

Malawi - Agricultural Project

The small-scale irrigation project was started in 2003 with 10 groups each having 10 members. Each group was given a manually operated treadle pump. On the whole this irrigation initiative has improved the food security situation among the participating families. Here are some results:

- During this past growing season, a total of 86 farming households benefited.
- One of the irrigation groups will contribute improved maize seed for other groups in the project.
- Mtendere Irrigation group enjoyed high crop yields and will be able to produce sufficient food for their family this year.

Challenges:

- Occasionally, it was difficult to source spare parts for the pumps particularly delivery pipes, piston valves and flap valves
- Some irrigation technical operations were started later than expected. This resulted in the delayed harvest of maize which coincided with the time in the village when food was scarce. Much of the harvest was stolen and some produce was washed away by early heavy rain down pours on Kabudira River.

Lessons Learnt: During the next season, project leaders will work closer with the farmers in order to ensure timely planting and irrigation of maize. It is hoped that an earlier crop harvest should reduce the problem of theft.