorghum during the field day at the farmers training centre

Eurofins Foundation

January- July, 2021

OBJECTIVE

- i) To improve soil fertility and boost production and availability of nutrition-dense foods
- ii) To promote the utilization of crop yields and improve nutrition and gender equality outcomes

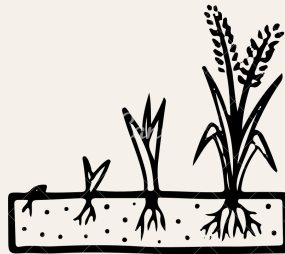
INTERVENTION AREAS

- Mlimo
- Chimbongondo
- Emityani
- Jombo
- Kabanda

Target Beneficiaries: 500 households

Activities achieved under this project:

- 500 (250female and 250 male) farmers attended training in different agroecological practices
- 500 (250 male and 250 female) farmers were trained in recipe preparation and nutrition.
- 500 (250 female and male) farmers attended gender training



Preparation of bokashi manure at the farmer training centre

Farmer Association Meetings

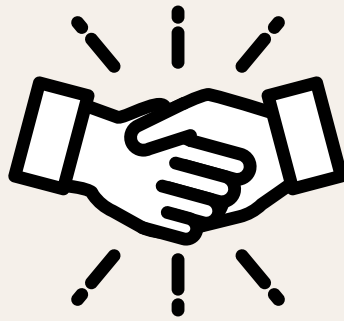
Kalongonda farmers farmers association has a membership of 25 farmers (12female and 13 male) and they are given groundnuts seed by International Crop Research in Semi-Arid Tropics(ICRISAT) to multiply seed as contract farmers, this year they were provided with 2000 kgs of groundnuts and they sold 7,598 kgs of groundnut at K800/ kg. amounting to Mk 6,078,000. The association committee meets once every month to discuss issues that are affecting their association . During the meetings they also remind each other of the importance of seed multiplication principles and how to make sure that they maintain the quality of the seeds ,mainly isolation. When they meet they also talk about the importance of farmer cooperatives/ association and how they will help to foster agroecology, equity and sustainable diets and that these associations will lead to improved livelihoods and local economies



Collaboration with other different stakeholders doing work on agroecology

SFHC has partnered with many organisations this year despite having challenges with COVID-19. SFHC has also created awareness on agroecology approaches to many different organisations through District Agriculture Extension Coordinating committee meetings (DAECC) that are organised by the Ministry of Agriculture at district level and different organisations are in attendance. The sensitization to other organisations was also made during the field days , seed and food fairs, and when they are having a visit to learn from our farmer research and training centre where we have different demonstration plots on different agroecology practices.





Governance

Soils Food and Healthy Communities organisation (SFHC) has 15 board members who guide and provide institution support to the organisation.

SFHC as an organisation uses a participatory approach to governance, with transparent decision-making processes. In so doing the board members themselves are farmers including the local village headmen. The organisation also has general assembly body who are comprised of farmer research team (FRT) members that were selected by the farmers in all the intervention areas where the organisation operates, and the general assembly meets once a year.

The organisation also works with resource-poor farmers, including women and youth, who are purposefully selected as participants and are also involved in project design, planning, management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. FRT meetings are also held monthly in all the intervention villages and lead by both men and women.

This year the organisation held board members meetings two times. At these meetings the board members, project staff discussed the project on how it is progressing and the challenges that are there and coming up with solution together.



Challenges

Despite managing to implement the different activities under different projects this year, SFHC faced a number of challenges listed below:

INFLATION

Has caused massive rise in many commodities which include fuel. This has been a big challenge to the project, it caused massive rise of commodities which also included fuel



PESTS

The most common pests were: aphids, foliage beetles, striped bean weevil, pod borer and orthocera (lwenya) mainly in legumes (cowpeas, beans and pigeon pea). Farmers were trying to spray botanical pesticides mainly tephrosia vogellii. Farmers look keen to continue exploring different botanical remedies using natural plants such as Chisoyo and many more. This year farmers still experienced pest's infestation in crops such as cowpeas, pigeon pea and beans, however farmers were advised to apply botanical pesticides such as Tephrosia vogellie leaves, Vernonia and Tithonia. Some farmers were using Ash in beans

COVID-19

The pandemic is still spreading and has remained the major threat to the project for example at some point it was difficult to go out in the communities because of the government restriction measures that were put in place, and at some point it delayed implementation of the activities.



WEATHER

Unpredictable rainfall pattern. For example this year (2020-2021) growing season the beans, cowpeas were heavily impacted because of too much rains. Because of these unpredictable rainfall farmers are encouraged to diversify their crops and use different agroecological practices that strengthen soil, prevent erosion, and retain moisture.