

**ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF SAFER AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES, LABOUR  
SAVING TECHNOLOGIES AND OTHER RELATED PRACTICES ON CHILD LABOUR: A CASE  
OF FAO-FICA PROJECT,  
CICOD PROJECT AND DISTRICT LABOUR OFFICE PROGRAMME IN KASUNGU DISTRICT,  
MALAWI**



ILO/IPEC Country Programme  
Lilongwe, Malawi.



**August 2012**

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>ASWAp</b>	Agricultural Sector Wide Approach
<b>CA</b>	Conservation Agriculture
<b>CAADP</b>	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
<b>CICOD</b>	Circle for Integrated Community Development
<b>CCLC</b>	Community Child Labour Committee
<b>CL</b>	Child Labour
<b>DCLC</b>	District Child Labour Committee
<b>DLO</b>	District Labour Office
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>FICA</b>	Flanders International Cooperation Agency
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GoM</b>	Government of Malawi
<b>IGA</b>	Income Generating Activities
<b>IHHS</b>	Integrated Household Survey
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IPEC</b>	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
<b>JFFLS</b>	Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools
<b>MCLS</b>	Malawi Child Labour Survey
<b>MGDS</b>	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
<b>MoAFS</b>	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
<b>MoL</b>	Ministry of Labour
<b>MPLC</b>	Multi-Purpose Learning Centre
<b>NAP</b>	National Action Plan
<b>NEPAD</b>	New Partnership for African Development
<b>NFE</b>	Non Formal Education
<b>NGO</b>	Non Government Organization
<b>T/A</b>	Traditional Authority
<b>TANARD</b>	Target National Relief and Development
<b>USD</b>	United States Dollar

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The rapid field assessment on safer agricultural practices, labour saving technologies and other related practices that are being promoted in Kasungu district, Malawi was undertaken under the support of IPEC/ILO Malawi. I therefore, would like to register my unconditional appreciation for the support rendered by project staff of the various projects that were visited during the entire period of the assessment. Specially, I am very grateful to Mr. Wells Kumwenda, FAO-FICA Project Manager for his enriching contributions in this write up, Mr. Soko Chitaya and Mr. Benjamin Mtika, FAO-FICA District Project Officers for making my field visits possible and also providing me with relevant data about FAO-FICA project. Their guidance during report writing was more constructive and editorial and any error and /or omission that might be in this paper remain my own.

Many thanks should also go to Mr. Lameck Phiri, CICOD Project Officer and Mr. Mutani Mhone, Assistant Kasungu District Labour Officer for making arrangements for my visits to their project impact areas so that I could interact with beneficiaries and community child labour committees. Most importantly, I thank the communities and beneficiaries for allowing me interact with them so that I could get first hand information about the degree of impact on child labour by the safer agricultural practices, labour saving technologies and other related practices being promoted in their areas.

## ABSTRACT

*The Government of Malawi (GoM) through the Ministry of Labour (MoL) and Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MoAFS) in collaboration with other stakeholders are preparing to hold a National Conference on Child Labour Elimination in Agriculture from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> September 2012. The objective of the conference is to provide a forum for stakeholders to show case the outcomes of various initiatives that have been promoted so far in an effort to address child labour in Agriculture. The conference will also initiate debate for participants in which a road map for effective child labour elimination in agriculture through collaboration will be discussed and agreed upon.*

*As part of the preparation, ILO/IPEC carried out a rapid assessment on the impact of safer agricultural practices, labour saving technologies and other related practices that are being promoted by FAO-FICA Project Unit, CICOD Project Office and District Child Labour Office in Kasungu district. The objective of the assessment was to quantify and document the impact of such interventions so that they can be showcased during the national conference. Primary source of information through focus group discussion with communities was employed. To beef up the primary data, secondary data source was also used through review of project documents and other pertinent reports of previous research studies on child labour.*

*Malawi being one of the countries in Sub Saharan Africa with highest rates of child labour, agricultural sector alone constitutes about 53.5 percent in Agricultural sector. The alarming rate of child labour is mainly caused by supply side and demand side factors. Paradoxically, agriculture is the economic bastion of the Malawi as it contributes approximately 36 percent of GDP and provides about 90 percent of the much needed foreign exchange earnings.*

*It is for this reason that concerted effort needs to be undertaken by stakeholders to ensure that agricultural sector continues to spin the country's economic development without compromising the education, physical, mental, emotional and psychological development of children. In view of this, the Government of Malawi together with the private sector and social partners are relentlessly implementing strategies that are aimed at sustainable elimination of child labour. This was evidenced during the field visit when interventions being implemented by the above mentioned organizations are significantly contributing towards child labour elimination by*

*addressing its underlying causes. For instance, in areas where the projects are operating enrolment of children in surrounding schools has increased. Also through sensitization campaigns communities have been able to acquire some knowledge about forms of child labour, where it is commonly found and how it can negatively affect children.*

*However there are a number of challenges which hinder the projects from effectively eliminating child labour in the impact areas. Notably but to mention a few, are limited resources by implementing agencies to adequately support more beneficiaries, limited coverage of community sensitizations especially in non project impact areas and limited school infrastructure and materials in surrounding schools to cater for withdrawn and reintegrated children. It is against this background that collaboration among interested organizations and active involvement of the grass roots including chiefs is a necessary condition for comprehensive child labour elimination in Malawi.*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Government of Malawi (GoM) through the Ministry of Labour (MoL) and Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MoAFS) in collaboration with various stakeholders are in the process of preparing to hold a National Conference on Child Labour Elimination in Agriculture from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> September 2012. The objective of the conference is to provide a forum for stakeholders to show case the outcomes of various initiatives that have been promoted so far in effort to address child labour in Agriculture. The conference will also draw participants from government and other stakeholders such as private companies and social partners to a debate in which opportunities for collaboration in support of the National Action Plan (NAP) on Child Labour can be identified.

As part of the preparation, International Labour Organization (ILO) carried out a rapid field assessment on some of the interventions that are being implemented in Kasungu District by FAO-FICA Project Unit, Circle Integrated Community Development (CICOD), and Kasungu District Labour Office. The objective was to analyse and quantify the impact of such interventions on child labour. The findings of the rapid assessment complement information from previous studies. Interventions that are being promoted by these organizations include safer agricultural practices, labour saving technologies, basic education for withdrawn children and capacity building through vocational skills trainings.

This report is therefore designed in such a way that it presents a synopsis of socio-economic context of agriculture in Malawi, overview background of child labour in Malawi, findings of the field assessment, conclusion, recommendations and references.

## **2.0 CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND**

This section highlights the contribution of agricultural sector to the country's economic growth and also how it is linked to child labour in Malawi. The section further explains the magnitude, main causes and forms of child labour.

### **2.1 Socio-Economic Context of Agricultural Sector**

Agriculture is the mainstay of Malawi's economy, accounting for about 36 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP); 90 percent of foreign exchange earnings of which about 65 percent comes from tobacco, 11 percent from sugar and 10 percent from tea. The sector also employs

approximately 87 percent of the total labour force and supplies more than 60 percent of the manufacturing sector's raw materials (GoM, ASWAp, 2010). Due to the stagnating growth of the manufacturing, the agricultural sector will continue to shoulder the burden of providing livelihood for a large proportion of Malawi's growing population which is at approximately at 13 million (IHHS, 2010).

The agricultural sector in Malawi is characterized by a dual farming system consisting of commercial estate sector and a highly traditional based subsistence sector. This came about when the government decided to shift its focus from small scale to large scale farming a few years after independence as a way of accelerating development through rapid growth in this sector that was expected to trickle down to other sectors of the economy (GoM, ASWAp, 2010). In a bid to ensure availability of labour and reduce labour costs in the estate farming which are mainly used for production of tobacco, tea and sugarcane, the tenancy labour system was extensively used. In mid 1990's the government through the structural adjustment programme also liberalized the growing of barley tobacco by smallholder farmers which was previously restricted to commercial farmers by repealing the crops act. This increased the production of barley tobacco by smallholder farmers (Mkwambisi et.,al, 2008).

## **2.2 Child Labour in Malawi**

Child labour constitutes one of the major development problems in Malawi. It is widespread in the agricultural sector and is rapidly spreading to the other sectors of the economy. Currently, many children are employed in commercial farms (tobacco, sugar and tea estates), smallholder farms, domestic service, informal sector and some children mainly girls are involved in commercial sex. However, child trafficking for labour exploitation and use of children for illicit activities such as drug selling and burglary are some of the emerging issues that need immediate attention by government as well as other stakeholders (Mkwambisi etal, 2008). According to the 2002 Malawi Child Labour Survey (MCLS), at least 37 percent of the children aged between 5 and 17 were involved in various forms of child labour. The survey further revealed that child labour in Malawi is more pronounced in agriculture, forestry, hunting and fishing representing about 53.5 percent, followed by community, social and personal service at 42.1 percent. Wholesale, retail trade, restaurants and hotels employed about 3.9 percent of the child workers, while mining and quarrying, construction and manufacturing employed 0.5 percent. These results

were confirmed by the 2004 Malawi Demographic and Health Survey. Nevertheless, the 2006 Malawi Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey found that child labour prevalence of children in the 5-14 age group had declined from 37 percent to 29 percent. These contrasting results call for a comprehensive survey on child labour which can validate the results.

In view of the alarming rate of child labour in Malawi, the Government has made significant commitment towards elimination of child labour by ratifying the ILO Conventions on child labour (*the 1999 convention No. 182 on Worst Forms of Child Labour and the 1973 convention No. 138 on Minimum Age of Children*) as well as drafting the Child Labour Policy and Hazardous work list. In further support of the implementation of the Child Labour Policy, the Government of Malawi has also developed a 2010-2016 Child Labour National Action Plan in order to translate the policy pronouncements into concrete programmes and activities and to ensure coordination of the various institutions and their programmes.

The 2010 -2016 Malawi Child Labour National Action Plan and other related research studies identify both supply side and demand side factors as the underlying causes of child labour in Malawi. The following are the most significant factors which influence child labour:

### **2.2.1 Supply side factors**

The following are the supply side factors that cause child labour in Malawi:

#### ***Persistent High Poverty Levels and hunger at Household Level***

Poverty in the form of lack of basic income and inadequate food for household members is a significant cause of child labour. Extreme poverty at household levels means that children are forced to engage in more harmful and risky forms of child labour than would otherwise be the case, and that their families encourage such work (2010-2016 NAP).

#### ***Poor Education System***

The two core ILO Conventions on child labour both identify the importance of education in tackling child labour. However, the education system in Malawi, just like in most of the Sub-Saharan-African countries, is faced with many constraints. A report by South African Institute of International Affairs released in December, 2004, revealed that, the education system in most African countries is characterized by poor learning environment. Most primary schools

especially those in rural areas lack resources such as good and adequate class rooms, textbooks, desks, chalkboards, and separate toilets for boys and girls. Consequently, children especially girls feel discouraged and drop out of school.

### ***Household Size***

Households with large families and female headed households are more likely to struggle to meet their daily needs than small and male headed households. As a result, children from such large households are likely to be engaged in child labour in order to supplement family income (Phiri, 2007). However, the 2002 Malawi Child Labour Survey revealed mixed results regarding the effects of household size on child labour. The survey found out that in some households large number family members resulted in child labour whilst in other households the number of family members had no effect on child labour.

### ***HIV AND AIDS***

With an HIV national prevalence of 12 percent, Malawi is one of the countries in the world which has been most affected by HIV/AIDS. Since the epidemic mostly affects economically productive people aged 19 to 55 it means that deaths of these people leave behind orphans and the elderly who cannot support themselves. As such HIV/AIDS has a direct impact on children's participation in the workforce since they are compelled to work even in hazardous work in order to compensate for changes in household earnings or labour supply. Also, households experiencing a member's prolonged periods of illness with AIDS and related conditions and eventual death, suffer drastic cuts in income, severe strains on cash flow, and likely loss of assets. To make up for these economic losses, children may be withdrawn from school and/or told to work. Or, children may seek work or engage in commercial sex in order to meet their basic needs or to acquire consumer goods (2010-2016, NAP).

### ***Cultural and Traditional Beliefs and Practices***

Cultural and traditional beliefs play a significant role in influencing child labour. In many societies in the country a boy child is preferred to a girl child and hence is given preference in accessing education and favoured when it comes to distribution of chores at the household level. Such tendency has made more girls than boys drop out of school. Furthermore, some societies believe that girls who reach puberty should not be in school but enter into marriages as a result

these girls perform roles that are supposed to be performed by elderly people. This eventually, affects their mental, physical, emotional and psychological growth. Some cultural practices such as polygamy increase the risk of contracting HIV by parents, which in turn increases the vulnerability of children to child labour once parents who were supporting them die. (NAP, 2010-2016).

### ***Demand for material things.***

Parents or the children themselves would like to possess some household materials such as new clothes, bicycles, cell phones or radios hence they release their children to work and get money thereby preventing their children from attending school.

### ***Peer pressure***

Children are forced by pressure from their friends who are working to join them and earn money or acquire material things.

### ***Hunger***

Most districts or places where the parents supply children experience hunger for an extended period of the year. As such it has become a tendency for the parents to release some of the children in the family to go and work for their employers in order to get income for buying extra food. At the same time the tendency is also a means of reducing the number of individuals in that family so the little food reserves they have can last longer.

### ***Asymmetry of Information about Child Labour***

Most people especially in the rural communities have limited or do not understand the difference between child labour and child work as such they engage children in work which is not of their age e.g driving oxcarts. Some parents let their children work for long hours or carry heavy loads which consequently prevents them from concentrating in their education as well as impedes the development of body. There is need therefore to sensitize communities so that they are able to distinguish the difference between child labour and child (MCLS, 2002).

## **2.2.2 Demand side factors**

Children are cheap labour, particularly in the agriculture sector where production of some crops is very labour intensive; they are less able to negotiate for good salaries; they are easier to

control than adults and are honest, respectful and trustworthy. Some spouses prefer employing girls as opposed to adult house maids because they believe that girls cannot grab their husbands. Also perceived social responsibility where employers feel socially obliged to offer income earning opportunities to poor families, including children may influence child labour (2010-2016 NAP).

### **3.0 TYPES OF PROJECTS BEING IMPLEMENTED IN KASUNGU**

The section below discusses the findings of the rapid assessment on the various agricultural practices and labour saving technologies that are being implemented in Kasungu district and are directly or indirectly helping eliminate child labour.

#### **3.1 FAO-FICA PROJECT**

##### **3.1.2 Background of the Project**

In 2008, FAO in collaboration with Ministry of Agriculture started implementing a livelihoods project called *“Improving Food Security and Nutrition Policies and Programme Outreach* in Kasungu and Mzimba districts to mitigate 2005/2006 hunger situation which was as a result of persistent drought. Kasungu and Mzimba were selected for the project because they were some of the most affected districts in Malawi. The Government of Malawi called on FAO to implement the project with financial support from the Government of Flanders as commitment towards achieving pillar three of the NEPAD Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) which it ratified in 2003 through the Maputo Declaration. CAADP pillar three emphasises on increasing Food Supply and Reducing Hunger by focusing on investments that will respond to the growing frequency and severity of food emergency crises, in addition to focusing on long-term development interventions (NEPAD, 2005). The project was also aligned to the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy’s (MGDS) aspiration of achieving agricultural led sustainable economic growth and development through increased food production and export base (ASWAp,2010).

Due to successful implementation of the project during the first phase, the project is currently in its second phase and much of the discussion in this report will base on micro projects (interventions) implemented in first phase and those that are currently being implemented in Kasungu district and to a less extent in Mzimba district.

Given the fact that some of the root causes of child labour are poverty and household food insecurity, poverty reduction and attainment of household food security significantly reduce all worst forms of child labour. Through the project a number of livelihoods interventions have been implemented in both targeted districts aimed at improving food and nutrition security as well as income levels of target beneficiaries. The following are some of the interventions implemented in Kasungu and Mzimba districts:

### **3.1.2 Small Scale Irrigation**

The effects of climate change are greatly affecting farmers in Malawi. The erratic rainfall patterns and rising temperatures have led to significant decline in agricultural production among smallholder farmers. As such, overreliance on rain fed agriculture by farmers continues to expose them to food and nutrition insecurity. It is for this reason that farmers need to cushion themselves from natural shocks through intensification of agricultural production. In view of this, the FAO-FICA project is promoting small-scale irrigation by supporting farmer groups with treadle pumps, motorised pumps, materials for construction irrigation canals and start up inputs such as fertilizer and seed. This approach has helped farmers increase winter production of maize (staple food) and vegetables thereby improve food stocks and income to households which otherwise would sell its labour for food and in worst situations engage children in selling labour for food as coping mechanism to food shortage. Some of the vegetables that are being grown under irrigation include; tomatoes, green leafy vegetables, and onions.

The 2009 baseline survey results show that before the project, winter agricultural production of the mentioned crops was very low compared to the current situation. This was because farmers were using water canes to irrigate their crops and also they had no access to agricultural inputs such as inorganic fertiliser. In addition to improving household food security and income, provision of treadle pumps and motorised pumps to famers has significantly reduced time spent in irrigating crops. Currently, farmers are able to irrigate large area of land compared to the period when they were using water canes.



*A beautiful maize stand for Yorodani Irrigation club in Mpeni village T/A Kaomba courtesy of FAO-FICA project. Before the project farmers could irrigate this area (0.03 ha) for six hours using water canes but now with motorised pump it takes them only one and half hours.*

Further to improving food security at household level, some farmers are able to get some incomes from sales of green maize which is used to meet other household requirements. **Mrs Veso Mwale** is a member of *Katayamabvi irrigation club* who has benefited from the project. During the 2010/2011 winter season, she managed to get **K45, 000 (approx. USD 161)** from sales of green maize cultivated on 0.17ha. She used part of the money to pay school fees for her children.

### **Challenges**

- Provision of irrigation equipment only may not be enough to these vulnerable households therefore the project included start up inputs which may be costly.
- Farmers are not able at the beginning of the program to meet the cost of maintenance and fuel for the motorized pumps calling for the need for initial support.

### **3.1.3 Conservation Agriculture**

Conservation Agriculture (CA) reduces labour constraints and enables even those who are very weak or short of time to have increased crop yields. Conservation agriculture also leads to reduced use of child labour. Lander (2007) defined conservation agriculture as a concept for resource-saving agricultural crop production that strives to achieve acceptable profits together

with high and sustained crop production levels while concurrently conserving the environment. CA is based on enhancing natural biological processes above and below the ground. Interventions such as mechanical soil tillage are reduced to absolute minimum and external inputs such as agrochemicals and nutrients of mineral or organic origin are applied at an optimum level and in a way and quantity that does not interfere with, or disrupt the biological processes.

Considering the fact that most cultivatable land in the impact areas has poor soils, the project is promoting adoption of conservation agriculture by its beneficiaries in order to increase agricultural production and reduce labour demand. Currently, 337 ha and 418 ha of land in Kasungu and Mzimba respectively is under CA and some participating farmers have already had their maize yields increased within a range of 2.5 to 4.0 tons per hectare compared to less than 1 tonne per hectare before the project (Phiri, 2010). Apart from increasing maize production, CA has allowed farmers to save labour and time spent in carrying out farming activities. Consequently, farmers have more time to engage in other productive activities such as raising

livestock and off-farm employment.



### ***A piece of land belonging to one of the beneficiaries under Conservation Agriculture***

One interviewed farmer from group village Chingati, T/A Kaomba indicated that CA has helped him increase maize production. Before adoption of CA he used to get 20 bags of 50 kg but after participating in the project, he is able to harvest maize in the range of 50-70 bags of 50kg from

the same piece of land. CA has also allowed him use his spare time do business of selling groceries at the near market something which he could hardly do before practising CA.

Since CA helps improve livelihoods of farmers through labour saving, increased food security and income levels children are saved from bondage of child labour hence improve their welfare.

Some notable impacts of CA to child labour in the project areas include:

- ✓ Demand for labour is reduced hence increased schooling by the children.
- ✓ Reversal of the Rural-Urban migration - youths are longer encouraged to look for employment in the informal sector in order to support their families with food and other basic needs.
- ✓ Increased interaction with other farmers especially through community meetings attendance where they learn about modern agricultural practices.

### ***Challenges with Conservation Agriculture***

The following are some of the key challenges faced in the adoption of CA:

- Leaving crop residues on the land causes conflicts in communities where livestock traditionally graze crop residue.
- Crop residue burning used as ground cover slows down the wide adoption of whole technology.
- CA requires a major shift in mindset by farmers from practicing traditional conventional methods of farming which are labour intensive to more profitable, sustainable labour saving CA.
- Availability of herbicides in rural areas is problem

### **3.1.4 Livestock Production**

Increased livestock production is important for improved nutrition and income at household levels. Communities in most parts of the country highly value livestock because they can easily be sold to provide the much needed cash to avert hunger during the lean period. In addition, livestock products such as milk can be an important source of proteins and vitamins for household members especially children thereby improving their nutritional status. If properly integrated in the farming system, livestock can provide organic manure for crop production hence reduces farmers' expenditure on inorganic fertilizers (Phiri et.al, 2010).

FAO-FICA project rolled out a pass on livestock program in order to reduce poverty and malnutrition levels among its beneficiaries. The pass on program is a community based regulated arrangement where the first recipient of livestock passes on the first female animal to a new recipient. Types of livestock under the pass on program include Goats (local female from Malawi and boar bucks imported from South Africa), dairy cows, sheep, poultry and pigs. According to 2009 baseline survey findings, before the project, livestock production in the project area was very low as reflected by low ownership rates, use of local breeds, poor feeding systems, subsistence level management systems resulting in slow growth rates, small body size of livestock, and low productivity in terms of meat and milk. Consequently, there were minimal economic and nutritional benefits realised by farmers.

Children's involvement in the livestock sector ranges from light work of helping out with household chores to situations of worst forms of child labor. Working in the livestock sector can sometimes take the form of bonded child labour or child trafficking for (forced) herding activities. Such incidences are commonly found in Kasungu and Mzimba district where children from other districts especially in central region of Malawi are employed to look after their employers' herds of cattle. This conduct denies children their rights to basic education and good health so that they can be productive citizens in future (FAO Report, 2010). However, the pass on program is designed in such a way that livestock are raised on zero grazing i.e. where livestock especially cattle at all times are not allowed to be grazed in the pasture land but rather be kept under stall feeding. This has significantly reduced the need for farmers to engage children in livestock herding.

The concept of integrated farming system has further allowed farmers to feed livestock with maize stalks and groundnut haulms thereby enabling farmers to cut down on cost of feeds. Due to increased number of livestock in the project area households who have benefited from this initiative are more income and food secure and are able to send their children to school and also provide them with scholastic materials than before. In Mzimba alone, the project distributed 21 dairy cows, 1102 goats and 150 pigs to primary beneficiaries and these farmers respectively have managed to pass on 9 female calves, 245 female goats, and 142 pigs to secondary beneficiaries.



*Mr. Rashid Milanzi on the left and his family from Chapwiya farmers' club is one of the beneficiaries of pass on program. On average, this farmer produces about 10 litres of milk per day and he gets about K48, 000 (USD172) a month from sales of milk. He has used some of the proceeds from milk sales to buy a local cow and 4 pigs.*

#### ***Challenges with Pass on Programme***

- With limited number of government veterinary extension staff the need to train more extension officers from other organizations in livestock management and dairy production techniques important.
- Passing on of large animals such as dairy is slow therefore does not benefit many farmers as quickly as the project wishes.
- Sometimes the pass on program is slow when most of the calves born are male because they cannot be passed on to secondary beneficiaries.

#### **3.1.5 Portable Water and Sanitation**

Most of Malawi's population especially from the rural areas has critical problems in accessing portable clean water for their home use. People are forced to drink dirty water and the result is prevalence of diseases such as diarrhoea and cholera which otherwise could be prevented. Diseases reduce the capacity of the farmers to effectively work on their fields as well as force care givers spend more time nursing the sick than doing farming activities. To address this problem, the FAO-FICA project drilled boreholes in the project area as a source of clean and

safe drinking water. The project drilled 25 boreholes in Kasungu and 12 boreholes in Mzimba district. In Mzimba district the project also maintained a gravity-fed water system which was installed in 1985 by the Government. It is estimated that the number of people that are able to access portable water from the boreholes is around 15,500 individuals. The gravity-fed water system is estimated to serve an approximate additional 15,000 individuals (FAO Report, 2011).

Apart from providing quality water to communities, the initiative has also reduced time spent in fetching water especially for girls who have now the opportunity to go to school instead of helping out with water collection. Changati Village is one of such lucky communities which have benefited a lot from this initiative. Initially, women and girls in this village used to take six hours to walk long distances to draw enough water for domestic use but now they are able to fetch water just within a stone throw distance and they take just an hour to draw enough water for home use. With little time spent in collecting water now, women reported that they are able to do a lot of household chores in a day which was not the case before.



*Women and girls of Changati village have all the reasons to smile after FAO-FICA project rescued them from the plight of water borne diseases and walking long distances to fetch water by drilling a borehole within their community.*

### **3.1.6 Afforestation Programme**

Malawi just like other countries in Sub Saharan Africa is grappling with the effects of climate change. Wanton cutting down of trees for fire wood and construction of buildings has left most

parts of the country almost bare. This is why the Government of Malawi recognizes tree planting day as a way towards restoring the natural environment. Generally, Malawi's economic development and social well-being largely depend on the country's natural resource base and the continuous environmental degradation means that the future generation will be severely hit by climate change effects. Sustainable use and management of natural resources and environment is the only way of mitigating the effects. Environmental degradation is mainly aggravated by number of factors which among others include increasing population pressure on the already limited natural resources, high levels of poverty especially among rural communities, gaps in capacity to manage natural resources and poor governance of local communities (FAO Report, 2011).

In line with the Government effort of ensuring sustainable natural resource management, FAO FICA project introduced afforestation programmes in which beneficiaries are encouraged to establish woodlots within their home stead or around school premises. The project provides beneficiaries with seed for raising seedling and training in nursery management and tree planting. In Kasungu and Mzimba districts, the project has so far distributed in each district 150,000 polythene tubes, 1340 kg of seed of various tree species including fertility enhancing tree species to farmer groups and surrounding schools. It is expected that in the long term these trees will be a source of fire wood and timber for construction. Furthermore, established woodlots will reduce time spent in collecting fire wood thereby allowing children particularly girls attend school. What is worth noting is that traditional chiefs in the project area are playing an active role by encouraging communities to plant more trees in their gardens as well as around their homes.

FAO FICA project is also working through local leaders to encourage beneficiaries to plant more trees. Recognizing the fact that Kasungu is a district where there is high rate of deforestation caused by tobacco production, Traditional Authority Kaomba is one of such local leaders who encourage their subjects to establish woodlots. During 2011/2012 only, **716,831** tree seedlings have been planted in his area. T/A Kaomba underscores the importance of establishing woodlots within his community since apart from providing fire wood for energy, trees can also be a source of income through timber which is highly demanded by tobacco estate farmers. Due to such

economic benefits from woodlots, some of the causes of child labour in his the community will be reduced.



*“Woodlot establishment is a sustainable way towards climate change adaptation and resilience” The picture shows a snap shot of great effort which communities in T/A Kaomba with support from FAO-FICA project have done.*

### ***Challenges with Afforestation Programme***

- Limited number of seedlings to benefit more farmers
- Sometimes, there is late distribution of seedlings within the groups to beneficiaries.
- Livestock and wild fire outbreaks pose a great challenge to farmers who have established woodlots.

### **3.1.7 Decent employment and child labour**

Elimination of child labour and promotion of decent employment for youths are policy issues that are highly correlated and should be addressed together. Promoting decent employment and entrepreneurship as well as life skills for rural children can prevent child labour in agriculture, while reducing child labour can help ensure that children have an opportunity to pursue education and develop skills for better employment in future in either formal or informal sector of the economy. In addition, if children of legal working age are empowered with skills to start up their own businesses or get employed in non hazardous work, the issue of rural –urban migration can be a thing of the past since these youths will be encouraged to stay in the communities and contribute to the development of their communities instead of going to urban

centres in search of employment opportunities leaving behind economically unproductive people.

Cognizant of this fact, the FAO FICA project introduced the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS). JFFLS is a holistic model that aims at empowering pupils with the agricultural, business and life-skills necessary for decent rural employment. It is an evidence based approach capable of demonstrating to parents or guardians and community the value of education and the potential for agriculture to provide sustainable livelihoods. Beneficiaries of the JFFLS are mainly orphans and vulnerable children who do not have a chance of acquiring agricultural skills, enterprise development skills and life skills from their parents or guardians so that they are prepared for their future life. Currently, there are 793 pupils (413 boys and 380 girls) in Kasungu district and 687 pupils (371 boys and 316 girls) in Mzimba participating in JFFLS.

### ***Challenges with Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools***

- Teachers who are not involved in the JFFLS are sometimes jealous of those that are involved because facilitators receive some incentives (allowances during trainings). As a result, non participating teachers try to frustrate the project by discouraging pupils from taking part in JFFLS.
- School calendar is not synchronized with a period of carrying out agricultural activities such that during long holidays pupils are not able to look after the crops grown in their JFFLS demonstration gardens.

### **3.1.8 Income Generation Activities**

The low level of income from farming and/or employment is another main factor contributing to food insecurity and poverty in rural areas. In order to address the issue, FAO FICA project is promoting a number of Income Generating Activities (IGAs) that could help farmers increase household income. In both target districts, farmers are involved in horticultural production, cassava seed multiplication, poultry production such as broilers, fish production and bee keeping. The project has assisted the communities to form groups, provide trainings and start-up inputs in form of loans to start up the business. The income from the businesses has helped most beneficiaries paying school fees for their children, building new houses, purchasing household basic items thereby avoiding the release of the children for early employment.

### *Challenges faced*

- Diseases for livestock such as poultry
- Limited markets that can offer better prices for agricultural commodities produced.

### **3.1.9 Village Revolving Fund**

Pervasive poverty in rural areas is one of the underlying causes of child labour in Malawi; it is also one of the consequences of child labour. Child labour prejudices education and health of a child thereby rendering the child unproductive in future. By preventing and eliminating child labour, the vicious cycle of poverty and child labour can be transformed into a virtuous cycle where rural children can grow up to be healthy and educated citizens thereby productively contributing to the country's socio-economic development. In order to achieve this transformation, beneficiaries with technical support from the FAO FICA project team established village revolving funds. What basically happens is that once farmers are organized into clubs, each member is required to make contribution towards the fund from which he/she can borrow some money to start up business of his/her choice. This approach has been regarded as one of the most effective ways of reducing poverty among rural farming communities. Phiri et al. (2010) reported that revolving fund enables farmers to gradually get organized and work collectively. It is through collective action that farmers can also seek financial assistance from other micro-lending institutions without necessarily having recourse to the project staff.

In Mzimba, 3,975 farmers are participating in the revolving fund initiative and these farmers through their clubs have so far managed to contribute **MK41, 615,762**, equivalent to **USD 14, 8627.72**. Since its inception, a lot of beneficiaries have significantly improved their income levels whilst those that have not been able to reduce their poverty levels at least have enhanced their group dynamics and collective action skills. Farmers that have managed to increase their household income end up being food secure and also be able to send their children to better schools.

### *Challenges being Experienced*

- In case of Kasungu, poor repayment rate attributed by mistrust among farmers
- Embezzlement of funds by group leaders

- The need for financial contribution by members crowd out the poorest of the poor who the project targets

### **3.2 CIRCLE FOR INTEGRATED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

Kasungu as one the districts where the rate of child labour was revealed to be high by the 2002 Malawi Child Labour Baseline Survey Report, IPEC/ILO started supporting Circle for Integrated Community Development (CICOD) to implement a project whose overall goal is to contribute towards elimination of worst forms of child labour through Prevention, Withdrawal, Protection and Rehabilitation. The children who are supported by this project are mainly those that were withdrawn from tobacco estates, vending, livestock herding and domestic services. In order to emphasize its commitment towards child labour elimination the project has designated its impact areas as Child Labour Free Zones. Currently, there are two child labour free zones namely Kasamba and Mayera in the Traditional Authorities Santhe and Kaomba respectively.

For effective child labour elimination, the project uses a number of strategies which among others include community awareness campaigns about child labour, education, vocational skills trainings and promotion of income generating activities among parents or guardians whose children were affected by child labour. The section below explains each strategy in some detail.

#### **3.2.1 Awareness Campaigns on Child Labour**

Since knowledge is power, the project is doing a lot of sensitization campaigns at area development committee level, village development committee levels as well as at community level in order to ensure that targeted communities understand issues of child labour and its consequences. The campaigns mainly focus on sensitizing people on the difference between child labour and child work, worst forms of child labour, causes of child labour, common areas of child labour, and negative effects of child labour on the children as well as on the future development of the country. During the focus group discussion this was proved to be effective way of imparting knowledge to communities because beneficiaries were able to articulate issues about child labour.

Empirically, it is believed that if communities are involved from onset of the project, they develop a sense of responsibility and ownership of that project and thereby minimize dependence on external support. In this respect, the CICOD project has established Community Child Labour

Committees (CCLCs) which help in sensitizing the communities about child labour. Establishment of these committees is also a good exit strategy for CICOD as it will ensure project sustainability once IPEC/ILO pulls out its support. Interestingly, chiefs in the project area are supporting the project by conducting village sensitization meetings. Some chiefs have developed village by-laws that forbid parents from perpetrating any conduct that fosters child labour and if parents are caught doing the contrary they are fined. Currently, the project has managed to prevent a total of 725 children from all forms of child labour.

### **3.2.2 Formal and Non-Formal Education**

Both formal and non-formal basic education remains fundamental to child labour elimination. Increased access to basic quality education reduces the desire of children to drop out of school and eventual indulgence into child labour. The project recognizes provision of non-formal education (NFE) and reintegration to formal schools as basic interventions that help prevent, withdraw children from child labour. The introduction of NFE at Multi Purpose Learning Centres (MPLCs) by the project is intended to provide a transition point for those children that have been withdrawn and have lost school years or have very little schooling in the past and cannot be directly mainstreamed into regular schools. During this transition stage, children are prepared for a formal academic setting so that they can freely cope with this environment and also be able to catch up with their friends. The MPLCs are also used for counselling children who have been socially and emotionally disturbed so that they can be rehabilitated. This approach has proved to be effective in reducing child labour in the project area.

The project is further working hard to prevent children already reintegrated into formal education from dropping out and re-entering into child labour by building capacity of teachers in the schools that are involved in this project. The type of training offered ranges from awareness-raising and sensitization skills on child labour to provision of training materials that contain child labour information. In addition, the project provides mainstreamed children with scholastic materials such as text books, pen and school uniforms.



*Mrs Evelyn Nyirongo, a local artisan is training girls at Santhe MPLC in tailoring. Displayed are school uniforms and other dresses they have just tailored for sale.*

So far NFE arrangement has made significant strides

in increasing enrolment of children in primary schools within the project area. For instance, enrolment at Santhe primary school in T/A Santhe has increased from 1600 to 1800 representing 12.5 percent increase whilst at Kapiri and Chilanga primary schools in T/A Kaomba enrolment has increased from 771 to 1025 and 965 to 1220 pupils representing a percentage increase of approximately 33 and 26 respectively. What is more encouraging is that one of the withdrawn children in Mayera Child Labour Free Zone is pursuing his education at Kamuzu Academy, one of the country's prestigious high schools and 10 others are at various government secondary schools.

### **3.2.3 Vocational Skills Training**

Vocational skills training is another strategy for the project which is aimed at developing entrepreneurship skills of withdrawn children especially those that have lost school age i.e. children of above 15 years of age and cannot be reintegrated into formal education after attending the non formal classes. Since the majority of the withdrawn children are from poor families, removing them from their work without providing a better alternative for income generation would only result in their regression to their former work. Therefore, providing them with education through the NFE classes and enterprise development skills through vocational skills training is the most effective approach for sustainable child labour elimination. Santhe vocational training centre offers a range of competitive training courses that are tailor made suit the existing job market.



*“Vocational skills training is a gate way to self-reliance for the rural youths”. Mr. Samson Phiri is busy drilling his students in carpentry and joinery at Santhe Child Labour Free Zone.*

It is envisaged that this approach prepares the youths to be productive and reliable citizens who can be self dependent in future. Currently, the project is supporting 86 youths (50 boys and 36 girls) to undergo training in areas of tailoring, carpentry and barbing. Plans are underway to introduce vocational skills trainings in other areas such as tinsmithing and brick laying in future. These children are trained by competent local artisans who are recruited by the project in collaboration with the CCLCs and are identified from the same project impact area. Upon completion of the training, graduated students are provided with start up kit.

Some of the students from Mayera Child Labour Free Zone who graduated from vocational skills training have opened their own tailoring shops after receiving start up kit (tailoring machines) from a sister project called Target National Relief and Development (TANARD). TANARD was implemented from 2007 to 2009 under the same IPEC/ILO programme and used same approach being used by CICOD project in eliminating child labour. When asked about the project, the graduated students expressed gratitude for being selected to be part of the few beneficiaries of the project considering the fact that there are many children in Kasungu district who are victims of child labour but do not have the chance to get such kind of support. They further said they are

now able to support themselves and their families with income they get from selling clothes which they sew.



*These two young men are proud graduates of Mayera Vocational Skills Training School. Early this year the project contracted them to make school uniforms for Chilanga primary school pupils at cost of MK30 000 (approx. USD 107)*

### **3.2.4 Income Generating Activities**

Apart from providing support to children, the project is supporting parents or guardians of the withdrawn child with livelihoods interventions so that they are food and income secure. Some of the livelihoods provided include livestock (goats and pigs) and soybeans and groundnuts seed for agricultural production. Due to this support, most families of the affected children are able to support themselves with essential items which in the past could not be accessed. Consequently, these parents or guardians are now not forcing their children engage in child labour to complement family income.

#### ***Challenges faced***

- Due to an increase in number of pupils enrolled, primary schools within the child labour zones face problems of shortage of teachers and limited learning facilities such as desks, class rooms, chalkboards and books.

- Limited funds from the project to support mainstreamed children with scholastic materials (e.g uniforms, text books and pens)
- Limited funds to procure adequate start up kits for youths attending vocational skills trainings.

### **3.3 KASUNGU DISTRICT LABOUR OFFICE PROGRAMME**

Kasungu District Labour Office (DLO) with support from Plan Malawi (NGO) is making tremendous efforts to eliminate child labour in the district. The approach which DLO is using the same as the one being used by CICOD although the only difference is that DLO also enforces labour laws through regular inspection. DLO is using awareness and sensitization campaigns, vocational skills trainings, formal and non formal education, child labour inspections and repatriation of withdrawn children as its key strategies. For effective implementation of the programme, DLO has established a well functioning District Child Labour Committee (DCLC) whose membership comprises of all district level government officers including those from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, non-governmental organizations in the district working on interventions that foster on children welfare. At grass root level, the DCLC collaborates with child labour monitors and Community Child Labour Committees (CCLCs) whose members are democratically elected. These committees are trained and monitored by experts from DLO.

#### **3.3.1 Programme Outputs Achieved**

Currently, the programme has made the following achievements:

- Established 92 CCLCs in 8 Traditional Authorities across the district
- Provided training to 330 children in various vocational skills such as carpentry, tailoring, barbing and tinsmithing.
- Withdrawn 3360 (2000 boys and 1360 girls) children from child labour particularly in the tobacco estates and domestic services
- Repatriated 96 withdrawn children and re-integrated them with their families in their district of origin.
- Prosecuted 73 employers who were found engaging children in child labour through court of law

- Trained 78 CL monitors across the district in identification of forms of child labour, withdrawal of children and administering child labour monitoring tools.
- Over 100 children have been selected to various secondary schools in the country.
- 130 primary teachers including media representatives, magistrates were trained on child labor rights and child labor issues.



*Kawamba Community Child Labour Committee members discussing child labour issues with Kasungu Labour Officer. The committee alone has managed to mainstream 118 withdrawn children to surrounding schools*

### ***Challenges faced***

The programme has faced a number of problems which include but not limited to:

- No effective data collection systems and storage
- Lack of support in terms of scholastic materials and school fees to children who have gone beyond primary school education.
- Lack of means of transport for CCLCs and monitors to help them move when carrying out child labour activities. This is very critical during rainy season.
- Limited funds to procure start up kits for graduated students from vocational skillings training centres

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

It is a known fact that Malawi has one of the highest rates of child labour in Sub Saharan Africa. This is because most of its population depends on own farm agricultural production to meet its demand for food and income. Since most of the farming activities are not highly mechanised compared to other developed countries, a large proportion of work requires manual labour. During peak periods of the farming season parents are forced to engage children in work that is hazardous or not of their age. Coupled with pervasive poverty and hunger, parents deliberately send children to work for other people so that the money received can be used to support the family. Currently, approximately 53.5 percent of child labour in Malawi is found in agriculture particularly in tobacco, tea and sugar estates.

The government together with other stakeholders are relentlessly making efforts to reduce such unacceptable level of child labour through implementation of various interventions and development of regulatory frameworks on child labour. Kasungu district being one of the districts with significant rate of child labour especially in tobacco estates, a number of development initiatives have been rolled out to help out reduce the problem. Most notably, FAO-FICA project, CICOD project and Kasungu DLO programme among others have made significant strides in addressing the root causes of child labour. However, there are a number of challenges that are hindering effective elimination of child labour by these organizations. It is therefore imperative to have concerted effort by stakeholders through joint collaboration in order to comprehensively address the problem in the district.

## **5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of the successes and challenges of the various project interventions that were visited during the assessment, the following key recommendations have been made for consideration by stakeholders:

- There is need for concerted effort among stakeholders to intensify community sensitization campaigns about child labour. This will help communities have a better understanding about child labour issues and be able to identify forms child labour existing in their communities.
- The government and other stakeholders should bring more livelihoods projects that address root causes of child labour in the rural communities.

- There is need to implement programmes that can promote good parenthood in communities through sensitization meetings. Parents or guardians should be reminded of their responsibility of providing support to children as well as teaching them good manners so that they can be reliable citizen in future.
- Chiefs have to be actively involved in any child labour programmes. This will ensure effective implementation as well as sustainability of programmes.
- Other stakeholders should come in to support CCLCs and child labour monitors with reliable means of transport e.g bicycles and structures for meetings.
- Traditional leaders should screen out some of the cultural beliefs that perpetrate child labour in their communities by instituting bylaws that forbids such practices.
- Paramount chiefs and Traditional Authorities should have a forum where issues of child labour can be discussed
- There is need to conduct research that can comprehensively document quantitative economic benefits that is lost both at household level as well as at community level if children are engaged in child labour. By show casing such quantitative results many parents or guardians can be enticed to send their children to school.

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