



Temwa Building Sustainable, Resilient Communities and Farming Futures

December 2022

This report shares the final developments under Temwa's Building Sustainable, Resilient Communities project which ended in August 2022, and the most recent updates from our new agriculture project, Farming Futures, which began in September.

We are pleased to report that significant progress has been made in improving food and income security for families in the area. Our Building Sustainable, Resilient Communities project enabled Temwa's vital assistance to farming families in Nkhata Bay North to continue between 2021-2022, despite the UK government withdrawing aid funding. Our new three-year Farming Futures project which will increase communities' climate resilience and improve stewardship of natural resources.

Project context and aims

Around 90% of households in Nkhata Bay North are smallholder subsistence farmers, with 58% of the population living on just over 50p a day. This extreme poverty means that most families suffer from income and food insecurity. Furthermore, in the wider Nkhata Bay district, over a quarter of forest cover has been lost in the last 20 years alone, which has led to soil erosion, dried up water sources, and lower agricultural productivity. This rapid deforestation, coupled with the impacts of climate change (including increased droughts, flooding, strong winds, and erratic rainfall), is making it difficult for farming communities to make a living to support their families.

Both our community-driven agriculture projects have focused on building communities' climate resilience through sustainable farming, forest-friendly livelihoods, and sustainable use of local natural resources. Temwa's one-year Building Sustainable, Resilient Communities project helped improve food and income security, while our new Farming Futures project focuses on supporting self-organising farmer groups to increase their crop yields using



sustainable farming practices, and diversify their income through livestock exchanges and business development.

Project achievements

We are proud to report that, in the last year, your support has helped build climate resilience of remote, disadvantaged communities through the following project activities and achievements.

Outcome 1: Improved food security for vulnerable households



Livestock rearing has diversified diets and improved agricultural productivity thanks to using manure from livestock as organic fertiliser. Following the drastically increasing price of fertiliser this year, 65% of the targeted farmers adopted organic manure fertiliser, registering a 15% increase in adoption rates compared to the previous year. We are pleased to report that 70% of the targeted farmers have increased their crop production by 10-15%.

Through production of vegetables using manure, farmers have reported that they are meeting daily dietary requirements because of access to vegetables from their

backyard and dimba gardens. For example, Eliza Kamanga and her family of five have fresh tomatoes and vegetables to eat every day which they grow in their garden using the manure from the Tiwonerepo pig group. Eliza sells her excess vegetables to provide extra income to support the family.

The reporting period has seen huge success in the multiplication of livestock, which benefits food security both through increasing use of manure for fertiliser, and by providing surplus livestock for families to eat or sell. For instance, at the Temwanani pig production group in Chikwina, 1 female pig gave birth to 8 piglets (see the case study below for more information on the group's success). There has also been an increase in the number of farmers who have received livestock through Temwa's pass-on scheme. Keness Nkhata, of the Tionelepo Pig group, received one female pig from a breeding centre meaning she now owns four pigs and expects to benefit from increased manure collection for winter cropping.

Temwa's Usisya Demonstration Garden has continued to provide community members with the opportunity to learn climate-smart farming techniques. The garden enables farmers from the surrounding villages to learn new methods to improve their crop yields, and also generate income. In September, for example, the garden generated income from sales of vegetables which has been reinvested to procure 12 tins of maize bran for pigs.



Outcome 2: Increased income from climate-adaptive livelihoods

Having diverse livelihoods and varied income sources ensures communities are more resilient to climate shocks which are becoming increasingly common in northern Malawi. During the reporting period, Temwa worked with 20 farmer groups, exceeding the project target of 16, benefitting an estimated 299 households. The farmer groups specialise in beekeeping, cultivating cash crops (such as legumes,

groundnuts, beans, and bananas), and rearing small livestock, including pigs, rabbits, and goats. Temwa provides tailored support to each group to increase their income and help them grow. Temwa's training has also supported the farmer groups to operate as Village Savings and Loans Groups, which allows them to save and borrow money, thus becoming more financially secure.

Temwa has supported eight farmer groups specifically with income-generating activities, aiming to create self-sustaining households through increased income. Four of the groups are involved in beekeeping, three in crop production, and one in banana production. The farmers have gained skills in financial management, resource mobilisation, record-keeping, and drafting simple business road-maps. For example, the Biliwiri beekeeping group has developed a three-year business plan which includes increasing their number of beehives to 300 by 2025 by constructing 45 beehives each month.

We are pleased to report that we have witnessed an increase in the generation of income amongst these groups during the reporting period. For example, despite a persistent dry season affecting honey production, 13 households participating in beekeeping have earned between MWK 80,000- 320,000 (£64-£255).

In September, Temwa participated in the Nkhata Bay district agriculture fair which was organised by the District Agricultural Coordinating Committee (DAECC). We supported 3 farmer groups, the Zulunkhuni beekeeping group, the Titemwane bean production group and the Chankhola rabbit group, to showcase their products to form new market links and learn from one another. As a result, the Zulunkhuni beekeeping group has now linked with a cooperative which sells branded and certified honey. The linkage has been established for the Zulunkhuni beekeeping group to learn the processes of certification and to supply the cooperative with honey.



Our key lesson learnt from our Building Sustainable, Resilient Communities project has informed part of our new Farming Futures project, which began in September. Our team found that there is a huge demand for livestock following the successful demonstration of organic manure increasing soil health and crop yields. The livestock groups, in part due to their careful management and housing of their livestock, now have a surplus and are looking to sell some to raise further income. Some of our income-generating groups, whereas, are looking to buy livestock in order to diversify their income streams. Therefore, the team has begun to link these groups so they are able to mutually benefit, and increase their methods of raising income.

Outcome 3: Improved community stewardship of natural resources

The Nkhata Bay district has lost over a quarter of forest area to deforestation in the last 20 years. Deforestation, which has removed crop cover and increased soil erosion, makes agricultural work incredibly difficult, meaning farmers struggle to support themselves and their families. Local governance structures play a central role in preventing further deforestation and promoting the sustainable management of local natural resources.

Temwa has continued working closely with 100 Village Development Committee (VDC) members and 8 Village Natural Resource Management Committees (VNRMC), who were present at all relevant training

events this year, in line with our community-driven approach. These structures started creating multi-year plans to guide the activities they are implementing. VNRMCs have been creating bylaws to regulate timber and firewood collections, while VDCs have been working alongside the Department of Forestry to stop illegal felling. For example, in September, it was reported that increased pooling of resources from stakeholders has improved the patrols being conducted in the Kaning'ina Forest. The community has also taken a major role in whistleblowing for possible illegal activities in the forest. This has led to the confiscation of over 45 kilns of charcoal and one vehicle full of timber, and five people have been apprehended after being found in possession of illegal charcoal and timber products.

The livelihood work funded through your support was complemented by Temwa's tree-planting project. In 2021-2022, the communities planted trees: 32,095 fast-growing and timber trees, 6,306 agroforestry trees on farms, and 2,510 fruit trees in orchards. In the last six months, the communities have raised 33,850 seedlings ready to outplant in the coming planting season. Our support for forest friendly livelihoods has continued to slow down deforestation rates in at least two villages.

Community stories

Livestock pass-on and organic farming methods

Linly Mgodzi struggled alone for years to feed and clothe her 9 children, only managing to send 2 of them to school. She often relied on wild fruits for their only food, and unreliable work to earn a living.

In 2018, this changed when Linly attended a community meeting and joined Temwa's livestock pass on scheme. Linly learned about organic farming methods and, by using the manure produced by her pigs, Linly was able to cultivate more diverse crops and improve yields with more successful harvests, giving her and her family enough food to eat and sell.

Linly said, "Before Temwa I was living a sad life. Now I have managed to improve my household. I helped my first born daughter to start her own business and we are able to sustain ourselves."

"Our community has changed a lot since Temwa started working here: more households are economically empowered and are doing organic farming. More households are also keeping natural forests because of the initiatives that Temwa has in our village."

Through Temwa's community-driven approach, Linly gained skills and knowledge which have enabled a diversified, stable income to support her family.



Female farmers leading the way

The Using'ini Temwanani Group, which started in December 2021, is made up of 11 women growing crops to provide for their households and sell for income. Before the group formed, the members did not have enough food to provide sufficient nutrition for their families. Since 2021, Temwa has provided the group members with training in natural pesticides and organic fertilisers, as well as advice on financial



strategies to increase their income. This has meant that they are better able to support their households, and start investing in their futures.

This year, the group planted maize, tomatoes, yams and nua beans. Using organic manure has increased the productivity of the soil leading to a better crop yield. Impressively, the women clear and cultivate the land by hand using panga knives with no help from anyone else!

The members say that being part of a group is a huge benefit: they learn, share and support each other. Forming a group together, and using Temwa's training, has made them more resilient to future environmental and economic shocks.
