

Southern Africa Fresh from the Field

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Southern Africa is a unique field, with only 3 countries. As such, we've chosen to combine the three country fields into one newsletter for your reading enjoyment.

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Lest you think World Renew has left us here to run wild, we do have a new Team Leader: Steve Sywulka. He visited us a couple of weeks ago to do some face to face handovers with Peter and to visit some of the sites. Pictured above, he is visiting a new village that we are implementing our Mafuwa A Moto project. The women in this village put on a drama about nutrition and the different factors in the village that prevent them from feeding malnourished kids correctly.

Steve was born and raised in Guatemala, Central America. He met his wife Beth while completing his Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Development and Graduate Certificate in International Agriculture at Texas A&M University. Steve has worked in war-torn rural Central America, NGO headquarters in Washington State, small businesses in South Carolina, and large corporations in Asia and Europe.

Steve completed a Certificate in Biblical Studies at Columbia Biblical Seminary and earned his International Master's of Business Administration with a specialization in Economic Development and Information Systems from The Moore School of Business. For the past ten years, Steve and Beth have lived in Western Africa, working with local churches to bring about holistic transformation in communities.

Four energetic children add much joy to Steve and Beth's home. Beth loves homeschooling. Steve loves visiting remote locations, dreaming about campers, and imagining with others what could be.

Steve will be working from West Africa until January, which is when he will shift with his family to Southern Africa.

Please do keep Steve and his family in your prayers as they leave a home they love and move into a new, foreign place. Pray for Steve as he juggles two very demanding jobs in the interim.

Teaching Conservation Agriculture through a Farm Field School Approach

A Story of Transformation



Juvêncio Mataria
Program Advisor
Mozambique Team

Since 2012 World Renew has been supporting sustainable development programs in Northern Mozambique in the Niassa Province. These programs increase food security through conservation agriculture (CA) teaching and economic growth initiatives. Farmer field school (FFS) is a group-based learning process that has been used by a number of governments, NGOs, and international agencies to promote Integrated Pest Management (IPM) or best agricultural practices. It brings together concepts and methods from agro-ecology, experiential education, and community development. The approach was initially developed as an alternative to the prevailing top-down extension method of the Green Revolution, a method that failed to work in situations that were more complex and counterintuitive problems existed, such as pesticide-induced pest outbreaks.

In partnership with the Diocese, we are developing a FFS approach where 25-30 farmers meet twice a month in a local field setting and in groups so they can observe and compare three 10/10 plots (e.g. Plot 1: Conventional agriculture + Local seed, Plot 2: Conservation agriculture + local seeds, and Plot 3: Conservation Agriculture + improved seeds) over the course of an entire cropping season. The first plot follows local conventional methods while the other two are used to experiment with what could be considered “best practices.”

The experiments observe key elements of the agro-ecosystem by measuring plant development, taking samples of insects, weeds and diseased plants, and comparing characteristics of different soils. At the end of the meeting they present their findings in a plenary session, followed by discussion and planning for the coming weeks.

We also encourage farmers not to look at alternative practices and automatically think they are superior to conventional practices. It is up to the farmer to decide what works best through his or her testing and observations. What the FFS does is provide a risk-free setting in which to discuss, dissect, modify and experiment with new agricultural management ideas. In this field-based



Farmers in Mecanhelas learning about soil cover, spacing, and intercropping.



setting, farmers are able to investigate a wide range of topics, such as management of soil fertility and water resources; methods of local varietal selection and issues of seed quality; risks associated with toxic pesticides and implementation of low-toxicity alternatives; development of marketing skills; and diversification of farming systems with new crops for food, fodder and profit.

Mario Alfaq, male 46 years, Metangula - Mangwiro Community

Through Farm Field School (FFS) sessions I have learned the importance of keeping our soil covered. One way to do this is through green manure cover crop, like Mucuna beans which not only cover soil but also increase nutrients in the soil.

In the past we used to produce Mucuna for food, not as ground cover. The planting time was almost the same as maize but we used a bigger space (4 to 5 meters) because we feared the maize being covered. Now with the new technique we know that Mucuna can be used for food and it can also be used for soil cover and restoration; increasing the nutrients in the soil. We have also learned that for better cover we need good spacing (50/50) and planting time.



Counting the harvest



Ruairidh Waddell
Country Consultant
Zambia Team

The end of our programming year is in June/July. It is a time I have come to dread because of the procedural reporting morass that sometimes accompanies. But I also wait with excitement and nervous expectation for program results and the transformative testimony of our partners' work. In some ways it is probably similar to the nervous expectation that many of our farmers have as they await the harvest results from their own crop.

This year has been a really busy one for us all in SAMT. Our El Nino response has taken a great deal of our time and this has sometimes been at the expense of engagement and involvement in our normal programming cycle. This has made the results our partners achieved this year in some ways even more special as it shows the capacity our partners and communities have attained. We have been able to be involved at critical junctures with surge capacity when needed. But by and large the successes this year are all down to them. I have put together this small table to show some of the improvements in income, diversity, yield, and productivity that The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) has made with their agriculture and livelihoods programming over the last two years. It is a quite remarkable step forward given the challenging climatic circumstances faced by farmers this year and is a testament to both the hard work of CCAP but also of the farmers and the clear adoption of sustainable farming techniques.

It is often said that growing a crop is the easy part and selling, marketing and, transporting the produce is the real challenge.

	2014-15	2015-16
Maize yield	1134 mt	1587 mt
Sunflower	130 mt	225 mt
Groundnut	168 mt	553 mt
Acres/farmer farmed using CA	1.07	2.04
Hunger months	2.16	2.05
Productivity MT/HA	1.62	1.97
Avg Household Income	\$508	\$1217



CCAP in Lundazi has developed a strong program and this year has placed some focus on marketing. This is one of the critical areas that we as World Renew have been able to develop with them. For the last year we have had a strong relationship with the Export Trading Company who has been supplying our food relief commodities for our program in Western Zambia with The United Church of Zambia. We have linked them to 600 farmers in Lundazi. They have been buying commodities from them since June at a slightly above average market rate. It is exciting to think that some of the soya, groundnuts and beans purchased from the farmers we are supporting in Lundazi may be making their way across the country to the drought stricken West where they are being distributed as part of our relief efforts. At the end of August, Export Trading had purchased just over \$400,000 worth of produce from 437 farmers from CCAP's program.

We have also managed to link our partners in marketing too. As part of our community work we have been supporting Matero Congregation of The United Church of Zambia (UCZ). They decided as a congregation to invest in a peanut butter machine that would provide a livelihood and a source of income for a number of widows living in their community. This peanut butter is now being marketed through the church and being bought by congregants across the church but also UCZ institutions like schools and hospitals. The womens group at Matero just purchased 2.5 tonnes of groundnuts from CCAP's farmers in Lundazi to be used for the peanut butter production. It is great to be able to link two of our partners together like this, it feels like we are all pulling together in one direction.

A game for hooligans played by Gentlemen

This is a common phrase that is used to describe the game of Rugby. For those of you that know me will know that I am a huge Rugby fan. Since coming to Malawi a few years ago I have been playing for a local rugby team here in Lilongwe. As part of our outreach program we have been working in the slum areas around Lilongwe building development squads of young men, training with them and teaching them the wonderful game of Rugby. It has been such a blessing to be part of this and to see us grow from one team to six teams in two years. The most exciting part of this is that last Saturday Malawi played Lesotho in its first international Rugby match in 27 years. Five players from these development squads were selected for the Malawi International team. These are young men from very impoverished backgrounds, from poor families with little education and few job prospects. Rugby has instilled in them a sense of discipline and pride. As well as being selected for the provincial team they also now have played for the International team. It has taught them that with dedication and hard work anything can be achieved and they themselves are a walking testimony of that. When talking to them none of them could ever have believed two years ago that they would have been playing rugby let alone representing their country as full internationals. I feel so honored, privileged, and blessed to have been able to be a small part of these great young mens journey and as is often the case, I feel they have taught me so much more than I have taught them.



Being an Old-Fashioned Girl



Faye Yu
Program Consultant
Malawi Team

Transactional sex is a term that most of us are not too familiar with. Sex becomes a transaction when someone receives something in exchange for it. Usually the exchanged item is money, but it can also be material goods such as clothes and soap. Unfortunately, this is common for young girls from poor families. School fees need to be paid, or food is needed in the house—these were some of the reasons listed by the girls I talked to, explaining why they started doing transactional sex. Girls who do not participate in transactional sex are seen as old-fashioned and stupid. The girls often do not see the negative consequences until it is too late.

This month we are conducting a year-end evaluation on our project to reduce transactional sex among girls ages 14 to 21. While I have often visited the project, I haven't had a chance to sit down and really talk to the girls. Conducting a focus group discussion allowed me the opportunity to ask questions and to better understand the environment these girls live in. I learned more about what pushed them into transactional sex, and about the events that led them to leave it. Below, I will share with you some of their stories. I have deliberately changed their names and combined some of their stories because many of them had similar experiences—so while you pray for one of them, you will also be praying for all of them.

Thokosani (which means “thankful”) appears to be in her late teens. She says that before she joined our group, she had been engaged in transactional sex for a while. I asked her how she started. She told me she had an older boyfriend. The boyfriend would give her money, which she would use to buy things she needed. However, when her boyfriend started to give her less money, her friends suggested she find another “boyfriend.” All of her friends were already doing it, so she felt like she could as well. I wondered if they expected their boyfriends to provide for them financially, so I asked if they would keep a boyfriend who didn't give them things. The response was an emphatic “No.” Jessica, the consultant who was helping to translate, told me



that some parents stop providing financially for their daughter when they get a boyfriend because they believe that the boyfriend should provide for the girl financially. In the old days, when a girl had a boyfriend, it was almost like an engagement for marriage, so the man was taking responsibility for the young woman. Nowadays, girls are getting boyfriends earlier and earlier, and there is no expectation of marriage.

Pemphera (which means “prayer”) joined the girls group and learned about the negative consequences of transactional sex. She also learned from her church that this was not a good thing. One of her friends who also engaged in transactional sex got pregnant and had a baby. However, the friend had to raise the baby by herself. The friend was in a more difficult financial situation then because she had to find money for herself and her baby. Pemphera decided that she herself needed to stop. However, guys still gave her extra money, expecting to get something in exchange. She kept the money without giving the guys what they wanted. One night, after keeping the money, she knew she had to leave the marketplace early to escape them. However, the guys who gave her the money were waiting for her. They demanded what they paid for and beat her. She thought they were going to rape her, but, fortunately, people heard what was going on and came to rescue her. Pemphera told me that from that day on, she never accepted anything extra from a guy.

The term “old-fashioned girl” used to hold a negative connotation for

Chikonde (which means “love”). She wanted to be a “modern girl” like the ones she saw at the marketplace. The modern girls wore beautiful clothes, such as miniskirts, and had their hair done. When she looked at herself, she saw a village girl with plain, worn-out clothes, selling donuts at the marketplace. She wanted to be like the other girls. Her friends told her what to do. She didn't see anything negative about it. Last year, the chief in her village told her to attend a group for girls who were engaged in transactional sex. From attending the group, she realized there were many negative consequences. She realized how easy it was to get pregnant and to contract sexually transmitted diseases. She learned about HIV and went to get tested. This was something no one ever talked about. She met other girls like herself who were in the same situation. She realized that being an “old-fashioned” girl was not bad but in fact was a good thing. Now she and her friends in the group sing about how good it is to be an “old-fashioned girl.”

These are some of the stories the girls shared with me. Many of the girls have stopped engaging in transactional sex. But it is harder and harder to make enough money to feed themselves and their families. Most of these girls are the primary breadwinners for their families. Currently we are trying to apply for another grant that will support our work with girls who are engaged in transactional sex. Will you please pray for this process?