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# Appendix 2

## Country Report Malawi

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## List of Acronyms

ADC	Area Development Committee
ANRMC	Area Natural Resource Management Committee
COMPASS	Community Partnership for Sustainable Natural Resource Management
CDHI	Clinton Hunter Development Initiative
DDC	District Development Committee
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
IFA	Individual Forest Area
IGA	Income Generating Activity
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
LSC	Local Steering Committee
MEET	Malawi Environmental Endowment Trust
MMCT	Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NSC	National Steering Committee
NTFP	Non-timber Forest Products
PMU	Project Management Unit
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RFO	Regional Forestry Officer
SMIF	Sustainable Management for Indigenous Forests
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VHL	Village Hands Limited
VFA	Village Forest Area
VNRMC	Village Natural resource Management Committee
WESM	Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi
WVI	World Vision International

## **Executive Summary**

With funding from the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation, SADC/GTZ implemented a regional project called 'Sustainable Management of Indigenous Forests' (SMIF) which was implemented in four SADC Countries namely Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique and Namibia. The broad objective of the project was to develop and disseminate strategies for sustainable forest management in the SADC region. In Malawi Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi (WESM) in collaboration with the Department of Forestry implemented the project in three phases, namely an inception Phase (1996 to 1999), a second phase (2000 to 2003) and a final third phase (2004 to 2006). The project was implemented in the Lisungwi valley 50 kilometers South of Neno district in Traditional Authority Symon targeting about 15,000 in 14 villages with an approximate area of 20,000 hectares.

## **Finding of the ex-post evaluation**

The project implemented a number of activities including establishment of VFAs and VNRMCs; establishment of school environmental clubs; development of management plans and by-laws; establishment of communal and tree nurseries; conducting awareness campaigns on natural resources management and HIV and AIDS; promotion of IGAs from NTFPs such as guinea fowl rearing, bee keeping, fruit juice production and others, promotion of fuel efficient briquettes, as well as establishment and independent management structure of the project. The ex-post evaluation found out that by the end of the third phase, most of the expected outputs were achieved however, 85% continue to be implemented. Most of the project interventions that continue to be implemented are mainly at individual and household level.

The project set up village level committee such as VNRMCs and other project specific committees such as guinea fowl rearing, nursery establishment, agroforestry, bee keeping and other committees. The ex-post evaluation found that 50% of the VNRMCs still exist in the project. There is however high potential for their survival since other organizations and programmes coming into the area are using these existing VNRMCs as well as revamping some of them. However, the project specific committees such as those responsible for tree nurseries, agroforestry and others have since collapsed. The performance of the committee heavily rely of the strengthen and interest of the village heads.

Over 97% of the people believe that the project have improved the livelihoods of many people as well as improved access and availability of forest resources in the area. However, the project failed to maintain the Community Fund that was established due to political intervention, lack of support from the government structures more especially those responsible for law enforcement and greed amongst some of the committee members. Despite the investment made to reduce deforestation, charcoal production more especially on individual forest areas is on the increase.

## **Overall rating and recommendations**

Using the international evaluation criteria, the project performed very well despite the various challenges which have formed major lessons for improvement for similar projects in future. Overall, the ex-post evaluation team concludes that the project rating is 2 meaning that the project was implemented in line with the expectations and there were no significant defects.

From the findings and analysis of the findings the ex-post evaluation team makes the following recommendations:

- Based on the experiences, SADC/GTZ should consider replicating the project as it has demonstrated that people's livelihoods can improve if such a project is effectively implemented.

- Project interventions need to deliberately target the individual families when delivering extension services and implementing project interventions.
- Future project interventions should promote more IGAs in order to provide short term benefits at the same time promoting sustainable management of the forest resources.
- The local government should ensure that resources for continued implementation of various project activities are included within the overall local government funding framework.
- For continued performance of the village level institutions such as VNRMC, there is need for continuous monitoring, mentoring and coaching of the village level institutions.

## 1 Introduction

This report presents the findings of an ex-post evaluation of the pilot project called GTZ/SADC Sustainable Forest Management and Conservation which was carried out in October 2008. The main objectives of the ex-post evaluation was to evaluate the success and sustainability of the development measures in the pilot component on the basis of a clearly defined evaluation criteria and a standardized success assessment grid. The first three chapters of the report outlines the introduction, describes the project area and summarises the approach and methodology used for carrying out the evaluation. Chapter four presents the findings of the evaluation where the project is assessed according to the international evaluation criteria and rated. The last chapter (chapter 5) presents the overall assessment and critical discussions of the results and some recommendations.

The 'Sustainable Management of Indigenous Forests' (SMIF) Project was a regional project, jointly implemented by the *Southern African Development Community* (SADC) and the *German Technical Cooperation Agency* (GTZ), funded by the *German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development* (BMZ). The project was implemented in four countries in the SADC region; Botswana, Mozambique, Malawi and Namibia with a broad objective of developing and disseminating strategies for sustainable forest management in the SADC region.

Most parts of the SADC countries are covered by indigenous dry forests of the open-savannah type which have over the past years constantly suffered from heavy degradation and deforestation. Overexploitation, high population pressure, rural poverty and unclear land tenure rights lead to unsustainable land use such as overgrazing and overcultivation. Though member states are affected differently, the problems has grown to such proportions, as to cause considerable concern and attract attention of the SADC as a whole. The SADC member states therefore considered sustainable community based, participatory forest management as a key instrument to offer rural population prospects of enhanced livelihood conditions and income generation at the same time.

To this effect an initial project financed by the Germany Government was developed in 1989 and was accepted by the SADC Technical Committee for Forestry. In 1994 a feasibility study was presented to GTZ, which proposed the implementation of four pilot projects covering 4 SADC countries namely Botswana, Malawi Mozambique and Namibia. In Malawi Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi (WESM) in collaboration with the Department of Forestry implemented the project. The project was implemented in three phases, namely an inception Phase (1996 to 1999), a second phase (2000 to 2003) and a final third phase (2004 to 2006).

The Project Review Missions of 2002 and 2006 observed that at target group level, improvement of living conditions was obvious and hence a key-prerequisite had been created for the introduction of a sustainable management for indigenous dry forests. Noteworthy achievements were the successful identification of supplementary source of income, innovative marketing approaches and the mobilization and motivation of the rural population. The Project Progress Review Mission of 2008 stated that while good results could be identified at local level in terms of improvement of the livelihood of the target group in the three pilot areas (Botswana, Malawi and Namibia), the impact at regional level (SADC) was below expectations. Two main reasons were identified: lack of documented monitoring and evaluation and impact data from the field country projects and the institutional weaknesses of the SADC Secretariat in the area of natural resource management. The 2008 Mission recommended for documentation of the upscaling results of the four pilot projects which were implemented in the four countries. Therefore GTZ and SADC recommended to conduct an ex-post evaluation of the four project areas, aiming at analysing and documenting the project approaches, lessons learned and their impact on local livelihoods.

## **2 Description of the pilot area and the pilot measuree**

### **2.1 The Project Area**

The SMIF Project in Malawi was implemented in the Lisungwi valley 50 kilometers South of Neno district in Traditional Authority Symon<sup>1</sup>. The project covers 14 villages with an approximate area of 20,000 hectares. The project was implemented in Kam'mwamba, Manyenje, Gobede, George Chikwekwe, Waiyatsa, Somisomi, Limani, Ngwenyama, Bonongwe, Zalewa, Kandoje, Manondo, and Chikapa Villages covering a total population of 15,647 (Mauambeta 1999, Mwalukomo 2003). The project area was sparsely populated before the construction of a motor way which connects Blantyre and Lilongwe. However after the construction of the motor way, many households migrated from high population density districts such Mulanje, Chiradzulu and Thyolo districts in search of land for farming and settlement. The increased population pressure in the project area exerted more pressure on the forest and tree resources. The construction of the motor way opened up the area and immediately become a quick source of charcoal and firewood for the urban centres like Blantyre and Lilongwe. The high population pressure and the increasing demand for charcoal and firewood from the area resulted in massing cutting down of trees which in turn reduced the vast tree cover of the area.

The SMIF project was implemented as a response to the vast reduction in forest cover in the country in particular the target area due to unsustainable utilization of forest resources which resulted in accelerated decline of forest cover posing a threat to the very source of people's livelihoods. In order to reverse this trend, the SMIF Project in Malawi aimed at empowering rural forest users to manage their forest resources sustainably by promoting communal and individual forest management and introducing sustainable income generating activities (IGAs). It was envisaged that communities' involvement in IGAs would deter them from destructive utilization of forest resources. The project was thus aimed at improving forest management while addressing livelihood needs of communities.

### **2.2 The Pilot Measure**

#### **2.2.1. The expected outcomes of the pilot measure**

The project was implemented in three phases. During the first and second phases, the project expected to achieve the following objectives:

- Develop and implement strategies to reduce deforestation
- Develop and implement of plans for the integration of women and other marginalized groups in natural resources management
- Empower communities to sustainably manage their natural resources
- Implement strategies to control illegal timber, fuel wood and charcoal trade
- Develop and implement techniques to harvest non-timber forest produce
- Install efficient project management system

These objectives were later revised towards the end of the second phase in order to incorporate changes that had occurred during the first phase implementation period. The new objectives were also designed to reflect an exit strategy for the project (Mwalukomo, 2006). Thus the project objectives were during the third phase revised as follows:

- Develop and implement methods and plans for sustainable use of natural resources
- Improve marketing of Non Timber Forest Products (NTFP)
- Improve communication, transparency and benefit sharing among local communities
- Raise level of civic education
- Install efficient reporting systems
- Install independent management structure.

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<sup>1</sup> The project area is now in Neno District after Mwanza district was split into Mwanza and Neno districts during the second phase of the project.

## 2.2.2. Project Approach

### Project implementation approach

According to WESM and various stakeholders in the project area, the project right from the onset believed in setting up clear project implementation arrangements and mechanisms at central, district and village levels in line with the policy and legal framework of the country. WESM also made sure that the choice of project interventions was addressing the livelihoods needs of the people in line with the root causes of high deforestation and forest degradation in the area. WESM also made sure that effective community participation should guide the implementation process of the project. The project therefore implemented a number of interventions as outlined below.

### Project activities

**Formation of VFA and VNRMC.** The Forest Act sets up the VNRMC as the key local level institution for forest development and also regulates establishment of VFA as one of the key forest development activities at community level. Realizing the problems of high deforestation in the area, the project facilitated the formation of VNRMCs to facilitate management of VFAs in all the villages of the project. Apart from establishing VNRMCs, the project trained the project committee members on various aspects of the forest policy and law, management of their committees and sustainable management of natural resources.

**Establishment of environmental clubs in primary schools.** The importance of environmental education could not be overemphasised in a project like SMIF. Children were also seen as critical to the success and sustainability of the project activities. Therefore WESM facilitated the establishment of environmental clubs in all the primary schools within the project area. As part of the education process, the project used to organize environmental education trips for school children to project sites within the project area as well as to other areas like National Parks and game reserves.

**Promotion of income generating activities (IGA).** Realising that natural resource management interventions usually take time to bear fruits, the project introduced various income generating activities such as guinea fowl rearing, bee honey production, indigenous fruit juice production, cane furniture making, tree seedling raising, and wine manufacturing, fuel efficient stoves, briquette production and vegetable growing. Other income generating activities promoted included collection and selling of indigenous fruit trees to the project.

Various types of capacity building interventions relating to various IGA were conducted by the project. For example families that were involved in guinea fowl rearing were among others trained in guinea fowl rearing, brooding, marketing, housing construction and various other aspects. While those involved in bee keeping were trained in a number of area including bee-hive construction, management, honey harvesting and extraction methods. Other people were trained on cane furniture production, vegetable growing and tree nursery establishment and seedling production. The seedlings were being sold with the project area and outside the project area to other people and organizations.

Over 90% of the people in the area were used to harvesting fruit trees for home consumption and sell to middlemen. Their harvesting methods contributed to highest levels of deforestation in the area. The traditional practice of fruit tree harvesting involved cutting of the whole tree or branch. The project trained project beneficiaries on sustainable fruit tree harvesting where branches or trees are not cut down in order to harvest fruits. The project trained people on fruit tree harvesting, storage and processing into various products such as juice and fruit juice powder.

**Development of community By-laws for Forest Management.** Realising that without proper and recognized village based rules and guidelines on the management of forest resources in the area, forests and trees would continue to be depleted, the project facilitate the development of By-laws for forest management. The project facilitated participatory resource

assessments for a number of village forest area before management plans were developed. After the management plans were developed, the project facilitated development of By-laws to government implementation of the management plans. The management plans and by-laws were the first ever by-laws for sustainable community based management of indigenous forest in Malawi which were approved and signed by the Minister responsible for Natural Resources in 1999. The process started at village level where each village agreed to develop own by-laws to be enforced by each village. When all villages in the project were mobilized, they all agreed to develop unified by-laws for the area covering the 14 villages. Once the by-laws were signed, communities set up a law enforcement committee which worked hand in hand with the Malawi Police and Forestry Guards to enforce the by-laws in line with the Forestry Act 1997.

**Establishment of Community Fund.** As part of the process of implementing the management plans, villagers agreed to set up a Community Fund from where proceeds from licensing, fines, sales of trees and poles were deposited. The project made an initial contribution to the fund of K132,000 which was deposited in the Community Fund for various community development activities in the project area. Through an intensive community sensitisation and training process, the local leaders and villager agreed on the benefit sharing mechanism of the proceeds from fines, issues of certificates and sale of products from the VFAs. The benefit sharing formulae that was agreed was 25%: 25% and 50%. It was agreed that 25% would go to the community fund, while 25% would go to the government and 50% for community to share.

This fund operated for a year then it closed because of the various challenges faced in the management of the fund. Apart from the political interference in the management of the fund, the law enforcement team faced a lot of resistance from government personnel more especially the patrolmen and police personnel manning the road block within the project area. The law enforcement team also wanted a bigger share of the proceeds from their enforcement efforts. When they realized that this was not materialising, some of the members stopped participating in the law enforcement exercise. Many other community members were demoralized with the political interference in the management of the Community Fund.

**Establishment of communal and individual woodlots and woodlands.** To improve access to forest and forest products by the communities, the project realised the need to improve the supply of forest products at both household and community level. Therefore, the project promoted establishment and management of individual woodlots and forest areas. People were trained on how to establish and manage individual as well as communal forest areas. During the evaluation it was noted that 85% of the project beneficiaries have individual woodlots and forest areas where they get their forest needs such as firewood other non-timber forest products. The project employed community facilitators who were based in the project area and were working hand in hand with extension worker from other organizations and government department to promote forest management activities.

The VNRMC played a very important role of monitoring and training other people on forest management activities. Apart from establishment and management of woodlots, the project supported the communities to plant fruit trees around their homesteads and agroforestry trees species in their gardens.

**Awareness campaigns on natural resources management and HIV and AIDS.** The project organized various awareness meetings and campaigns on sustainable forest management as well as the linkage of HIV and AIDS to natural resource management. The project used various community based theatre groups, culture groups and community based band during awareness campaigns. Various gender, HIV and AIDS advocates and specialist were brought into the project area to talk to people during awareness meetings. Politicians such the Member of Parliament for the Area and some ministers have patronized and spoken during awareness meetings. Impressed with the progress of the project, the government decided to organize an inaugural tree planting exercise in the project where the former President Bakili Muluzi was the guest of honour.

**Development of participatory land use plans.** The project supported villagers to develop participatory land use plans for individual land holders as an entry for the development of individual forest management plans. Mwalukomo (2006) said that project thought of supporting individual families to develop participatory land use plans after noting that individual families had more land which was laying idle which could easily be designated for sustainable forest management. Since most of the idle land was bare, simple land use plans with recommendations on use and management was felt to be necessary.

### **Institutional and implementation arrangements**

The project was implemented within the existing decentralization institutional structures such as the District Development Committee (DDC), Area Development Committee (ADC) and Village Development Committees (VDC). All the project structures were set within this district development framework. To ensure coordination at national, district and village level, the project had a National Steering Committee (NSC)<sup>2</sup>. The overall responsibility of the NSC was to ensure that the project is coordinated in line with the national policies and other development agendas of government as well as to overall policy guidance to the project implementation process.

At project level, a local steering committee (LSC) local government, traditional leaders of the area, representatives of village heads, representatives of government and NGO members of staff working in the project area, women groups used to oversee the overall performance and policy guidance of the project at local level. The majority of the members of the local steering committee members have evolved to become Trustees of Village Hands Limited<sup>3</sup>. The local steering committee worked very closely with the various project committees and linked the project to the village development process through the Village Development Committees.

As an exist strategy, a private company called Village Hands Limited was registered in 2004. In line with the Companies Act, the company has a Board of Directors, and is owned by the communities in the project. The Board which is composed of experienced business individuals, human resource managers, legal experts and environmental experts is the steering body of the company. Currently the company only produces fruit juice and honey as its line of business.

During the first and second phase of the project, the project had a local steering committee that was overseeing the coordination and governance of the project at local level. As a exist strategy, the project facilitated the establishment and registering of Kamwamba Natural Resource Management Trust through which the local communities own Village Hands Company Limited. All the villages through their village natural resource management committees are represented in the Trust.

### **2.2.3. Factors affecting the status of the outcome**

Malawi is committed to the need to protect as much as possible the natural environment, including forests. This commitment is enshrined in the National Constitution and therefore the government recognized the importance of putting in place effective legal and institutional instruments and procedures to uphold this constitutional commitment. In line with its Constitution, the government is also a signatory to numerous bilateral and international agreements and conventions linked to environment and forestry. Some of such agreements and conventions include the Rio Declaration, the Convention to Combat Desertification, Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biodiversity, the Convention on International Trade and Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and many others.

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<sup>2</sup> The NSC comprised the project management team, Director of Forestry, RFO (South), DFO, District Community Development Officer, District Environmental Officer, GTZ/SADC/FANR (FSCTU) Coordinator, District Commissioner, MP for Neno South Constituency, Traditional Authority Simon, District Agriculture Development Officer and a women group representative for the area.

<sup>3</sup> Village Hands Limited is a community based registered company that has been formed to continue the manufacturing of fruit juice after the project phased out.

Since 1992, the Malawi government embarked on a drive to review most of its environmental and natural resource management related policies and legal frameworks. Some of such policies and legal frameworks included forestry, environment, fisheries, water resources management, land, decentralization, irrigation and many others in order to be in line with the international and regional treaties and protocols the government signed. The recognition of the natural resources users and key managers of the resources has been the biggest drive to the successful implementation of the Sustainable Management of Indigenous Forests Project in the country.

The Malawi Forestry Policy (1996) and Forestry Act (1997) provide for community management of forestry resources both on customary and public land. For example on public land, the Act provides for collaborative management between the government and forest users more especially communities. The Act also provides for tenure security and usufruct rights of forest resources on customary land. On the other hand the Land Policy (2002) aims at strengthening tenure security over land by the local Malawians.

Amongst others the Forestry Act and policy promotes establishment of village forest areas and village natural resource management committees (VNRMC) to manage forest resources on customary land. The VNRMCs act as a link between the Forestry Department (department responsible for forest matters) and the local communities. The VNRMCs act as a governance structure and change agent for forestry development activities in a village or set of villages. The policy also promotes establishment of woodlots and forest area by individual families or individuals on customary land. The Act also provides for the development of management plans and by-laws for the communities to have legal basis and recognitions during law enforcement. Both the by-laws and management plans are signed by the Minister responsible for forest matters as required by law.

The country is currently undergoing through a decentralization process following the enactment of the Local Government Act (1998) which devolves power and authority to the local assemblies. The Local Government Act promotes community participation in decision making processes as well as management of various development interventions and natural resources. Both the Local Government Act and Forestry Act recognise the important role the local communities have in managing the environment and natural resources. The Local Government Act establishes local level development structures such as the District Development Committees (DDC), Area Development Committee (ADC) and Village Development Committees (VDC). The Act stipulates that all the development decisions starts from the various village level committees such as VNRMCs into the VDC, then ADC and lastly to the DDC. Implementation of the SMIF project in the district and country provided a framework for the implementation of the overall decentralization policy and decentralization process in the country and therefore attracted a lot of attention from various stakeholders championing the decentralization process including the donor community. The SMIF project was also seen as a vehicle for the implementation of the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy which led to the development of the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy.

One of the reasons for rapid deforestation was stated as weak tenure and usufruct rights over the forest and trees in the country. The SMIF project provided a framework for promoting and strengthening tree tenure and usufruct rights which was in line with the 2002 National Land Policy.

In general terms the policy and legal framework in the country was very supporting and conducive for the implementation of the SMIF project.

### **3 Methodological approach of the study**

The study followed the following steps:

**Literature review.** In order to understand the assignment, project areas, its stakeholders and what has been achieved during the project implementation phase, various relevant documents were reviewed including, baseline reports, progress reports, mission reports, training tool kits, financial reports, district development plans, district profiles, natural re-

source and environmental related policies and Acts such as Forestry Policy and Act, Environmental Act, Land Policy, Water Resource Act and various other monitoring reports which were produced by the project on monthly basis.

**Preparatory workshop in Mozambique.** GTZ organized an ex-post Evaluation Preparatory workshop which took place in Maputo Mozambique in order to agree on the tools and ex-post evaluation criteria. The workshop was facilitated by the Team leader of the assignment Dr Max Kasperek and attended by the Team Leader of the Project, and three country consultants from Namibia, Mozambique and Malawi. During the workshop, participants developed and agreed on checklists and guide questions to be used during the data collection as well as agreed on the format to be used for writing the ex-post evaluation report.

**Training of research assistants.** To speed up the data collection process, 4 research assistants were used. These assistants were trained on data collection and techniques for interviewing and data capturing before the field work.

**Sampling of households and stakeholders to participate in the exercise.** In consultation with the implementing agency in Malawi (WESM), stakeholders to participate in the ex-post evaluation exercise were identified at national, district, and village levels. It was agreed that the evaluation team should visit all the 14 villages of the project and purposefully sample at all least 5 families in each villages for detailed household interviews. Personnel from all the NGO and government programmes now implemented in the area were sampled to participate in the ex-post evaluation. The sampling made sure that all the village heads, selected local and central government personnel were interviewed. WESM worked with a number of other stakeholders such as the University, Forestry Research Institute as well as politicians. These too were sampled for to participate in the ex-post evaluation exercise. The evaluation team also interviewed policemen and forest guards who are manning the road block along the Main Road 1 that is within the project area.

**Field survey and data analysis.** After agreeing on the sampling approach and stakeholders to be interviewed during the exercise, the research team set up appointments with the various individuals and organizations and the villagers. The research team visited and interviewed all the selected organizations and individuals at central, regional, district and village levels using the agreed checklist and questionnaire. Focus group discussions and individual household interviews were conducted in all the villages. One focus group discussion with an average of 20 participants was conducted in each of the 14 villages and a total of 70 individual interviews were conducted during the field survey. After the field work the information gathered was systematically analysed using SPSS.

There were no significant limitations during the process of carrying out the assignment. However, the study team could not meet some members of the local assembly like the District Commissioner because they were busy supervising farmer registration exercise for subsidized fertilizer distribution. It was also difficult to meet some of the local leaders as planned because they were also busy with farmer registration exercise. However, the research team managed to meet 99% of the sampled communities and stakeholders for the exercise.

## **4 Findings of the study**

### **4.1. Contribution to the outcome through outputs**

#### **4.1.1. Forest Management Plans**

##### **Preparation of the Management Plans**

Before the project started, all villagers, local leaders and various stakeholders operating in the area identified a number of challenges to the sustainable management of forest resources in the area. Through various consultative meetings each village agreed to develop management plans for their village forest areas after a participatory resource assessment in order to promote sustainable management of their forest resources. They also agreed to develop By-laws to govern implementation of the management plans. Realising that the by-laws will be required for each village, local leaders agreed to combine all the by-laws into one to form forest by-laws for all the village forest areas in the project area. Before, during and after the development of the by-laws a series of meetings were organized in all the villages to set out the objectives, and by-laws for managing the forest and natural resources in the area. Various resource persons such as specialists on natural resource management, gender, HIV and AIDS, environmental law, sociologist and many others were brought into the project area to explain to the people the process of developing the by-laws, the implication of certain provisions in the by-laws as well as the need to develop by-laws that are inclusive and holistic in order to achieve sustainable natural resource management. The process of developing the management plans and by-laws was very inclusive and therefore their implementation and enforcement were highly supported by the villagers and all the stakeholders who were involved in their implementation. It was therefore not surprising during the ex-post evaluation to discover that over 78% of the people interviewed indicated that they are familiar with the objectives of the management plan. About 69% of the people interviewed said that they were involved in the setting up of the objectives and scope of the management plans while 14.3% indicated that they were not involved while 16.3% were either not sure or not involved. About 73% said that they were involved in making decision on allocating responsibilities while 68% of the respondents said that they were involved in carrying out resource assessments before the management plans were developed. Asked about the decision making process on benefit sharing, only 56% of the respondents felt that they were involved in making decisions on benefit sharing from their village forest areas.

However, all of the people interviewed indicated that they are aware that there are by-laws and management plans that govern management of their village forest areas. They believe that the local leaders and individual families use the management plans to guide in the management of the village forest and individual forest areas.

##### **Implementation of the Management Plan**

The study found out that the status of implementing management plans in both individual and village forest areas depend on a number of issues including leadership, individual or community management of the forest area. Where local leadership was strong, the implementation process of the management plans is also strong regardless of whether the management plans are for an individual or village forest area. The research found out that 77.6% of the respondents felt that the management plans be it on the VFA or individual forest area are being implemented.

##### **Implementation of individual forest area management plans**

All the families that have individual forest areas and have management plan indicated that is easy and quicker for them to make decisions on what to harvest, when, how, as well as what tree to cut from their forest area in line with their management plans. The individual families are able to decide on what type of activities to be performed in their forest area. Families

indicated that it is very easy to limit access into the forest area because they are regarded as private property and all people in the village recognise that. Intruders in a private property are very limited and if found they are dealt with very heavily. Even though the by-laws were set for all the forest areas in the project, enforcement of such by-laws was found to be successful in individual forest areas than village forest areas.

Because individual families are free to decide what and when to harvest from their village forest areas, they are easy targets of the charcoal producers and firewood sellers from within and outside the village. This makes it difficult for some individual families to follow their management plans because they allow access and harvest of some trees for charcoal without following the management plan. People alleged that apart from charcoal coming from protected forest areas, a bigger portion of charcoal that is big sold along the main road which connects Blantyre and Lilongwe is coming from individual forest areas. Charcoal production is higher from individual forest areas with weak household heads who are mainly interested in making quick money than those that are stronger and think of the future of their forest needs.

*Mrs Saweluzika has individual forest area with a management plan which was developed in 2005 with support from the project. Due to pressure from the charcoal producers and low levels of household income, she sells trees from her forest area in order to find money for their household. She mentioned that even though her management plan only allows limited harvesting of some tree species, she continue to sell all the tree species in order to make money. During the time of interviews she confessed that her forest area was once successful but now it is on the verge of being wiped out. Currently, Mrs Saweluzika is no longer involved in tree planting activities but no one can access her forest area without her permission.*

### **Implementation of village forest area management plans**

Each of the 14 villages in the project area has a village forest area with by-laws that govern implementation of the management plans. During the project period village level institutions such as village natural resource management committees were established. These committees were very vigilant and active to enforce the by-laws in line with their management plans. Even though the forest areas continue to exist to day, the committees are not as functional as they used to during the project period and the existence of the forest areas depend on the strength and interest of the village heads. It was found out that 50% of the village forest areas are still managed according to the management plans. The VNRMC are able to regulate the amount of wood harvested, access into the forest area, construction of firebreaks, and they are also able to engage the villager in decision making processes regarding tree planting activities and participation in other community based natural management activities in the villages.

Mrs Chikapa is a group village woman who has both an individual and village forest area. The village forest area is a resource to about six villages under her jurisdiction. She said that even though the village has a VNRMC to oversee the management of the village forest area, she has more influence on the implementation of the management plan for the village forest area than the VNRMC. The VNRMC more often fail to bring encroacher into the forest to book and people respect her as local leader more than the committee responsible for the forest area. Mwalukomo, 2006 reported that while VNRMC were able to issue 18% of the fine to encroachers of in their VFA, the village heads were able to issues 82% fines to encroachers meaning that some offenders could not be easily brought to book by the VNMRC. However according to the Malawi Forestry Act section 31 subsections 1b; VNRMCs have the mandate to oversee the management and utilization of the village forest area including setting by-laws and punishing offenders. *In section 30, the village head has the powers to demarcate unallocated customary land a village forest area which shall be protected and managed in a prescribed manner.*

Even though the Forestry Law emphasizes on the VNRMCs, people in the rural area have high respect for their traditional leaders than the democratically elected members of the vil-

lage committees when it comes to issues of conflicts and cases. This is because village heads are the custodian of land and culture and therefore own the land upon which the forest are growing and have traditional powers which are not vested in the elected committee members. This is why where the village leadership is strong and has interest in forest and natural resource management, implementation of the management plans has been successful than where the village leadership is weak and has no interest in the management of forest and natural resources in the project area.

Where the village head is strong, it is the village head that ensures that the management plans are implemented and by-laws are enforced. No timber or charcoal licences could be issued by the VNRMC without the consent of the village head. In the project area, since the collapse of the patrol committee, no licences or extraction certificates have been issued by the village natural resource management committees. However, individual families are the one that are selling trees to charcoal producers but without a licence because individual families are not mandated to do so. Because the village head has trusteeship over the land where the village forest areas are established, people continue to believe and trust their local leaders as important figures in forest and natural resource management.

### **Securing the natural resource base**

One of the objectives behind the development of management plans for village forest areas in the area was to ensure improved access and security over natural resources by the communities in the 14 villages. Over 69.4% of the project beneficiaries and 95% of the project facilitators believe that without the project, the project area would have been bare by now. The various messages and capacity building activities of the project increased the level of understanding of the importance sustainable management of natural resources. Implementation of various project interventions such as bee keeping, guinea fowl rearing, and fruit juice production require proper management of trees and forests.

Without trees no one can hang bee hives and therefore people are forced to serve the remaining trees and forest in order that their beekeeping and honey production business continue to flourish. Guinea fowls lay eggs in the bushes around the houses and therefore anyone keeping them requires having a well managed bush with trees and grass. The realization of the many benefits they derive from the natural resources, many people are keen to sustainably manage their trees and forest resources. Over 95% of the women interviewed indicated that access to natural resources has improved and continue to improve in some villages while in other villages access is becoming limited every day. The decline in availability of some forests and trees resources is being attributed to increased levels of charcoal and firewood production from some villages around the project area which is increasing pressure on the remaining forest resources in the project area.

### **Livelihood and implementation of the management plans**

*“The project assisted us to develop a management for our forest area which we are implementing. We follow all the plans as advised. Availability of firewood and other non-timber forest products such as fruits which we sell to Village Hands Limited has increased. I do not walk long distances to fetch firewood. This gives me more time to manage my family. My husband has also over 10 bee hives in our forest area where we harvest honey after every three months. The proceeds from honey and guinea fowls have assisted us to construct a permanent house and buy basic household requirements as well as pay schools fees for our children, Mrs. January Kaudzu said.”*

It is evident that those families that have managed to follow the advice from the project as well as implement their management plans are doing well in the village. About 87.8% of the people interviewed indicated that their life has improved over time with the implementation of the project while 4.1% felt that there is no change to their livelihoods. There are many families like Mrs Kaudzu who has well managed forest area and benefiting. The benefits are more in households with individual forest areas than in a village forest area.

## 4.1.2. Empowerment of local communities

### Village committee and their roles

Through the Local Government Act (1998), the Malawi government is undergoing through the decentralization process. The Local Government Act requires that all development activities at village and district levels should follow the district and village level decentralized structures. In line with government decentralization process, the project set up various village level committees that were responsible for various project activities. Falling under the village development committee<sup>4</sup> are the various committees such as the VNRMC. In this project, there were other committees that were below the VNRMC which were project activity specific. Some of the committees included beekeeping, fruit juice production, guinea fowl rearing, vegetable growing, tree nursery, school clubs and agroforestry committees (Table 1). These committees performed functions specific to their activities but under the VNRMC. The VNRMC is a subcommittee of the Village Development Committee responsible for natural resource management. Apart from the VNRMCs, the project had Area Natural Resource Management Committee which eventually transformed into a Trust and all the VNRMC are accountable to the Trust through the village development structure.

**Table 1. Committees and their functions**

Name of committee	Mandate	Status
Area Natural Resource Management Committee (ANRMC)	Coordination and guidance on natural resource management and project management activities	Transformed in Trust for governance of Village Hands Limited Company
VNRMCs	Village level coordination of forest and natural resource management and development activities	Majority exist on paper. People doubt the role. Clinton Hunter Project using some of the committees.
Guinea fowl rearing committee	Coordination of guinea fowl project activities	Non-existent. People working individual level
Bee keeping and honey production	Coordination of beekeeping development and honey production marketing activities	Existing. USAID funded project continuing with beekeeping activities in the area
Agroforestry committee	Coordination of agroforestry activities	Non-existent
Vegetable growing	Promotion of vegetable growing	Non-existent
Fruit juice making	Manufacturing of fruit juice from indigenous fruits	Fruit juice taken over by a community based company-Village Hands Limited.
Tree nursery committees	Coordination of tree seedling raising and selling	Non-existent. Clinton Hunter Development Initiative using some of the people to raise tree seedlings in their main nursery
School clubs	Promotion of tree planting and natural resource management activities in schools	Still existing but not active. Heavily relies on the interest of the teachers

From the table above the majority of project activity based village level institutions are no longer functioning. For example the tree nursery committees collapsed immediately after the project phased out because they could not find a market to sell their seedlings which the committees were raising for sell to other villages and projects and planting materials became scarce. Tree nursery committees were established to coordinate the tree seedling raising for individual households and for sale. It was revealed by the committee members that most of the people participating in the activities were interested in selling the tree seedling to get money. Once the market for tree seedlings could not easily be identified, committee mem-

<sup>4</sup> VDC is a village level institution responsible for development activities at village level as stipulated in the Local Government Act. At village level all the other committees such as VNRMC fall under this committee.

bers lost interested and the committees collapsed. Recently, a new project funded by the Clinton Hunter Development Initiative has started in the area and is using some of the committees to coordinate its tree planting activities in the area.

Beekeeping and honey production has become big business in the area and therefore all the committees in 14 villages where the project is being implemented exist and some have been established in the area. In the villages where the project is not being implemented, the committees no longer exist but the individual families are continuing the bee keeping business. A USAID funded bee keeping project is using the same committees to implement the project. Several families and individuals have joined the project and are now selling honey as a group to markets in Blantyre and other urban centres.

It was found out that though all the 14 VNRMC exist in the project area, 50% are still functional. There are high chances that the rest of the fourteen VNRMC are going to be revamped with the coming in of the Clinton Hunter Development Initiative project on natural resource management which is using the same village level structures that the project was using. However as already alluded to in the earlier sections, where village forest areas are still standing today, is because of the interest and strength of the village leadership not necessarily the VNRMC.

For example, the ANRMC set up a subcommittee to be responsible for enforcement of the By-Laws. The subcommittee started very well, it used to mount road blocks and confiscate illegal forest products such as charcoal, firewood, timber and others. The subcommittee had the mandate to charge any illegal intruders in the forest areas in the project and intruders used to pay fines. However, this subcommittee did not proceed for long because; the government forest officers more especially the forestry guard and patrol men felt that they were intruding in their work and hence provide less or no support to the villagers. Another reason the team did not proceed was the issues of benefit sharing. Though it was clear that 50% of the fine will go to the community for sharing, 25% to the community fund and 25% to the government, some members of the subcommittee (patrol team) wanted a bigger share than what was stipulated. Some politicians also wanted to have shares in the money collected from fines. This affected the performance of the subcommittee and it collapsed. Though the community fund had an initial input of K132, 000 from the project, the fund did not continue because the law enforcement subcommittee did not continue to issue licences and mount road blocks.

Some of the VNRMCs have also collapsed because the committee members always wanted a bigger share of everything compared to the people they were representing in their committees. For example the VNRMC committee members would want to attend all trainings, share the money collected for the community fund, as well as receive preferential treatment. Some people felt that the committee members were a special club for forest management activities in the area. Compared to the fines melted on people contravening the BY-Laws, it was noted that VNRMC managed to issue only 18% compared 82% by the village heads (fig 1).

VNRMC have failed to resolve conflicts relating to natural resource management unless supported by the village heads. The village heads are the one who are playing a lead role to ensure that management plan are implemented and no illegal activities are happening in the village forest areas. It can be concluded that the village heads have a big role to play in sustainability of project interventions in as far as natural resource management is concerned. If they are by-passed, project activities will fail.

Before the project phased out, it provided support to the project based committees in terms of training, acting as market for some of the products produced by the committees such as tree seedlings, guinea fowls and guinea fowl eggs and also finding markets for the committees. The project provided an enabling framework through the extension workers based in the villages for the committees to meet regularly which currently is not happening. Many people were encouraged to participate in these committees because they used to derive benefits from the sale of their products. When the project phased out some of the products

such as tree seedlings could not easily be sold and hence the committees collapsed. Continued coaching and mentoring of the project based committees is necessary for their survival.

### **Community participation in decision making processes**

The project area has various types of village level committees; some of them have recently been established by the new projects that are being implemented in the district. For example apart from Clinton Hunter Development Initiative funded projects, World Vision International, CADECOM (Catholic Development Commission) are some of the organization working in the area and these organisations are either using the village level institutions or have established their own.

Since the villages have varied types of committees, it was interesting to note that 87% of the respondents were satisfied with decision of development committee and felt they represent their views. About 83% of the respondents felt that their opinions are herd by the decision makers in the committees. However, over 90% of the respondents were not satisfied with the VNRMCs due to their poor coordination and collaboration with other development committees. Because of the dissatisfaction with the work of the VNRMCs, people interviewed felt that many VNRMCs are no longer active and therefore do not truly represent their views. These findings agree with what Mwalukomo 2006, revealed in the impact assessment report of the same project. Mwalukomo noted that there was general lack of grassroots representation and community participation in decision making processes towards forest development activities in the area.

### **Role of the local government**

All the districts in the country are required by law to develop district development plans from which their funding from central government is based. Any outside support from NGOs and other development agency falls within the government district development planning process and priorities. In this project, WESM has been working very closely with the Forestry Department and the Local government Authority responsible for the district. Through the district planning process, the local assembly has allowed a number of organizations to implement their project activities in the area. The local government has also placed various extension officers in the project even though the local population to extension worker ratio is very high (1200: 1). Though very few, the local government extension officers continue to work very closely with various organizations and programmes operating in the area.

The project area had no hospital but now the local assembly with support from the Clinton Hunter Development Initiative is constructing a hospital for local people in the area. The road network within the project used to be very poor during the project period but now the local government has made sure to improve the access road network to allow farmers' easy access to market centres. The improvement of road network in the area has also increased the charcoal trade because many traders can now easily access the remotest villages in the project area and district to buy charcoal and firewood.

In addition to improving the road network, the local government through the Rural Electrification Programme connected the project area to the electricity grid. The connection of the area with electricity has changed the social economic platform of the people more especially at Kamwamba trading centre where the fruit juice factory is located. The connection of the project area to electricity has made it possible for many household to improve their houses and connect electricity in their homes.

The local government officials interviewed felt that the project has assisted to build decision making capacity amongst villagers in the district more especially in the impact area. The office of the Director of Planning and Development indicated that they constantly receive development requests from the villages within the project. This is a manifestation of level of capacity and awareness of the decentralization process amongst people more especially the

village heads. The local leaders from the areas have been able to convince the local government of their development challenges. In return the local government authority has made sure that the project area is given a priority in its district development planning and financing. However even though the local government authority has provided some investments in terms of development activities in the area, very little financial resources are allocated for sustainable natural resource management.

### 4.1.3. Capacities of local people

#### Training activities and use of knowledge gained

During all the three phases of the project, there were a number of training activities that were targeting the project beneficiaries and facilitators. It was however difficult for people interviewed to remember all the types of training activities they attended and number of times they went for such training activities. Table 2 below summaries training courses that target group and beneficiaries attended during the project.

It was interesting to note that 67.3% and 20.4% of the project beneficiaries and facilitators continue to use the knowledge acquired during the training regularly and occasionally respectively. *The Coordinator for the Clinton Hunter Development Initiative Natural resource management project said, "It has been easy for their project to start implementing their project because of the enormous nursery and tree seedling management capacity already existing in the project area. All the people that we have employed in our project said they were originally trained on nursery establishment and tree planting by WESM. They said WESM used to organize field trips, field days in addition to the training activities. The project has spent very little on training these workers in our nurseries. Our approach is however different from WESM because everyone who is working in this nursery is paid money while WESM was not. During the tree planting time the trees will given freely to all the people in the area. "*

*Mrs Mary Stima said I am now the chairperson of the village development committee because of the leadership training by WESM. Men and women in my village recognized my potential and understanding of leadership issues and therefore elected me to chair the village development committee. I also chair the church development committee."* Many people in the project area believe that they learnt something from the project and will continue to cherish the knowledge and skills learnt from the project.

Table 2. Summary of training activities implemented by the project

Type of training course	Target group
Participatory resource assessment	Extension workers and committee members
Sustainable natural resource management	Extension workers, committees and villagers
HIV and AIDS and natural resource management	All stakeholders
Leadership	Committee members
Bee keeping and honey production	Bee keepers
Beehive making	Bee keepers
Guinea fowl rearing	Guinea fowl households and extension workers
Sustainable indigenous fruit harvesting	Fruit harvesters
Juice process and storage	Juice producers
Agroforestry	Selected households involved in agroforestry
Nursery establishment and tree seed collection	Selected villagers
Tree planting and management	All people

## Knowledge on technical issues

Apart from the utilization of knowledge and skills acquired from the project, the evaluation also assessed the knowledge of people in various aspects of the project including natural resource management, business management and legal issues. Over 57% of the respondents said that they know how to measure available stock while 66.3% said they know how to establish a sustainable harvest. It was also found out that 59.2% of the respondents know how much wood has been extracted from their forest areas. Over 81% of the respondents said that they know which tree species are not allowed to be cut. However, the challenge is that some of the tree species are no longer found and if they are found they are stolen at night by people. Cases of theft in village forest areas are increasing because, the by-laws enforcement has collapsed in many villages since most of the VNRMC are not performing well. People in the project were found to have a fair understanding of the management and utilization of their forest area judged by the level of knowledge on various aspects of the implementation of the management plan.

It was noted that the people in the area have a higher level of knowledge on marketing and business management. For example 73.4% and 73.5% of the respondents said that they know how to establish the price for their produce and how to calculate profit and losses from the sale of their products.

Mrs Chikapa, the group village headperson for Chikapa village said that in the past it was easy to ask people not to cut down certain tree species for particular purposes. For example one would not cut down *Khaya nyasica* for firewood and *Tamarind indica* for timber. However the pressure on the limited forest and tree resource is very high that limiting people to cut down particular tree species can easily be done if it is in an individual forest area. She indicated that she has tried in her village forest area but people come at night to still some of those “protected” tree species.

### 4.1.4. Income generation

#### Income Generation<sup>5</sup> and Livelihood Improvement

The project implemented a range of natural resource based income generating activities. All the project beneficiaries interviewed during the ex-post evaluation were engaged in one of more income generating activities the project introduced in the area and levels of income from 2003-2005 (Table 3). It was noted that the most popular IGAs in the project area are charcoal making, guinea fowl rearing, bee keeping selling of trees for charcoal and fruit juice production. IGAs such as cane furniture, wine making, tree seedling selling, fuel stones making and brickettee are no longer been practiced and have since collapsed with the end of the project. Many reasons were advanced by the people on why some IGAs are still performing well than others.

#### **Box 1. The case of Mr. Mataka the guinea fowl farmer from Samoson village**

I got two guinea fowl from my father in law in 2004 since he was the one participating in the WESM project. By 2007, the guinea fowls had increased to 120. Between November 2007 and March 2008, I sold close to 800 eggs at K85 (USD 0.60) each egg. In July this year, I sold 100 of my guinea fowls at K550 each. I have used the money to buy a daily cow and a bicycle. Even though I have bought a daily cow, I will continue to keep guinea fowls. There are some challenge that I am facing in the guinea fowl business. Some of the challenges include lack of the brooding chickens and lack of extension advisory services or technical support more especially when the birds are sick.

<sup>5</sup> It was difficult to establish income levels from the various IGAs during the ex-post evaluation because many people were not ready to provide actual income figures from their income from the IGAs.

People interview said that there is ready market for honey, fruit juice, guinea fowl eggs, guinea fowls both within and outside the project area. There are also some projects like the USAID funded beekeeping project which are promoting bee keeping in the area. The demand for fruit juice is very high both within and outside the projec area. For example indige-nous fruit juice is now sold in most supermarkets in Malawi and the production levels of fruit company in the project area is far bellow the demand.

Even though the demand for guinea fowl and guinea fowl eggs is high , there is a decline in the number of households still keeping guinea fowls. Availability of brooding chickens and chick diseases are some of the contributing factors for the decreased number of households keeping guinea fowls. However income levels from guinea fowl rearing are still high amongst households even though there is decline in the number of household keeping guen fowl (box 1). Some families are selling their guinea fowl to buy dairy cattle for milk production.

**Table 1: Income Generated by Communities from 2003 to 2005.**

Activity	No. of farmers involved	2003 <sup>6</sup>	2004	2005	Activity Totals
Juice	3	7,300.00	4,500.00	27,300.00	39,100.00
Honey	32	28,122.00	12,400.00	44,235.00	84,757.00
Guinea fowl birds	208	184,101.00	363,392.50	391,450.00	938,943.50
Guinea fowl eggs	208	8,066.00	0.00	56,700.00	64,766.00
Tree seedlings	18	11,227.00	29,930.00	84,260.00	125,417.00
Bwemba fruits	8	0.00	56,073.00	0.00	56,073.00
Malambe fruits	29	0.00	76,409.00	70,000.00	146,409.00
Cane furniture	2	0.00	21,000.00	51,500.00	72,500.00
Wine	3	3,815.00	6,104.00	70,370.00	80,289.00
Fuel stoves	4	0.00	1,310.00	0.00	1,310.00
Blue gum poles	8	0.00	0.00	15,400.00	15,400.00
Fruits & Vegetables	74	0.00	0.00	461,570.00	461,570.00
Yearly Totals		244,634.00	573,122.50	1,274,790.00	2,086,534.50

Source: Project Records

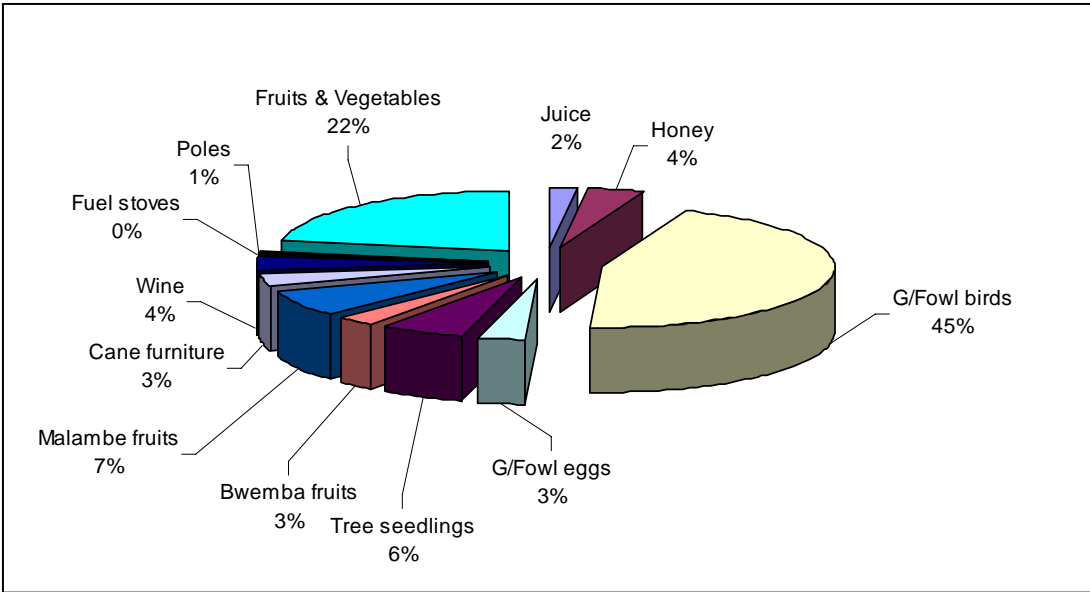


Figure 2: Comparison of income generated by communities from IGAs between 2003 and 2005

Figure 2 above show a trends in income levels during the project period between 2003 and 2005. As indicated above, the only IGA that are been implemented till today are the guinea fowl rearing, honey production, selling of guen fowl eggs, selling of malambe and bwemba fruits to Village Hands . Guinea fowl continues to generate more income for individual households as revealed bythe case of Mr. Mataka of Samison village. The coming in of the USAID funded honey production project is expected to increase the household income level from honey but currently the income levels per household are still lower than from guenea fowls.

All the people interviewed believe that the livelihood of the people has improved as a result of the project. It was indeed found out that about 90% of the people who were engaged in IGAs are currently being considered well to do in the project area becasue they have food throughout the year, have livestock, permanent houses and at least a bicycle and radio. Children from families involved in IGA have improved access to household basic needs and ecuation.

### **IGAs and natural resource management**

It was noted that all the households that are involved in bee keeping and guinea fowl rearing have village forest areas. Paul Mangani from George village said *“there is generally a change of attitude amongst people towards management of natural resources. People are very concious about cutting down trees carelessly. However the levels of income are extremely low amongst many housholds in his village and therefore a good number of families have reverted to cutting down trees for charcoal production after the project phased out.”*

Most of these houseolds have annual income levels ranging from K50,000-70,000 (USD 357-500) which is slightly higher than the national income levels of USD 230 per year per household. The improved income levels has a direct collerationship to the improved management of natural resources in the area. It was noted those families with higher levels of income have better forest areas and woodlots than those whose incomes are low.

#### **Box 1. Case study of Mr. Phiri (former charcoal producer)**

Before the project I was a serious charcoal producer. Even during the project period I used to produce charcoal but outside the project area. In 2005, I decided to change my business after seeing that trees and forest are declining fast from the area. The awareness campaigns from the project played a big role to change my attitude towards charcoal production. After being convinced, I registered to recieve guinea fowls. I also joined the bee keeping club. In 2006, the project bought 30 guinea fowl at K450 (USD 3.2) each from me. This was a morale booster for me and I bought extra eggs and brooding chickens to increase my guinea fowl stock. I now have over 100 guinea fowls which I am expecting to sell in December. The money I am going to realize will be used to buy iron sheets for my house and other basic household items.

I did not benefit much from bee keeping during the project period but now I have joined the honey production project which has enabled me to increase the number of bee hives from 5 to 20 and I sell 60kg of honey at K400/kg which amount to USD 171 after every harvest during the quarter. Previously I could not make this amount. I am now rich compared to my freinds who are still involved in charcoal production. I have my own forest area, two bicycles, an iron roofed house and adequate food for my house for the whole season. I even employ some household members to work in my gardens for food or money.

Even though there are a number of people like Mr Phiri, it was noted that charcoal production and selling from the project area mainly from individual village forest areas is still high as a result of the high demand for energy in urban centres close to the project area. Individual families sell trees to charcoal producers who come around the village looking for trees. This is also a big source of income to some families. However, village leaders are concerned with the increased production of charcoal in the area more especially if the families are not follo-

wing their management plans. Since the cutting down of trees is on individual forest areas, the village level committees or the village heads have little say on the management and utilization of the individual forest areas. Mechanisms for monitoring management and utilization of individual woodlots and forest areas are weak or do not exist currently since the phasing out of the project. Families are selling their trees for charcoal production without adequate advice from the forestry extension workers and most of times end up selling many trees in order to realize a reasonable amount of income which by the end of the day destroys their forests. Usually the charcoal producers buy a considerable amount of tree at a very cheap price. It was noted that a family sales each big tree at K140 or USD 1 but the charcoal producers require a large number of trees for them to make charcoal.<sup>7</sup> and therefore the families are tempted to sell many trees in order to get a considerable amount of money. The considerable gains made by the project the management of the forest and trees in the project area may easily be undermined with the increased need for cash by the households who own individual forest areas.

#### **4.1.5. Documentation of experiences and development of toolkits**

##### **Print and electronic publications**

The Malawi Forestry Act (1997) stipulates that communities can enter into management agreement with the government to manage a forest resource if they have approved management plans and by-laws. However since the Act was approved in 1997, there had not been any management agreement that was signed by the government with the communities. The Kamwamba provided some lessons to many communities and government when it announced the signing ceremony of their management plan and by-laws between the communities and Ministry of Natural Resources in 1999. From the day the management plans were signed, the government organized a series of radio and television programmes expressing their gratitude to WESM and local leaders in the project area for setting an example and pace in the implementation process of the Forest Policy (1996). The project received a lot of publicity in both print and electronic media both within and outside the country.

Apart from the media houses documenting the experiences from the project, WESM through its Nantchengwa magazine published various case studies and documentaries from the project. Various case studies and documentaries were published in newsletters and magazines published by COMPASS (Community Partnership for Sustainable Management of Natural Resources), Malawi Environmental Endowment Trust (MEET), Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust (MMCT), the Lump and in various Forestry Department newsletters.

The project also received a lot attention at international level. Various well known publications by USAID, FRAME, IUCN, Slow Food Editore of Italy, FAO, Centre for Under-utilised Crops, Springer Science and Business Media, M&E Media of South Africa and many others have published experiences and lessons from the project. The project staff and management of WESM have published their experiences from the project in a number of journals.

##### **Exhibitions and displays**

Since the project started WESM and the project have been participating in various exhibitions at national and international levels. For example, WESM has mounted exhibitions and displays in almost all the national and international events such as the World Environmental Days, World Water Days, World Population Days, National Independent Days, Agricultural Shows and Trade Fairs. Every year a team of farmers from the project area go to Italy to display their various products from the project. Apart from exhibiting in Italy every year the project used to organize variety shows in the project area for people from other villages in the district and projects from other districts in the country. As part of sharing lessons to other projects and districts, the government organized various national events such a Tree Planting Week which were inaugurated by the former president in the project area.

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<sup>7</sup> Local leaders estimated that one needs three trees to make a 50 kg bag of charcoal

During the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in South Africa in 2002, the Baobab (malambe) fruit juice production was held by IUCN as one of the natural resource based enterprises in Southern Africa which has a potential for uplifting the living standards of the poor households in Southern Africa. The project was therefore invited to mount displays during the Summit in Durban under the marketing burner of “*There is Another Way that Works.*”

Because of the attention the project attracted, the project had no choice but to share as much information and lessons as possible to many people and projects. Some of the hottest products from the project that everyone wanted to see and learn during each and every exhibition were guinea fowls rearing, indigenous fruit juice production and the community enthusiasm. All the exhibition and displays were always mounted by the villagers themselves and usually they used to combine them with a lot of dances and humour.

Documentation and sharing of lessons from the project has made it possible for many civil society organizations, government departments, private sector companies to adopt the community based approach and the various innovations such as fruit juice, bee keeping, guinea fowl rearing that the project introduced.

### **Exchange visits and tour**

The project encouraged and invited individuals and organizations to visit the project area and learn from the project beneficiaries in order to share as many lessons as possible. The visits were also used to motivate and encourage the project beneficiaries to work hard in their various project interventions. Each village had a visitor’s book to record where all the visitors to their village and project area were recorded. Visitors’ books at Group Village Headwomen Chikapa revealed that between 2000 and 2005, the village was receiving visitors every month both from within the country and outside the country. The Group Village Lady said that during that period the project received a lot of visitor than ever before. The Chairman for the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources’ visit to the project area in 2001 coincided with visitors from other projects. He said, if we can have more than one projects that are attracting visitors like Kamwamba in Malawi then information sharing and learning will be strong.

Project beneficiaries have also visited other projects in the country and outside the country where they made presentations and held discussions with people from the various projects. The adoption rate of the intervention from this project in Malawi is very high partly because of the exchange visits the project promoted.

Apart from information sharing, the exposure visits strengthened the level of confidence amongst the project beneficiaries which in turn improved their level of participation. However, currently, the level of confidence in some of the project beneficiaries has gone down since they are no longer going for exchange visits and level of visits by outside individuals and organizations has gone down.

### **Development of toolkits**

As part of sharing the lessons learnt from the project, WESM and project management developed a number of toolkits which continue to be used by many government departments, NGOs and community based organization as well as other projects in the country and outside the country. Some of the toolkits developed by the project include the following:

- Guinea fowl rearing (Kuweta Nkhanga)
- Indigenous fruit juice processing
- Simple guide to By-Laws development for VFA (Kupanga malamulo oyendetsera nkhalango za mmidzi)
- Bee keeping and honey production (Ulimi wa njuchi)

- Simple steps for indigenous seed collection (Ndondomeko zotolera mbeu zakunkhalango)

All the project facilitator more especially the extension workers said that the tools are simple to use and are continuously being used when training local people in the villages. The tool kits are now part of the extension worker field guides. Field Officers for the Clinton Hunter Development Initiative project said that their project just reproduced the toolkit instead of developing new one since the WESM project did good work already.

Various projects in the country that are promoting guinea fowl, bee keeping, tree planting are actually using the tool kits that were developed by the WESM project. World Visions International said that they have all the copies of the tool kits from the project and each of their community facilitators has a copy which they use for training farmers. Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust, the Department of Forestry and other Civil Society Organizations involved in natural resource management use the Simple steps to By-laws development as a guide for communities to follow when they are developing by-laws for their forest areas and forest blocks from the research under co-management agreements.

The development of the toolkits has also assisted to popularise the project as well assist other communities and projects to easily promote the various sustainable forest management interventions that project was promoting in Kamwamba area. Some of the tool kits like the Guinea fowl rearing and bee keeping were also circulated to other similar projects in Mozambique, Botswana and Namibia.

#### **4.1.6. Marginalized Groups**

The project deliberately targeted female headed households, widows, orphans, HIV infected as its primary beneficiaries during the course of its implementation. During the project period 56% of the village level institutions were headed by women and 40% of those women leaders were widows or keeping orphans at their households. The project targeted women in its empowerment process where over 65% of villagers participating in IGAs were women.

At baseline, the project area had 35% females headed households who received two guinea fowls each as a group. The guinea fowls were “passed-on” to other project beneficiaries through eggs. The requirement was that each family to be passed on should have at least a brooding chicken that will hatch the eggs. There were some widows who are benefited from various other income generating activities such as vegetable growing, bee keeping and various training activities that the project offered. During the ex-post evaluation, it was found out that over 80% of the women who benefited from the project are continuing with their IGAs.

About 71.5% of the people interviewed confirmed that the livelihood of the marginalized groups of people in the project area has improved with the implementation of the project. There are many women just like Mrs. Samisoni who also have stories to tell about their benefits from the project.

It was noted that 69.4% of the people interviewed said that marginalized groups of people were satisfied with their participation in decision making more especially in other development activities not necessarily related to natural resource management since some of the VNRMCs are not functional. Before the project ended they used to be invited for meetings or they could hear announcements through the village head from the committees but they do not hear anything concerning the committee now. One of the committee members from Mgwenyama village said that the committee receive no support to continue existing and most of the people like to work independently now as opposed to the period when the project was still being implemented. It was learnt that if an activity directly benefits the marginalized groups of people, participation from such people is very high regardless of whether the village level institutions are functional or not.

**Box 2. Case study of Mrs. Samison, a widow.**

*Mr name is Mrs. Samison. I have a family of 6 children, three boys and three girls. I lost my husband in 1997 after he had just completed his contracted with one of the companies in Blantyre. Before he died we used to live a happy life but things changed after his death. It become tough for me to fend for the family more especially for my school going children.. In 2000, I decided to join the WESM facilitated project hoping that I could get some support. I realized that I made a good decision. "WESM gave me a perfect gift that I will continue to cherish. WESM gave me the training, skills, guinea fowl and the bee hives. From guinea fowl, I have been able to send my children to school; I have constructed an iron roofed house. To-day all my children go to school. One of my children has just finished her tertiary education and I am very proud of that. To me the project has changed my life and my children will live a better life. I do not consider myself as a widow any longer. I generate close K60,000 (USD 429) a year from my various IGA activities. If it was possible for my husband to come back from the grave, he will be a very happy man to see how the family has changed as a result of the project."*

#### **4.1.7. Sustainability**

##### **Opportunities, threats and risks for continuation of the project activities**

The ex-post evaluation found out that 85% of the project activities continue to be implemented in the project area. Most of the project activities in the pilot project were introduced at both group and individual level. For example, guinea fowls were given to a group first so that they can learn together on how to keep and management them. Thereafter individuals were benefiting from the eggs. By 2006, a lot of individual farm families had their own guinea fowls, bee hives, and forest areas and were doing their businesses as individual at the same time continuing with group activities. The ex-post evaluation found that over 95% of the surviving project activities are being carried out by individual families not as a group. Even though it can be concluded that most of the project activities continue to be implemented, there are a number of challenges and risks that people face to continue the project activities. It was also noted that there are many opportunities that can allow the project activities to continue as summarized in table 2.

Table 2 reveal a number of threats to the continuity of some project interventions. Some of threats can easily be mitigated if local support is provided in terms of coaching and mentoring. For example most of the village level institutions are not functioning because they currently lack coaching and mentoring support. Because most of the project activities are now happening at household level, but many extension services target groups. This may be a challenge to many individually managed project intervention which apparently are the ones that are surviving now. To local people, they say this is not a big issue because through the project they learnt a lot of skills that is why they are continuing with the project activities. What it means therefore is that targeting groups will work at the beginning of the project but since the biggest interest for many people is to satisfy individual needs, as the project progresses, people move towards operating independent of each other. The household satisfaction is also determining the sustainability of project activities because most of the project activities that are currently continuing are those being implemented by individuals.

The downside to increased individual participation in the project activities is that those who have forest areas are easily tempted to sell the trees without considering their management plans in an effort to get more money. They have the decisions making power to decide what to do with their forest areas. The forest areas may easily be wiped out because households in an effort to get more money they harvesting their forest areas beyond the allowable limit as outlined in the management plan

## **Level of acknowledge of project activities by local government**

The local government authority has district development plans which are produced in line with district planning process. According the Director of Planning and Development, the district plans are produced from the village development plans. The officer said that the project in Kamwamba is fully recognised and reflected in the district development plans. He however intimated that reflecting them in the plans does not guarantee funding and implementation process of the district plans is always slow and some times certain things are never implemented. The district plans reflect issues of HIV and AIDS mainstreaming, natural resource management and promotion of various types of forest based enterprises as some of the priority areas under the district environmental and natural resource management components.

Realizing the implementation challenges at community and local government levels, the project put in place sustainability mechanisms before phasing out its activities. Some of the sustainability mechanisms were already put in place during the design phase of the project like setting up village level project structures, targeting group as well as individuals, recruitment of members of staff and volunteers<sup>8</sup> from the project area who remained after the project phased out.

Some of the local structures that the project established and continue to exist today include the following: Village Hands Limited which was registered in 2004 as a limited company with Board of Directors but is owned by the people from the 14 villages of the project through the Kamwamba Natural Resource Management Trust. The company buys raw materials (indigenous fruits) from families and individuals within the project area. Apart from being a market for the indigenous fruits the company also employees its members of staff from the project area. The company buy Bwamba and Malambe fruits from the villages thereby supporting those individual and families that are collecting indigenous fruits.

The Kamwamba Natural Resource Management Trust was set up to among other coordinate all the village natural resource management committees in the project area as well as oversee implementation of the management plans and enforcement of the by-laws. The Trust acts as an Area Natural Resource Management Committee for the project area. The Trust exists and is fully functional but most of the VNRMCs are not fully functional just as is the case with the project based committees such as nursery committees.

The formation of a local steering committee comprising local leaders and local government personnel was one of the sustainability strategies to ensure that the project is recognized at district level. The local steering committee ensured that the project was being implemented in line with the government policies at the same time ensuring that the project activities are institutionalised in the district planning processes. Being part of the district project, the local government has been able to consider some of the problems people from the project area were facing such as access to markets, medical services and electrical power. The improvement of access road in the project has made it possible for some families to sustain their IGAs because they easily bring their products to the market or buyers easily access them in their various homes. It was noted that the connection of the area into the electricity grid has boosted juice production at the juice factory because now they are using power from electricity to produce fruit juices and jam.

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<sup>8</sup> The members of staff and local volunteer continue to be active in the area but their support to the project activities is limited to the villages where they are based. Since they are in no way compelled to provide support to the communities, their continued involvement in the project activities is minimal but they are at times asked to provide support by the individual families.

**Table 2. Opportunities, threats and risks for project activity continuation**

Activity	Opportunities	Threats	Risks
Establishment of VFA and VNRMCs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both village and individual forest areas continue to exist</li> <li>• Village leaders keen to ensure implement the management plans</li> <li>• Existence of legally recognized Area Natural Resource Management Trust</li> <li>• Other projects and organization willing to use the existing structures</li> <li>• Enormous knowledge on natural resource management exist</li> <li>• Government supportive of the initiative</li> <li>• Project approach in line with the government policies</li> <li>• Policy and legal framework conducive for implementation of the management plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak or non-functional VNRMCs</li> <li>• Individual families harvesting their forest areas without reference to management plans</li> <li>• Survival of the VFA dependent of strength of the village leadership</li> <li>• VNRMC not able to solve conflicts</li> <li>• VNRMC not truly representative of the community aspirations</li> <li>• Charcoal production on the increase in individual forest areas</li> <li>• Weak forest extension services</li> <li>• Weak by-law enforcement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most of the individual forest area may be wiped out with increased demand for charcoal</li> <li>• Community ownership element in VFA may be lost</li> <li>• Community decision making giving way to individual decision making process</li> <li>• By-laws will lose value and meaning</li> </ul>
IGAs from NTFPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existence of projects and organizations promoting IGAs in the area</li> <li>• Markets available for indigenous fruit, fruit juice, honey, guinea fowls and eggs within the project area and urban centres</li> <li>• Knowledge of IGA available amongst people</li> <li>• High interest to expand their IGAs by people</li> <li>• Interest of the local government authority to promote and fund some IGAs</li> <li>• Toolkits available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diseases and limited brooding chicken stock in case of guinea fowls</li> <li>• Increased charcoal production may affect guinea fowl and bee keeping IGAs</li> <li>• Limited financial and human resources by local government authority</li> <li>• Weak business and marketing skills amongst some people</li> <li>• Weak extension support services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities may abandon some IGA in favour of IGAs that have extension support services</li> <li>• Lack of brooding chickens may reduce the population of guinea fowls</li> <li>• Interest of people in the IGA may be lost</li> <li>• Forest areas may be lost due charcoal production</li> </ul>
School clubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental and natural resource management is part of the school curriculum</li> <li>• Schools mandated to have clubs</li> <li>• Teacher willing to coordinate school clubs</li> <li>• Parents support is strong</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher transfers affecting performance of club</li> <li>• Limited continuity due to school closures and pupil transfers</li> <li>• HIV and AIDS pandemic affecting teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak support discourage teachers</li> <li>• Limited financial resources</li> <li>• Activities of the clubs not fully budgeted for by the Ministry of Education</li> </ul>
Communal and tree nurseries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for tree planting is strong</li> <li>• Many projects and organizations supporting tree planting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survival rates very low due to drought and livestock</li> <li>• Seed materials availability limited</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communal tree planting will not continue</li> <li>• Any effort on tree planting may</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deforestation is high in the area due to charcoal</li> <li>• Government support for tree planting intention strong even though not supported by financial resources</li> <li>• Skill and knowledge existing in the area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Village level institutions not fully functional</li> <li>• Participating families not getting the anticipated monetary benefits</li> </ul>	treated with caution by the communities
Awareness campaigns on HIV and AIDS and natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many support organizations</li> <li>• Financial resources readily available</li> <li>• High level of awareness amongst people</li> <li>• Local government has a district plan and budget for such activities now</li> <li>• Knowledge on HIV and AIDS exist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of capable people</li> <li>• Weak implementation of the district plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIV and AIDS more pronounced than sustainable natural resource management</li> </ul>
Establishment of a community based company- Village Hands limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community owned</li> <li>• Raw materials for fruit juice readily available</li> <li>• Demand for fruit juice very high</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition from project to company not understood by villagers</li> <li>• Expectations from company too high by the community</li> <li>• Staff and trustees expected money from the project that had phased out to run the company</li> <li>• Inadequate company management skills within the villages in the project area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closure of company due to misunderstandings</li> </ul>

#### **4.1.8. Project Approach**

The project is considered as one of the successful natural resource management projects in Malawi because of its approach in its implementation cycle. Right from the problem identification and design phase, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, the target group were fully involvement. During the project identification phase, a series of participatory processes were conducted where all the stakeholder i.e. local communities, local leaders, various natural resource users, government, civil society organizations were involved. The process of identifying the project did not only end at doing the participatory assessments through the participatory rural appraisal, when the reports of the assessment were done, meetings were organized in the villages, at district and national level to discuss the various options identified and alternatives to the solutions identified.

When the project was approved and started being implemented in the project area, all the stakeholder were already aware of the key problems the project was trying to address which were affecting the majority of the poor and forest dependent people in the target area. What the implementing agency did was to introduce the project and its implementation modalities which were in line with the government policies and therefore did not introduce something totally new in terms of the implementation process. The various village, area and district level institutional structures that were established to implement the project were already being practiced in many parts of the country. However, the focus on the livelihoods of the people in order to promote sustainable natural resource management was a new initiative in the country.

The long-term nature of natural resource management intervention before they bear fruits or results prompted the project to promote sustainable natural resource management by introducing the intervention that provided short terms benefits to the communities while awaiting long-term benefits. This innovativeness attracted many forest dependent poor people who joined the project to participate in various project interventions. The publicity of the project attracted more attention both within the country and outside. The project used to be advertised on the radio, television, newspapers and many forms of media. In addition to the print and electronic media, the project benefited a lot from the many national and international events where it displayed most of its products and innovations. The use of the project beneficiaries to participate in the national and international events encouraged many people to participate in the project. A lot of individuals and organizations visited the project area to learn and many project beneficiaries have visited projects within the country and outside the country to explain their project. A lot of research work has been conducted in the project by researchers and students from various universities and research institutions. These activities helped to open up the project area and the various innovations the project was promoting.

Openness to learning by the implementing organization made it possible for the project to change and revised some of its approaches. For example, the decision to phase out the project into a community based private company is one such innovation that came about as a result of the various lessons learnt during the first and second phases of the project. The international nature of the project introduced an element of competition between the country projects. WESM did not want to be an old one out in the implementation such as an initiatives that was trying to pilot implementation of some government policies such as the forestry, environmental policy, decentralization policy just to mention a few.

#### **4.1.9. Project Management and Coordination**

##### **Project implementation structures**

The implementing agency of the project set up a project implementation management unit which was based in the project area. The management unit had a coordinator and team of community based facilitators who were supported by a team of support staff at the project management unit office. In the villages, a team of project volunteer who were also project beneficiaries were selected and trained to work closely with the community based facilitators.

The volunteers were motivated with the various training activities they used to receive and other materials such as t-shirt the project provided during awareness campaigns. Even though not paid the volunteer were key innovators and motivators in the villages.

In line with the decentralization policy, the PMU set up village level committees for the project such as VNRMCs, guinea fowl rearing committees, nursery committee and others. These committees were coordinated at village area level through the Area natural resource Management Committee (ANRMC). The project had a local steering committee (LSC) and National Project Steering Committee at district and national level respectively (figure 1). The project had a German Government DED Project Advisor during who was based in the project area to provide advice on the implementation process of the project.

The current structure of the project reflects the implementation of the exit and sustainability strategy that was developed during the second phase of the project. The project phased into a company called Village Hands Limited and the Area Natural Resource Management Committee phased into a Trust called Kamwamba Natural Resource Management Trust which is registered under the Trustee Incorporation Act of Malawi as a Trust.

### **Reporting and coordination arrangements**

The project had an elaborate and efficient reporting and coordination mechanism. The project used to produce reports that were presented during both local steering committee and national steering committee meetings. The project established a community based monitoring systems where the communities were involved in the monitoring of the project activities. The project beneficiaries through the local leaders used to organize meetings at village level to discuss and review various project activities. Outcomes from these meetings were presented to PMU through the community volunteers and community based facilitator who used to have monthly meetings at the PMU.

The PMU used to organize stakeholder meetings where various other key players such as government departments, NGOs, CBOs and local leaders from villages outside the project area used to attend. Apart from sharing lessons and experienced, the stakeholder meetings provided a forum for the stakeholders to provide feedback to the PMU on the implementation process of the project.

The elaborate project management structure and reporting systems strengthened coordination between and amongst the various units of the project which ensured effective implementation. Even though the project had these structures to coordinate implementation of the project, management and utilization of the structure faced some challenges during the course of implementing the project. For example, the 2001 project evaluation report revealed some shortfalls in the coordination between the forestry extension workers and the PMU. The report also observed that there were tendencies for many people to work independently making the work of the various project based village committee difficult. However, the PMU and WESM in general managed to come through this by using the observation from the 2001 project evaluation, various other lessons learnt to improve coordination and collaboration.

However, the transition from project to a limited company seems not to be fully understood by people in the project area. The Trust and employees of the company expected that the establishment of the company meant that all the moneys that were coming for project activities would now be channelled into the company which was not the case. This caused some friction between members of staff, members of the Trust and the implementing organization WESM. The ex-post evaluation concludes that the transition process itself was not clear even though they accepted to transform the project more especially the fruit juice factory into a limited company. The communities needed more time to understand the transition process as well as clear guidance on the operations of the company in relation to the people in the project area. All the efforts have been made to ensure that people understand the transition process and current Board of Directors and Trustee work very closely to ensure that the company makes enough profits for the community.

## 4.2. Assessment according to international evaluation criteria

### 4.2.1. General remarks

In line with the international evaluation criteria, the table below indicates the relationship between the outputs of the project that were assessed and the international evaluation criteria. The ex-post evaluation assessed a number of outputs of the project in particular the empowerment process; implementation of the management plan, income generation activities; impact on the marginalized groups of people; sustainability of the various project interventions; capacity building and sharing of experiences and replicability of the project. Using the international evaluation criteria, the outputs have been rated accordingly as summarised in table 2 below.

- **Relevance.** Based on the summaries in table 2, community empowerment, income generation activities, sustainability, experiences sharing and replication of the project activities are highly relevant to analysing the relevance of the project. The development and implementation process of the forest management plan and capacity building process are relevant but not highly relevant for the analysing the relevance of the project.
- **Effectiveness.** The development and implementation of the management plan is highly relevance in the analysis of the effectiveness of the project. The evaluation team also found out that community empowerment; income generation and capacity building are relevant for analysing the effectiveness of implementing the project.
- **Impact.** Using the international evaluation criteria, project impact, income generation activities and capacity building are highly relevant for analysing the impact of the project in the district and the country. The assessment should also look at forest management plan, marginalized, marginalized groups and capacity building because they are relevant to analysing the impact of the project
- **Sustainability.** Community empowerment, income generation and sustainability mechanisms are the project outputs that are highly relevant for analysing the sustainability of the project. It was also noted that forest management plans, experiences and replication of the project are relevant for analysing the sustainability of the project.

It was also noted that marginalized groups as an output is still relevant but less significant in analysing the project effectiveness and sustainability. Sharing of experiences and lessons as well as the replicability of the project interventions may still be relevant but in a significant way to analyse the effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the project.

Table 2. Analysis of results of the ex-post evaluation.

	Relevance	Effectiveness	Impact	Sustainability
Empowerment	xxx	Xx	Xxx	xxx
Forest management plan	xx	Xxx	Xx	xx
Income generation	xxx	Xx	Xxx	xxx
Marginalized groups			Xx	
Sustainability	xxx		Xx	xxx
Capacity building	xx	Xx	Xxx	xx
Experiences, replication	xxx			

xxx = output highly relevant for the analysis of the evaluation criterion; xx = outputs is relevant for the analysis of the evaluation criterion; x = output less relevant; blank = output may still be relevant, but in a less significant way

### 4.2.2. Relevance

#### Project Relevance- Rating: 1

The project was designed to address the problem of rapid deforestation in Mwanza East, by focusing on the underlying causes of poverty, inadequate environmental awareness and building capacity of the communities to enable them manage their natural resources to ensure better living standards. In line with the identified prob-

lems, the implementation process was well in line with the national, regional and global policies, agreements and protocols. The project supported implemented of the government Vision 2020 and the Poverty Reduction Strategy which lead to the development of the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy. The project was also implemented within the framework of the national natural resource related policies such as forestry, environment, land, food security, decentralization policy as well other government programmes such as the National Forestry Programme and the decentralization programme.

Realizing the impact of the project on the poor people, organizations and government departments are replicating the project in many parts of the country. Over 10 companies and organization have now started processing indigenous fruits as an off shoot from the SMIF project. Some of these companies and organizations include Tree Crops Limited which produces and packages Baobab Flour, Baobab Oil and other products for local use and export; Naturals, another company which is making Malambe Juice Khathi-Khathi; Magomero Women's Group in Zomba which produces Baobab juices, Jam and Sweets; Nabomba Women Jam Making Group in Chikwawa which produces Jam and Ngolowindo Women's Group in Salima which produces Baobab Juice and other companies exist in Malawi.

Other countries in the SADC region have adopted some of the project interventions and are promoting them in their countries. For example a sister Country Project in Namibia purchased some Guinea Fowls from Project Farmers in 2001. Those birds were distributed to other farmers involved in project activities in Namibia. The birds were being sold at R200 to R250 per bird (Mwalukomo H, 2006). Guinea fowls have been domesticated in Namibia from the Malawi project.

At national level, several Government Departments and Non Governmental Organizations purchased guinea fowls from the project area that were distributed to various community groups and individuals as capital inputs for breeding purposes. These include Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, Joint OXFAM Program Malawi, World Vision International (WVI), Blantyre Synod Project, Malawi Red Cross Society, the Lutheran Development Service as well as some companies. So many individuals also bought guinea fowls for consumption and breeding. Although the number of guinea fowls originating from these breeding stocks has not been quantified, it is obvious that guinea fowls have since multiplied in various parts of the country.

USAID conducted a detailed evaluation exercise of the SMIF project at their own expense with the aim of replicating the project at national level in 2001 (Gil Enterprise Consultants, 2001). This study led to the development and initiation of the Community Partnerships for Sustainable Resource Management (COMPASS) Project. With funding from Joint Oxfam Program in Malawi, WESM extended the project in the name of Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) extra 18 villages around the project area. WESM also extended to the project activities to other districts in the country.

Since 2006, the project has been sending two farmer representatives to Italy to showcase value added natural products from the project area i.e. honey, malambe and bwemba juice. Farmers from the project area showcased in 2006, 2007 and two representatives were in Italy during the ex-post evaluation exercise in October 2008.

Long after the project had stopped its operations, a number of International organizations and individuals visited the project to learn what was happening there. Dr. Peter de Groot from the European Centre of Underutilized Crops in the United Kingdom visited the project site in 2008 to learn from the project.

At national level, project activities have been adopted and replicated as much as possible. For example, the Malambe Fruit Products which were unknown in 1997, are now a household name everywhere. Apart from Village Hands selling Malambe Fruit Juices, there are so many companies produced Malawi Fruit Products. The Malambe Industry is now booming, thriving and well organized in Malawi. Most markets are crowded with Malambe Flour vendors selling tonnes of Malambe Flour stacked in bags. These vendors sell the flour to retail-

ers who in turn sell the flour in small packets to women who produce Malambe Fruit Juice freezes. One vendor indicated that there is big money in the Malambe fruit.

The project has significantly improved availability and access to natural resource by the local people in the project area. However since there is high deforestation rates in many parts surrounding the project area, there is increased pressure on the individual families with forest areas to sell trees for charcoal and firewood. The increased need for improved household income may influence individual families to sell their trees which by the end of the day my undermined the gains achieved by the project.



*Photo: Malambe fruits, Limbe Market in Blantyre, October 2008.*

#### **4.2.3. Effectiveness**

##### **Project Effectiveness- Rating 2:**

The initial project was aimed at improving forest management while addressing livelihood needs of communities at the same time. To achieve this aim, a number of objectives were implemented during all the phases of the project. The implementation of these objectives has been satisfactory, despite some challenges.

While strategies to reduce deforestation were developed and implemented, deforestation was not reduced as expected. Instead charcoal making and trade continued in some parts of the target area during the project period and after the project period. A number of reasons were responsible for this observation. There is relaxation on forest law enforcement by the responsible Government Department. Charcoal business does not require any capital and therefore is attractive for resource poor people who want to venture into business. This makes it an attractive business than tree planting and other initiatives. A charcoal study conducted in four Cities of Blantyre, Zomba, Lilongwe and Mzuzu in 2007 revealed that the Charcoal business is worth estimated at a total value of MK5.78 billion per year; almost equivalent to 2006 tea exports (Kambewa et al 2007).

On a positive note, the project contributed significantly to the livelihood security of many families in the project area. Over MK5 million has been generated by local communities in the target area. The project also increased the participation of women in all its activities. About 56% of the user groups were mainly headed by women with one VNRMC being totally represented by women.

Various forest management activities were implemented including tree planting and management, creation of forest areas under different management regimes, and establishment of local institutions for effective management of forest resources

On the overall, the forest resource changed positively in stocking density from 548 to 793.73 stems per hectare in 1998 to 2006 respectively translating into +30.95 % gain. Individual forest areas (IFA – regulated) with strong leadership attained the highest stocking density from 548 to 1740.97 stems per hectare translating into +68.5% gain. Village forest areas (VFAs) (areas which fall under the village forest rules) gained by +48.31% during the same period

from 548 to 1060.29 stems per hectare. Individual forest areas (IFA – unregulated) with weak leadership attained the lowest gain +24.06% (from 548 to 603.08 stems per hectare) (Chanyenga et al. 2006).

**Table 3. Percent change in stocking densities of trees 5 cm Dbh and above.**

	Overall stocking (1998)	IFA unregulated (2006)	IFA regulated (2006)	VFA Regulated (2006)	Total Control (2006)	Overall stocking (2006)
Stems/ha	548	603.08	1740.97	1060.29	912.5	793.73
% change	-	+24.06	+68.50%	+48.31	+39.95	+30.95

*Source: Chanyenga, Chithila & Ndhrazi (2006)*

Most of the objectives in the last phase were implemented successfully. Methods and plans for sustainable use of natural resources were developed and implemented successfully, and the marketing of Non Timber Forest Products, especially Malambe and Bwemba Fruit Juices was improved. New markets were identified at Shoprite and various other Chain Stores in the country. The major challenge for Village Hands Limited has been capitalisation of the production process to ensure continued supply of the products. The project also managed to raise the level of civic education and awareness about environmental management. Finally, an independent management structure was put in place. The Kam'mwamba Natural Resources Management Trust is still active two years after the project finished.

With respect to gender, HIV and AIDS, the project have been very successful. Women participation has been very high. Various HIV and AIDS awareness and maintstreaming activities assisted the project beneficiaries and project staff to understand the linkages between natural resource management and HIV and AIDS. The project currently has a highly sensitized community on HIV and AIDS as result of integrated HIV and AIDS and reproductive health messages.

#### 4.2.4. Efficiency

The establishment of the PMU and the various national, district and village level project management structures helped improve the implementation process and coordination of the project. People interviewed said that the management structure and technical support both to the project and from the project to the communities was excellent. Management made sure that they comply with all the reporting requirements and procedure of the project.

In relation to financial inputs, the total project financing costs from 1997 to 2006 amounted to MK76, 129,854.00. At the same time, a total income of MK8, 587,806.50 was generated from various NTFPs during the same period.

**Table 4: Project Budget / Expenditure against Project Income from Various NTFPs**

PHASE	PROJECT BUDGET/EXPENDITURE		INCOME FROM NTFPS
		MALAWI KWACHA	MALAWI KWACHA
1997 to 1998	Euro 202,000	10,001,394	282,057
1999 to 2002	Euro 301,662	43,740,990	4,154,000
2003 to 2006	Euro 150,000	22,387,470	4,151,749
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>Euro 653,662</b>	<b>76,129,854</b>	<b>8,587,806</b>

*Source: Data extracted from Project Documents at WESM Offices. DM transformed to Euro.*

While other project benefits such as environmental services and products of trees for agroforestry, timber, carbon sequestration, soil and water conservation are not documented, it is clear that financial inputs injected into this project far outweighs the financial outputs.

An attempt was made by Gill Enterprise Consultants (2001) to derive a Benefit-Cost Rate for project operations projected over a 10 year period at 20% Discount rate. The consultants took into account all costs including administration, overheads and capital expenditure on buildings and processing equipment. The Benefit – Cost Rate was 0.45 (rates of <1 indicate that project is not viable). The Benefit-Cost Ratio of 0.45:1 showed that the revenue generated from the project outputs; mainly NTFPs were insufficient to cover expenditure levels projected over 10 years. The Net Discounted Benefits stream was negative for the years 0-10, which meant that the project had no break-even point (I-e. it was not possible to derive an Internal Rate of Return (IRR).

Despite this gloomy picture, cumulative project benefits in the long run will outweigh the financial inputs of the project considering that project operations are still on going, and many of the project activities have been replicated and adopted by other communities in and outside Malawi.

#### **4.2.5. Impact**

##### **Project Impact -Rating: 2**

Three major impact areas have been assessed. These are economic impact, environmental impact and social impact.

##### **Economic Impact**

In general, the project has managed to improve the livelihoods of almost 90% of the 1900 households (or 9,000 people) from the thirteen villages. It is important to recognize the fact that all households were involved in at-least one project activity. Sustainable utilization of forest resources improved both social and economic conditions in the Mwanza Area. For example, since 1997, over MK8, 500,000.00 have been realized by communities from the sale of various NTFPs including Guinea fowl rearing, bee keeping and fruit juices. The money went directly to farmers, increasing their incomes from US\$43.00 to over US\$500.00 per capita per annum for sum engaged in these activities (Mauambeta et al. 2008). Many of the households have invested this money in education for their children, construction of brick burnt iron corrugated roofed houses with cemented floor, clothing, livestock, oxcarts, farm implements and similar investments.

##### **Case Study**

*Mr Yohane Juwa, a former Project Village Based Worker, and now a progressive farmer from Chikwekwe village testified that his life has changed because of the project. He has been keeping guinea fowls and doing bee keeping. He says since the project came to an end, he has managed to own over 15 cattle, bought an oxcart and farm implements, built a very good house and bought two cell-phones. He hires the oxcart and the farm implements to other farmers. He regrets that the project had to come to an end. He thinks there will never be another comparable project in this area.*

*This example and many more, exist in the project area.*

##### **Environmental Impact**

The project developed and implemented various strategies aimed at reducing deforestation. Some of the strategies included raising awareness about dangerous of deforestation, raising tree seedlings and planting trees at individual, village and institutional levels, encouraging the planting fruit trees for children every year; encouraging natural regeneration within forest areas, and promoting land use planning and development of forest management plans. Using all these measures, deforestation rate which was estimated at 1.6% in 1997 decreased to

about 1.4% in 2006 (Chanyenga et al. 2006). However, this decrease could be as a result of inadequate trees in the area. At the same time, the forest resource changed positively in stocking density from 548 to 793.73 stems per hectare in 1998 to 2006 respectively translating into +30.95 % gain. Individual forest areas (IFA – regulated) with strong leadership attained the highest stocking density from 548 to 1740.97 stems per hectare translating into +68.5% gain. Village forest areas (VFAs) (areas which fall under the village forest rules) gained by +48.31% during the same period from 548 to 1060.29 stems per hectare. Individual forest areas (IFA – unregulated) with weak leadership attained the lowest gain +24.06% (from 548 to 603.08 stems per hectare) (Chanyenga et al. 2006). However, this gain continues to be undermined by the continued illegal cutting of trees for charcoal production.

The campaign on plant a fruit tree for each child every year increased the number and variety of fruit trees for food and sale. This improved both the nutrition and household incomes. Soil and water conservation structures using vetivar, contour bands and ridge alignment, combined with agroforestry activities reduced soil loss and increased water retention in gardens. This in turn increased crop yield at the house level. A number of households had surplus food reserves over the past few years due to integrated farming technologies.

## **Social Impact**

In 1996 when a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) was conducted as part of a baseline survey for this project, the project area was one of the least developed areas in Neno District. Though a very dry area, there were no water boreholes. People were drinking water from unsafe and unreliable water sources. In 1997, as part of pre-conditions for project success, WESM Project Management took the issue of water supply to the area as number one priority. The issue was brought to the Mwanza District Assembly. During the same year, over sixteen boreholes were sunk in all the villages using funding from the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF 1). Since that time, water was brought to the people, and people's lives greatly improved. Communities, especially women and children, could now concentrate on project activities than searching for water (Mauambeta, D, personal communication 2008).

Another great social improvement that has occurred in this area is the empowerment of women and men through training and awareness creation. Women are now able to compete in leadership positions.

The project also increased knowledge and skills amongst beneficiaries about environmental management and HIV and AIDS. For example, the youth increased their knowledge of wildlife through visits to protected areas. The rest of the communities are now aware about the impacts of HIV & AIDS and how they can prevent contracting the deadly disease.

Two recent outstanding social impacts have been the introduction into the area of cellphone networks and electricity. Initially, cellphones were owned only by the well to do from towns and cities. For the past three years, cellphone ownership by local communities has increased using money realised from the sale of NTFPS promoted by the project. Almost all cellphone owners were using the project office solar power system to charge their cellphones. Communities are now able to communicate with each other, and do various business activities with ease than ever before.

When the project was starting 1997, there was no electricity in the project area. The WESM Project Management Team worked hard to convince the Electricity Supply Commission of Malawi (ESCOM) to extend an electricity line from the nearby Trading Centre of Zalewa to Kam'mwamba. By mid-2008, electricity was connected to the Project Office Building and the rest of the Kam'mwamba Trading Centre. This development has brought in other social amenities- maize mills, shops, and other benefits. This has also meant that women do not have to travel long distances to grind their maize into flour, and they pay less for the electric run maize mill engines compared to diesel run engine, making financial savings for other household needs. Communities attribute this development to the presence of the SMIF Project (Mauambeta, D. Personal communication, 2008).

On a negative part, as a result of the electricity, many developers are settling in the area. Part of an area that was once allocated to the project office, was re-allocated to a maize mill investor by the Village Headwoman. This issue was still under discussion amongst the Kam'mwamba Village Natural Resources Management Trust at the time of the visit to the area.

#### 4.2.6. Sustainability

##### Project sustainability- Rating: 2

About 85% of the interventions in the project area are still continuing amidst many challenges. When the project was phasing out in 2006, a number of sustainability measures were put in place. This involved putting in place local institutions which would carry on with project activities into the future.

One such institution was the establishment of a private company known as “**Village Hands Limited**” which was registered in October 2004. The company has a Board of Directors and is owned by the community through the Kam'mwamba Natural Resources Management Trust which was registered separately. The Board which comprises experienced business, quality management and environmental experts is the steering body of the enterprise. Village Hands Limited has been mainly responsible for the marketing of the branded fruit juices and honey.

While activities have continued beyond 2006, VHL experienced a number of challenges. First, the staff members working at the VHL and the Trustees did not differentiate between a **donor funded project** and an **independent limited company**. This led to a confusion amongst these members especially on financial matters. Most of the Trustees and staff members thought GTZ had left a substantial amount of money for them to use beyond the project period. The second challenge was administrative, inadequate management and leadership of VHL. The current Operations Manager, even though well educated to a Bachelors' Degree level, lacks management and leadership skills. These two factors have led VHL almost stop production due to abscondment of work by juice production staff and litigation by staff against VHL Management and Board Members. Inadequate production of juices has also exhausted the capital that VHL had build over the years. However, efforts are underway to resume production of products at VHL.

The second institution that was put in place to oversee project activities was the Kam'mwamba Natural Resources Management Trust. This was aimed at addressing some operational weaknesses of VNRMCs and to have a well defined and permanent institutional structure with legal mandate. In order to avoid creating a multiplicity of community registered organizations which may not be active in the long run, it was seen to be appropriate to register one trust for all villages of the project area so that all VNRMCs of the participating villages could be represented on this committee and report to this Trust which can act as an Area Natural Resources Management Committee (ANRMC). This led to the development of Constitution for an Area Natural Resources Management Trust of the Neno South (previously Mwanza East). The Trust was incorporated under the Trustees Incorporation Act as a charitable and public interest organization in the name of 'Kam'mwamba Natural Resources Management Trust' (Mwalukomo, H. and Buss C. 2005). The Trust is now overseeing the various activities in all the thirteen villages. The Trust still conducts regular meetings to discuss progress of project activities at each village.

Most community households are still doing their activities such as Wine Production, honey production, guinea fowl rearing and soil and water conservation activities. Communities have also gone into livestock (dairy production) from NTFPs sales. The only going concern has been the resumption of illegal cutting of trees for charcoal production, which is a very common sight in all the villages.

#### 4.2.7. Coordination

##### Coordination- rating: 1

According to Mauambeta (Personal communication, 2008), the Malawi Country Project has been successful because of strong partnerships and collaboration with various stakeholders and partners. Many examples exist underlying the issue of strong coordination and collaboration in the project including the following:

The project worked with the beneficiaries, 9000 committed individuals from 190 households in 13 villages. Other project partners included staff from various relevant Departments such as Ministry of Community Development; Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development; Department of Forestry, and the Country's political leadership. The project also worked with the University of Malawi and the Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS) on the development and research of the various natural products. The private sector was instrumental at offering markets for the various products produced by the project. Of special mention are the Peoples Training Centre chain stores, Shoprite, BP Service Station Shops; and many donor funded projects visited and bought products from the project area.

Many local and international donor partners assisted to the success of the project. University Students from Germany carried out GIS research work in the project area. The German Development Services (DED) provided technical capacity building through recruitment of local Development Workers, and secondment of Technical professional Development Workers to the project. The German Embassy in Lilongwe supported the project with funds to scale up certain project activities. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provided both technical and financial support to the project. Joint OXFAM Programme has also supported the expansion of the project activities into neighbouring villages. The project also received technical support from the University of Southampton Center for Under-utilized Crops who conducted a survey on Malambe fruits and juice production in the project area and produced manuals on Malambe Fruit Harvesting and Juice Production. Banja La Mtson-golo, a local Health NGO assisted the project in conducting HIV & AIDS awareness campaigns in the project area.

A number of local and international organizations assisted the project to disseminate its results including the following:

The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations who organised an *International Workshop on Community Forestry in Africa: Participatory forest management: a strategy for sustainable forestry management in Africa*; in April 1999 where a paper was presented in 1997 in Banjul, Gambia (Mauambeta, DDC 1999)

The World Conservation Union (IUCN) assisted the project to display at the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in South Africa in 2002. The Baobab (*Malambe*) fruit juice production initiative of the project was identified by IUCN as one of the natural resource based enterprises in Southern Africa which demonstrated commercial viability and sustainability. The enterprise was thus supported to showcase its products at the summit along side with seven other enterprises under a marketing banner of '**There is Another Way that Works**'. This initiative was documented and disseminated widely in a Brochures entitled *There;s another way that works* (IUCN 2002); *Earthyear Volume 2*; 2002; Audio Tape and DVD. Since that time, a number of similar initiatives are underway in other countries including Zimbabwe and Zambia. The University of Southampton also assisted the project to disseminate the results of the project in 2007 at a Conference on New Crops and Uses: Their role in arapidly changing world where a paper was presented by WESM (Mauambeta, DDC 1997). Terra Madre Foundation of Italy, has been sponsoring the participation of at-least two participants from the project to attend the Terra Madre Food Communities every year since 2006 to date. The University of Mzuzu disseminated results of the project when they organized a National Forestry Symposium in September 2004 (Mwalukomo,H and Mauambeta, DDC 2004). The South African Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Knysna organized a Conference on Natural Forests and Savana Woodland Symposium 11 in Knysna, South

Africa where the project made a presentation in September 1999. (Skottke M, and Mauambeta D.D.C, 2000)

**4.2.8. Overall rating of the pilot measure**

**Overall project rating: 2**

Overall, the project performed very well despite some challenges which have formed major lessons for improvement for similar projects in future. Overall, the ex-post evaluation team concludes that the project rating is 2 as summarized in table 5. This conclusion is based on the observations summarized below.

Table 5. Summary of project ratings.

<b>Criteria for analysis</b>	<b>Rating</b>
Project relevance	1
Project effectiveness	2
Project impact	2
Sustainability	2
Coordination	1
<b>Average</b>	<b>2</b>

**(a) Develop and implement strategies to reduce deforestation**

A number of strategies were developed and implemented including development of management plans at village and individual or household forest areas. From the implementation process of the management plans, it was clear that communal management of forest resources was not a good strategies because of tenure security, access rights and commitment of the individuals involved. Implementation of the management plans was more successful amongst individual owned forest areas and communal areas with strong leadership. It is for this reason that it was recommended that individuals doing forest management activities on their own land should be targeted in the delivery of extension services. Well motivated and encouraged individual forest owners are likely to participate more effectively in communal activities as an interest group.

**(b) Develop and implement plans for the integration of women and other marginalized groups in natural resources management**

The project integrated women in all project activities. In fact, women dominate most of the project activities including beekeeping, a male dominated industry.

**(c) Empower communities to sustainably manage their natural resources**

Communities received different training modules including tree planting, tree nursery management, soil and water conservation, agroforestry, natural resources based enterprises such as bee keeping, guinea fowl rearing, fruit juice production and others. Communities also received leadership and management skills to enable operate in groups effectively. The project continued to build the capacity of the Kam'mwamba Natural Resources Management Trust long after 2006 to ensure that they are to carry out most of the forest management activities in the area.

**(d) Implement strategies to control illegal timber, fuel wood and charcoal trade**

The project developed strategies to deal with illegal time, fuel wood and charcoal trade. The project developed the first Community Constitution which was the basis for local communities to be engaged in enforcement of the forest policy and law. However, due to logistical problems amongst the law enforcers (Police and Forest Guards) manning Road Blocks, communities were not allowed to participate in law enforcement activities. Ten years down, de-

forestation still continues to this date because of inadequate law enforcement despite the promotion of alternative income generating activities. One solution to this is to regularize charcoal production by working with charcoal producers in developing forest management plans on their own land which provide for charcoal production and Government provides licences.

Punitive measures are not the best way for dealing with illegal activities. However, if people deliberately chose to be irresponsible, strict enforcement of the law is a necessary option. Environmental friendly income generating activities can only be alternative where law enforcement is effective because people will have no choice but to find other strategies for survival (Mwalukomo, H. 2006).

**(e) Develop and implement techniques to harvest non-timber forest produce and improve their marketing**

The SMIF Project is known throughout the world because of its success in developing very successful NTFPs which have become a brandname for the project. The project is synonymous to **Malambe Project** because of the Malambe Fruit Juices which originated from this area. Today, Malambe products are being produced throughout the country. For the first time, the Project Area has a local company producing products within the village and selling the products in cities. This has created local employment. Village Hands Ltd stands out as one of the major achievements of the project in terms of income generation and livelihood security.

**(f) Raise level of civic education and awareness:** The project also did a commendable job on creating awareness and raising the level of civic education on several issues including HIV and AIDS and Gender

## **5 Conclusions and outlook**

### **5.1 Analysis of findings**

The project was design to address high level of deforestation through reduction of poverty and therefore a number of interventions targeting the resource poor were implemented in the project area. Realising that natural resource management interventions take a long time to bear fruits, short-term interventions that provide visible and tangible benefits to the communities were introduced such as IGAs. Since the argument for cutting down the trees to charcoal was lack of alternative sources of income amongst resource poor households, the introduction of the IGAs in the area was a big motivation to many people. The project was also designed in line with several government policies and legal frameworks hence it received a lot of support from the government and many stakeholders. The participatory nature of the project cycle management allowed project beneficiaries to take control and ownership of the project innovation and interventions. The project implementation structure promoted coordination at village, district and national level. The design of the management and organizational structure of the project allowed the various stakeholders to want to be part of the success story of the project. It can be concluded therefore that a properly designed project with an integrated approach to its implementation can promote sustainable management of natural resources amongst the resource poor households.

Realising the need to strengthen ownership, knowledge and skills within the project in the management of the natural resources, the project made considerable investment in strengthening the capacity of the project beneficiaries. The project target group attended various training activities including leadership, natural resource management, income generation promotion, management of specific IGAs, fruit juice production and other types of trained. The high level of knowledge about the project and natural resource management in the area reflects how well the project delivered its capacity building interventions as well as the commitment the people had on the project.

In additions to the training activities, project beneficiaries toured projects inside and outside the country. The tour and exchange visits uplifted the communities' spirit and commitment to achieve more in the project. Many of the people in the project have now become useful local and prominent local leaders as a result of the project. Even the marginalized groups feel that the community empowerment process has enabled them to participate and contribute in the decision making processes of the area.

Apart from the many training interventions in the areas of natural resource management, IGAs, HIV and AIDS awareness, leadership and others, the project supported the communities to visit other project areas within the outside the country to allow them to learn at the same time motivate them to commit themselves to achieve more. The training activities and exposure visits and tours helped the project beneficiaries to have self confidence to put much more effort in implementing the project. The benefits accrued from IGAs like fruit juices, guinea fowl, honey have helped many poor families to construct permanent houses, procure diary cattle, bicycles, as well as pay school fees for their children. The improved levels of income amongst the poor households enabled to drive their attention away from charcoal burning and other unsustainable natural resource management activities such as bush burning. The increased participation of women in the project activities ensured that the poorest in the project are targeted.

There continued challenges to the empowerment of the rural communities. Some say that new demands always emerge with time. The level of income improvement does not much with the increases in the prices of commodities and inflation and many other economic issues. The economic changes mar the impact of the project at household levels. No wonder currently cases of charcoal production on individual forest areas are on the increase. The increasing cases of charcoal production, aggravated by the weak law enforcement mechanism, further down plays the economic, social and environmental gains that people have achieved over the past years in the project area.

The increase levels of charcoal production in the area despite a considerable increase in the levels of income at household level indicate that increased income levels alone can not directly collate to decreased levels of deforestation. There is need to improve access to electricity in urban area as well as reduce the cost of electrical power in the country. This will motivate many urban dwellers to switch to electricity for household thereby reducing the demand for charcoal.

To ensure sustainable management of the forest areas, the project help the communities to develop management plans and by-laws which were approved and signed by the Minister responsible for Natural Resources. All the people and stakeholders involved were excited with the development because the expected that all the illegal activities will be controlled and stopped and the forests are going to regenerate and access to forest products would improve. Things did not work according to plan, the VNRMCs did not function as expected, and the law enforcement machinery functioned for a short period of time. The community development fund that was set to manage funds from fines, licences and concessions from forest areas did not continue despite an initial contribution of K132,000 (USD 943) from the project. In an effort to improve the performance of the VNRMC an Area Natural resource Development Committee which later transformed into a trust was formed. However implementation of the village forest area management plans did not improve unless the VFA is guided by a strong village head. The failure of the VNRMCs to facilitate implementation of the management plans for VFAs is an indication that with the increased depletion of forest resources, people would want to secure their individual access and tenure of the forest resources first before securing the tenure security of the group. The process of natural resource 'privatisation' at community level by the individual families contributed to the weak performance or failure of some VNRMC in the project area. The village heads have been successful to individually manage the VFA because many people look at the forest area as a private property for the village head even though villagers can access with the consent of the village head. Mwalukomo, 2006 revealed that village heads were able to handle more conflicts related to illegal activities in VFA than VNRMCs and indication that village heads are more respected than VNRMCs.

In a situation of decreased access or shortage of natural resources, it is very difficult to promote community or group work before satisfying the needs of the individuals. This is true in this project, where individual forest areas are still being well managed than village forest area under the responsibility of VNRMCs.

Implementation of the project has improved access to forest products by many people in the area. There are now more indigenous fruit trees which were not the case before the project and fruit harvesting methods have improved. More trees have been planted even though the rate of planting has decreased compared to the period when the project was still active.

Implementation of the project in the area has attracted the interest of many organizations at national and international level. This has improved the information sharing and dissemination process of the lessons learnt from the project. Many such as COMPASS, World Vision International and others have modelled their project interventions on the SMIF project.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

From the findings of the expost evaluation the following recommendations are made:

- ◆ Based on the experiences, SADC/GTZ should consider replicating the project as it has demonstrated that people's livelihoods can improve if such a project is effectively implemented.
- ◆ Experience has shown that when resources are limited, people would want to satisfy their individual needs first before considering the group. In such situation therefore,

project intervention need to deliberately target the individual families when delivering extension services and implementing project interventions.

- ◆ The income generation component of the project has been highly successful. Promotion of IGAs like fruit juice production, bee keeping and guinea fowl rearing has somehow contributed to the sustainable management of natural resource in the area. Therefore IGAs need to be promoted in any natural resource management interventions because they provide short term benefits at the same time promoting sustainable management of the forest resources.
- ◆ In this project, village heads are being recognised more than the village level institutions. The strength of the village heads has contributed to the successful implementation of management plans in many villages in the project area. This can be explained because people still respect tradition and culture and village heads are custodians of both tradition and culture including land. If local leaders are custodian of tradition, culture and land any project interventions that bypasses them may spell doom for its success.
- ◆ The local government has an important role to ensure continued provision of extension and other technical support to the people in the project area. Since the project has proved to be a success story in the district and the country, the local government should ensure that resources for continued implementation of various project activities are included within the overall local government funding framework.
- ◆ Village level institutions function very well during the project period and thereafter some collapse while others continue to exist but not fully functional. For continued performance of the village level institutions such as VNRMC, there is need for continuous monitoring, mentoring and coaching of the village level institutions.
- ◆ The project has registered a trust called Kamwamba Natural Resource Management Trust which has the role of overseeing natural resource management activities in the project area as well as providing a link between Village Hands Limited and the villagers. The trust would survive if it has the capacity and resources, the local government and the various other stakeholders need to provide adequate resources for capacity building support to such an important institutions to ensure their survival.
- ◆ The project recruited a number of community based volunteers who are still based in the project area. During the design process of the project, a sustainability strategy for maintaining and encouraging the volunteers to continue providing support to the project beneficiaries even after the project is finished should be developed. One of the ways to encourage and promote the volunteers would be to institutionalized their work in the overall village and district planning framework.

## Statistical Data

### General questions

Q1. Did the project in your opinion help conserve the forests and other natural resources?

	N	%
Yes very much	25	51.0
Yes somewhat	23	46.9
In do not know	1	2.0
No	0	0
Total	49	100

Q2. Did the project help improve your living standards?

	N	%
Yes, very much	26	53
Yes somehow	20	40.8
I don't know	3	6.1
No	0	0
Total	49	100

Q3. Did the project help you to be more involved in decision making on natural resource management in doing the management itself and in sharing the benefits from natural resources?

	N	%
Yes very much	18	36.7
Yes somewhat	27	55.1
I don't know	1	2.0
No	3	6.1
Total	49	100

### Forest Management plan

Q4. To what extent are you familiar with the objectives of the management plans?

	N	%
I know the objectives very well	42	75.7
I don't know exactly	2	4.1
I do not know them at all	5	10.2
Total	49	100

Q5a. To what extent were you involved in defining the objectives and scope of the management plan?

	N	%
Not involved	7	14.3
Somewhat	16	32.7
Very much	26	53.0
Total	49	100

Q5b. To what extent were you involved in decision-taking on allocation of responsibilities?

	N	%
Not involved	5	10.2
Somewhat	21	42.9
Very much	23	46.9
Total	49	100

Q5c. To what extent were you involved in carrying out resource assessments (inventories)?

	N	%
Not involved	7	14.3
Somewhat	21	42.9
Very much	21	42.8
Total	49	100

Q5d. To what extent were you involved in decision-taking on resource use and management?

	N	%
Not involved	7	14.3
Somewhat	22	44.9
Very much	20	40.8
Total	49	100

Q5e To what extent were you involved in the decision-taking on benefit sharing?

	N	%
Not involved	13	26.5
Somewhat	18	36.7
Very much	18	36.7
Total	49	100

Q6. To what extent is the management plan to the best of your knowledge implemented?

	Well imple- mented (N=49)	Not imple- mented (N=49)	Not much (N=49)	Don't know (N=49)
Limiting the amount of wood ex- tracted	77.6	6.1	14.3	2
Regulating the activities of forest user coming from outside the vil- lage	67.3	14.3	14.3	2.0
Licensing of timber, charcoal, NTFP, etc	57.2	26.5	16.3	0
Zonation of forest area	85.7	14.3	0	0
Establishment of tree nurseries	79.6	6.1	14.3	0
Establishment of tree plantation	61.2	22.4	14.3	0

Q7. To what extent does the implementation of the plan secure the natural resource base of the community?

	N	%
Very helpful	34	69.4
Useless	5	10.2
Somewhat	6	12.2
Don't know	4	8.2
Total	49	100

Q8. To what extent does the implementation of the plan change the livelihood of the entire community?

Situation become worse	4	8.2
No change	5	10.2
Improved	34	69.4

Don't know	6	12.2
Total	49	100

## Income generation

Q9. How is your life now, when compared with the time before the project?

Improved a lot	26	53.0
Improved somewhat	17	34.7
No change	4	8.2
Got worse	2	4.1
Total	49	100

Q10a. Did you participate in the following activities? If yes, how much have the following activities increased your net income?

	Yes (N=49)	No (N=49)	% Income increase
Maize cultivation	98.0	2.0	82.0
Guinea fowl rearing	93.9	6.1	83.7
Ostrich breeding	0	0	0
Fruit tree planting/Harvesting	71.4	28.6	61.2
Vegetable growing	75.5	24.5	71.5
Bee keeping	51.0	49.0	79.6
Juice production	55.1	44.9	75.7
Collection of wild plants	53.1	46.9	69.4
Tree nurseries	71.4	27.5	63.2
Charcoal	20.4	79.6	24.5
Marketing of timber and firewood	26.5	73.4	30.6
Tourism	0	0	0
Thatching grass	16.3	83.7	26.5
Hammer mill	0	0	0
Cane furniture (Reed mats)	36.7	63.3	69.4

11. What do you use the money for which you earn with these activities?

The money is used for buying the following purposes

	N=49	%
Paying school fees,	35	71.0
Buying cement, iron sheets and paying builders	25	51.0
Constructing my mothers house	15	31.6
Buying a dairy cow	18	36.7
Buying bicycle	20	40.8
Buy goats, chickens and guinea fowls	23	46.9
Transport to town	10	20.4
Buying television screen	5	10.2
Household basic needs	37	75.5
Buying food	40	81.6
Buying farm inputs such as fertilizer and seed	26	53.1
Buying household utensils	14	28.6
Started other business	16	32.7

Q12. What is your annual income besides the above mentioned resources?

Range (USD)	N( 49)	%
1500-2000	22	44.9
2000-3000	15	30.6
3000+	12	24.4

13. How much do you have - if at all - pay for licenses, fines, travel costs, etc.?

	N (49)	%
USD 50-100	18	36.7
USD 100-200	25	51.0
USD 200+	6	12.2

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### Empowerment of local communities

Q14. How many meetings of the committee do you attend?

	N	%
All	28	57.1
Once in a while	19	38.8
Never	2	4.1
Total	49	100

Q15. To what extent are you satisfied with the work of the committee?

	N	%
Very satisfied	24	49
Somewhat	23	46.9
Not satisfied	2	4.1
Total	49	100

Q16. To what extent do you feel represented in the committee?

	N	%
Very good	23	46.9
Somewhat	23	46.9
Not represented	2	4.1
I don't know	1	2.0
Total	49	100

17. To what extent are your opinions heard by the decision-makers in the committee?

	N	%
Very good	18	36.7
Somewhat	26	53.1
Not heard	4	8.2
I don't know	1	2.0
Total	49	100

18. To what extent do the decisions of the committee affect your economic or other activities?

	N	%
Significant	24	49.0
Little effect	19	38.8

No affect	6	12.2
Total	49	100

## Capacity Building

19. Which training courses did you attend? How many times?

Type of training course	No. of people (n=49)	%
Participatory resource assessment	49	100
Sustainable natural resource management	49	100
HIV and AIDS and natural resource management	49	100
Leadership	30	61.2
Bee keeping and honey production	27	55.1
Beehive making	27	55.1
Guinea fowl rearing	49	100
Sustainable indigenous fruit harvesting	30	61.2
Juice process and storage	25	51.0
Agroforestry	49	100
Nursery establishment and tree seed collection	49	100
Tree planting and management	49	100

20. To what extent do you use the knowledge acquired in the training activities you attended?

	N	%
Regularly	33	67.3
Once in a while	14	28.6
Don't use	2	4.1
Total	49	100

Q21. To what extent do you know about the following subjects?

	Good (N=49)	Satisfying (N=49)	Poor (N=49)
<b>Natural Resource management</b>			
Measuring of available stock	38.8	13	26.6
Establishing a sustainable harvest	51.0	24.5	24.5
To establish how much has been extracted per year	44.9	22.5	32.7
<b>Business Management and book keeping</b>			
How to establish price of products	61.2	18.3	20.4
How to calculate profits and losses	55.1	24.5	20.4
<b>Legal Issues</b>			
Tree species not allowed to exploit	69.4	16.3	14.3
Circumstances under which outsiders are not allowed to harvest	59.2	16.3	24.5
Benefit sharing mechanism for natural resource revenue	40.8	24.5	34.7

## Marginalized Groups

Q22. Do you think that marginalized groups (ethnic minorities, women) are now better off than before?

	N	%
Much better off	21	42.9
Somewhat better off	16	32.7
No change	10	20.4
Don't know	2	4.1
Total	49	100

Q23. Do you think the project has contributed to strengthening your position in decision-making processes at community level?

	N	%
All	21	42.9
Once in a while	16	32.6
Never	12	24.5
Total	49	100