SCOPE Malawi Newsletter

April 2021

Welcome!

This is our first quarterly newsletter in 2021. The beginning of 2021 was highly influenced by the second wave of Covid and the closure of schools for almost 1,5 months. Malawi was hit hard and in order to keep our team and partners safe, we started to work from home wherever possible. But just like last year, that didn't stop us from pushing our projects forward. We would like to use this newsletter to proudly introduce to you our new project called **„Eco-Schools for Eco-Communities: Our Response to the Climate Crisis."** In addition to the regular project updates, you will also find a **recipe on how to make soap** at the end of this Newsletter .

Eco-Schools for Eco-Communities: Our Response to the Climate Crisis

Malawi has not only been affected by hunger and deforestation but also by climate change extremes, such as cyclone Idai in 2019. The Eco-Schools for Eco-Communities project funded by GIZ aims to increase the climate resilience and food security in five school communities located in Southern Malawi, in Chikwawa and Thyolo districts, some of the most affected areas by cyclone Idai, seasonal flooding, dry spells and hunger. In Chikwawa, the maize crop dries out every year due to long dry spells (Picture 1) leading to hunger. For most families, illegal uncontrolled charcoal burning (Picture 2) is the only means to cope. The five schools will receive training workshops in agroecological farming, water conservation methods and in the construction and use of fuel -efficient rocket stoves, to support the transition of these schools to so-called Eco-Schools. **An Eco-school provides healthy environments that are designed to meet the ecological, cultural, educational, nutritional, social and other basic needs of the learners, teachers and their families.** The idea is to support a child's development in a sustainable home and school environment. For more wholesome results we target not only the schools but also the surrounding communities to transition into eco-communities. The overall aim is to guarantee food security . To implement the project we are working together with our partners MAWO and Perm-A-Outreach. Find out how we conducted our baseline survey on the next page.

Picture 1: Panganani Village , Changoima, Chikwawa Maize as the main crop is being affected by drought and heat. This leads to poor harvests, and forces farmers to search for other modes of income

Picture 2: Charcoal production is the solution for many farmers, not knowing that cutting the trees leads to further droughts, and soil erosion.

Interact, exchange and participate - Our baseline study

When we headed to Chikwawa and Thyolo, we wanted more than simply collect data. **We wanted to understand the challenges our five partner communities and schools are facing and what vision they have for their communities.** This would help us to establish which areas we can support them over the next few years.

The process was conducted using community and school mapping tools. **In total we worked with four different mapping tools.** The mapping tools made sure that everyone was involved in the data collection process.

1)The household mapping tool
Is used to create a household map with an average of 80 households. Each household is then mapped using the different demographic or agroecological characteristic, for example, whether they grow fruit trees or make organic compost.

2)The dietary diversity tool
This exercise is designed to find out whether or not a community eats the necessary variety of all 6 food groups (as recommended by FAO). Most communities lack a daily intake of fruits, fat and meat

3)The food crop diversity wheel
This tool helps us to find out what varieties of crops are being grown in the community, who plants what (gender specific) and how much space is used for it. It also helps us to see varieties that have been lost over the years.

4)The school mapping tool
Similar to the household mapping this tool is designed to map criteria regarding food security and a healthy school environment.

Way forward: We will be working with these five schools and communities on agroecology, growing more climate resilient varieties, energy saving stoves and restoration of natural resources.

Picture 3: Household mapping in progress at Panganani Village Chikwawa

Picture 4: A teacher at Chisawani Primary School, Thyolo presenting the finalized school map to the community.

Picture 5: A food crop diversity wheel is coming to life, Chintebe Village

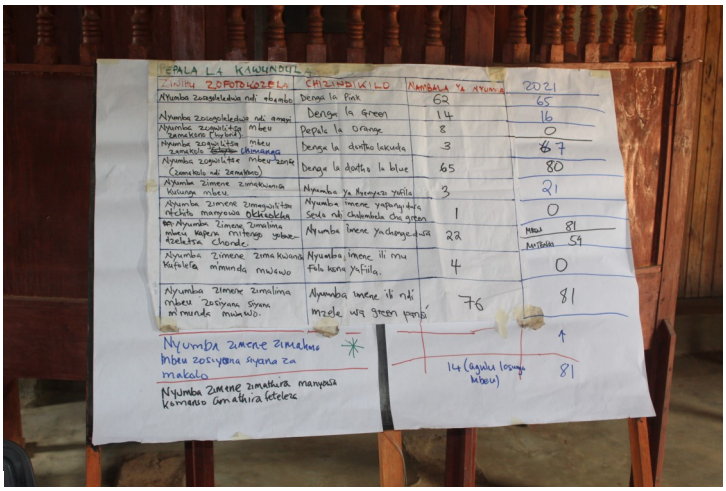
Picture 6: Chitungwani Village, Chikwawa
One of the teachers presenting the dietary diversity wheel, after developing it together with the community.

The Seed and Knowledge Initiative

Part 1: Community mapping at Chitsime - Review meeting

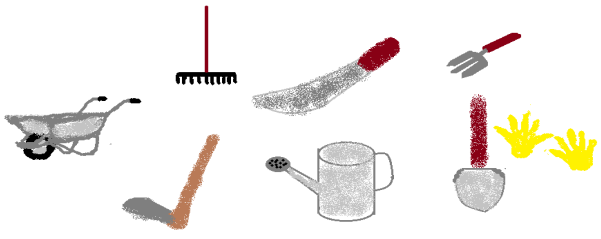
When we started working with the Landirani Trust's Chitsime Community T/A Mbangombe in 2019 the community did an analysis on seed diversity, agroecology practices being used and dietary diversity in the village. At the beginning of 2021 we thought it would be interesting to review whether the community had made any changes. It was noted that there has been a significant increase in the agroecology practices and seed diversity in the community. For example, in 2019, there were only 3 seed savers compared to 21 this year. In 2019 there were 22 households that grew soil fertility trees compared to 59 this year. In terms of seed diversity, new varieties that were lost have been reintroduced such as sorghum, yam, and kabinde maize(the purple variety). The community has not yet recorded changes in diet however, and mentioned that they have grown a lot more this year but since they haven't harvested completely may record changes in diet next year.

Picture 8: The first sorghum has been harvested, to enrich the diet.



Picture 9: Improvements since the start of the project are clearly visible as numbers don't lie.

Part 2: Distribution of tools and seedlings



Each Household received a hoe, a shovel, a watering can, and a panga knife. Regarding the schools they also received what the households received plus wheelbarrows, hand forks, rakes and gloves.

In time for the rainy season, our communities and schools received fruit trees, such as bananas, mangoes, pawpaws, guavas and avocado pears. Aprt from fruit trees, we also distributed other seedlings Other seedlings like agroforestry trees such as hardwoods (M'bawa (khaya nyasica) and Mtangatanga (albizia lebeck). Last but not least we handed out leguminous such as Msambafumu *(alfezelia quanzesis)* , Mnthethe and Mkungu.

Strengthening Resilient School Communities Project (SRSC)

Part 1: Construction

Picture 10: One of our calabashes at Tsokamkanasi school

The SRSC project used the first quarter of 2020 to construct rainwater harvesting structures in 16 of our partner schools, with 4 underground tanks. These ferrocement calabashes, made from cement, iron mesh and wire are a more durable option compared to plastic tanks. The calabashes will be harvesting water from the school roofs. The **construction of calabashes, hand-washing stations and underground tanks** was made in partnership with Rain Water Harvesting Association of Malawi.

The first picture is showing one of our rainwater harvesting calabashes. **Each calabash has a storage capacity of 10,000 liters. The underground tank has a capacity of 56.000 liters** and should support vulnerable schools throughout the dry season. It wasn't easy to chose which schools should benefit, but together with our partners we managed to come up with a list of schools facing the biggest water challenges.

Did you know?

When we receive 1mm of rain and it falls on 1square metre of roof/land we get one litre of water? 1mm x1m²=1litre. Malawi gets annual average rainfall of around 800mm per year. If that rain falls on an average classroom of say 100 square metres, then 80000 litres of rain can be harvested in one season. This amounts to 8 of these calabashes per classroom .

Picture 11: Three out of 80 hand-washing stations. The grey water will be directed towards green areas of the school, to be used for watering.

Picture 12: An underground water tank under construction. The underground tanks are currently not yet finished. Watch out for our next Newsletter for an update.

Part 2: Distribution of seedlings

To make the most use out of this rainy season **we wanted our partner schools to plant during the rainy season**. In total a number of around **4200 fruit trees were locally bought. Those include Mango seedlings, Papaya, Banana, Avocado and Tangerine seedlings.**

How to make your own soap from wastes

Believe it or not, but you can make your own soap using only three ingredients. All you need is **Water, Ash** and **Oil** (food grade oil). The ash should ideally be made from groundnut leaves and banana leaves as those have a high concentration of Potash. If you can't find banana or groundnut leaves, you can also use ash from any kind of wood. For the process, we recommend working with plastic, clay or wood utensils to avoid corroding.

You will need

a 20 litre bucket,

a stick or large wooden spoon,

a clay pot,

Soap making step by step

1st step: Put ash into your bucket until its 2/3 full and fill up the rest with water. For six days , make sure you stir the mixture at least once a day.

2nd step: On the 7th day, do not stir the mixture but sieve the mixture with a clean cloth. You will need the filtrate/ leftover water, also called Lye, for the soap making

3rd step: Boil the lye until you have about 1 cup. At this stage if you drop an egg or irish potato into the mixture it should float. If the egg or potato do not float, then the concentration of potassium in the ash was too low and the Lye can therefore not be used for soap making. Don't give up and try again with a different kind of ash.

4th step: You will now need your oil. For the final step, mix your Lye with oil 1:1 on low heat and make sure you steer the mixture continuously. Keep steering until you get a thick porridge. At this stage, drawing a pattern on the porridge mixture should leave a 'trace'. This means your Lye and oil have blended in completely and the mixture keeps the trace of your stirring like a pattern on the surface.

5th step: You can now put your soap in a mould. After one day, you can cut the now hardened soap mixture into sized pieces. Keep them in a dark environment for another 4 weeks before using the final soap.

To make your own soap you will need only 3 ingredients:

1) *Water*
2) *Ash*
3) *Oil*

The final product , soap made out of ash, water

An example of a mould. The mould is used to store the soap in its right form while waiting for it to dry.

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Feed The Future
Grow A Garden

SCOPE Malawi works with schools to engage and educate the youth in sustainable development initiatives. We focus on Agroecology, Natural Resources Management, Environmental Education, Sustainable Agriculture, Climate Change Adaptation, Mitigation, School Health and Nutrition.

Together with our partner network we work closely together with schools and colleges to promote permaculture. We want to design healthy environments that meet the educational, nutritional and other basic needs of the students, teachers and partners/farmers.

"Give me food and I'll eat for a day, teach me how to grow my own food and I'll eat for a lifetime." Chinese saying

Our condolences

Mr Eliud Ngunjiri was the current Chairperson for ReSCOPE and one of the founding Board members. He was the Chairperson for SCOPE Kenya. He was a pillar of strength and support to the entire ReSCOPE family.

Farewell message from the SCOPE Malawi team

I first met Eliud Ngunjiri in 2009 at the International Permaculture Convergence in Malawi. There were so many people at the convergence and it would have been easy to 'meet' him and forget him in the sea of faces. But that wasn't Eliud. He made sure you really 'met' him. His laughter, passion and humility made him a friend to people of all ages. We called him Mukuru, our elder. He was a simple man, and on his trips to Malawi didn't want fancy food, fancy accommodation, just simple gifts for his wife Tabitha. As a young person touched by Eliud, I mourn the loss of a great humble teacher, mentor, father and friend.

We only pray that we keep your legacy alive.

Chifundo (SCOPE Malawi)

Death and Funeral Announcement

Eliud Kihoro Ngunjiri
Sunrise: 3/3/1953 - Sunset: 9/3/2021

It is with humble acceptance of God's will that we announce the promotion to glory of Eliud Kihoro Ngunjiri on 9th March 2021 at the Kenyatta University Teaching, Referral & Research Hospital, after a short illness bravery borne. He was the founder and Executive Director of RODI Kenya. He was the founding chairman of the SACDEP Board of Trustees till his demise.

Son of the late Ngunjiri wa Wakaritu and the late Nyambura Ngunjiri of Ol-Rongai, Nakuru County. Son in law of late Peter Tene Gachiengu and Serah Watiri of Matumaini, Molo. Loving and devoted husband of Tabitha Nyakio, He raised three awesome sons, Ngunjiri Kihoro (PELUM-K), Peter Tene Kihoro (Business man) and Dennis Kihoro (RODI Kenya).

Brother of the late John Mwangi Ngunjiri, Geoffrey Gathuma Ngunjiri and Erastus Maina Ngunjiri. Brother in law to the late Veronicah Njeri, Ruth Afandi, Zipporah Kaumeuru.

Grandfather of Lawrence Augustine Ngunjiri Kihoro, Adrian Peter Tene Ngunjiri and Nathan Ndiri. Cousin, uncle and mentor to many.