

# Integrating Nutrition in Value Chains-Malawi FY2015 Third Quarterly Report (Jan-March 2015)



## **AUTHORITY/DISCLAIMER**

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# Third Quarterly Progress Report FY2015

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COVERING THE PERIOD: APRIL 1 – JUNE 30TH **2015**

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACE	Agricultural Commodity Exchange for Africa
ADC	Area Development Committee
ADMARC	Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation
AEDC	Agriculture Extension Development Coordinator
AEDO	Agriculture Extension Development Officer
AFO	Association Field Officer
ALF	Assistant Lead Farmer (also an extra-terrestrial being on a hit 1980's TV show)
AGRA	Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa
AHCX	Auction Holdings Commodity Exchange
AI	Artificial Insemination
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AMC	Association Management Center
ANC	Ante-Natal Care
BCC	Behavior Change Communication
BDS	Business Development Services
BSP	Business Service Provider
BVO	Bid Volume Only
CADECOM	Catholic Development Commission of Malawi
CBCC	Community Based Child Care Center
CBO	Community Based Organization
CCAP	Church of Central Africa – Presbyterian
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy (USAID)
CIP	The International Potato Center
CISANET	Civil Society Agriculture Network
COP	Chief of Party
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
DAI	Development Alternatives, Inc.
DARS	Department of Agriculture Research Services
DfID	Department for International Development (UK)
DID	Differences-in-differences
DNC	District Nutrition Coordinator
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
DSA	Daily Subsistence Allowance
EMMP	Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan
ENA	Essential Nutrition Actions
EPA	Extension Planning Area
ESCOM	Electricity Supply Company of Malawi
FAS	Field Accounting System
FBO	Farmer Based Organization
FISP	Fertilizer Input Subsidy Program
FMB	First Bank of Malawi
FtF (FtF)	Feed the Future

FTFMS	Feed the Future Monitoring System
FUM	Farmers Union of Malawi
FY	Fiscal Year
GAC	Group Action Committee
GALS	Gender Action Learning System
GHI	Global Health Initiative
GMP	Monthly Growth Monitoring
GoM	Government of Malawi
GP	Groundnut platform
GVH	Group Village Head
Ha	Hectare
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IITA	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
INVC	Integrating Nutrition in Value Chains
IFRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IIF	Investing in Innovation Fund
IP	Implementing Partner
IPC	Innovation and Productivity Centre
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IR	Intermediate Results
ISF	Implementation Support Fund
IT	Information Technology
IYCF	Infant and Young Children Feeding
LUANAR	Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources
LPO	Local Purchase Order
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAC	Marketing Action Center
MAPAC	Malawi Program on Aflatoxin Control
MBC	Malawi Broadcasting Company
MBG	Milk Bulking Group
MDI	Malawi Dairy Industries
MISST	Malawi Improved Seed Systems and Technologies Program
MIM	Malawi Institute of Management
MIP	Market Information Point
MKW	Malawi Kwacha (symbol for)
MMPA	Malawi Milk Producers Association
MoA&FS	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSU	Michigan State University
Mt	Metric ton
MZ	Malawi Zebu (cows)
NA	Nutrition Assistant
NASFAM	National Association of Smallholder Farmers of Malawi
NFRA	National Food Reserve Agency
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization

OBM	Opportunity Bank of Malawi (Also referred to as OIBM)
OCA	Organizational Capacity Assessment
OFSP	Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato
OPC	Office of President and Cabinet
OPI	Organizational Performance Index
OVO	Offer Volume Only
PCI	Project concern International
PDI	Positive Deviance Inquiry
PSA	Public Service Announcement
QR	Quick Response
RLEEP	Rural Livelihoods Enhancement program
SAIOMA	Strengthening Rural Input and Output Markets in Africa
SCU	University of South Carolina
SOYAMA	Soy Bean Association of Malawi
SSDI	Support for Service Delivery Integration
STTA	Short Term Technical Assistance
Sub-IR	Sub Intermediate Results
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
TA [T/A]	Traditional Authority
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNC	University of North Carolina
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USG	United States Government
VAC	Village Aggregation Center
VC	Value Chain
VCC	Value Chain Competitiveness
VFP	Village Financial Platform
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Associations
WRS	Warehouse Receipt System
ZBS	Zodiac Broadcasting Station
ZOI	Zone of Influence

# Executive Summary

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This reporting period, the third of the FY15, was a busy one for INVC. It coincides with the end of the principal agricultural season, thus the harvest period for soybeans and groundnuts and the start of the soybean marketing campaign. During this quarter both gender and village financial platform activities gathered increased momentum. Our nutrition activities focused on deepening the core of Care Group counseling, dietary diversification, sanitation and hygiene, while piloting growth monitoring. At the same time we focused on better, clearer, more complete integration of nutrition and value chain activities. In local institutional capacity building we focused on instituting a stepwise approach to resolution of common areas of weakness with our partners, offering one thematic subject of common interest per month while continuing our individualized assistance coaching and mentoring our partners depending upon their specific needs.

Our partnership matrix continues to diversify, though true tangible synergistic action moves forward in fits and starts. Consultations and information sharing are easy first steps but when it comes to implementation of joint, coordinated activities, the true learning begins. This reporting period saw us reaching across sectors to education and health and firming up our discussions with the World Food Program (WFP). We participated in the CARE sponsored Congressional Learning Tour and the Sustainable Economic Growth mega-launch in Liwonde. Our collaboration with the South African Trade Hub intensified as we learned just how embedded their program is in Malawi and within our grantee implementing partners. We learned that partnership building takes a large time investment, negotiation, much communication and mutual trust. They build and solidify over time and require a “shake-out” period at commencement. For positive synergies to be sustaining, they must be win-win for all sides.

The reporting period saw a number of staffing changes, some planned, and some unanticipated. Departing from the project in a planned fashion were our communications consultant, Keith Cundale and Nkhoma Business Process Manager Kim Phillips. Departing in an accelerated fashion from her planned departure date of 30 September was Shannon Rogers who left INVC for an opportunity with the Elisabeth Glaser pediatric AIDS organization as an M&E officer in their Washington DC office. Unplanned resignations included Felix Sato, our IT Administrator, Chrispin Kamkangadza, and Paul Phiri, one of our two grants accountants. Chrispin has entered an entrepreneurial venture with his uncle, Paul has joined UKAID and Felix has taken a position in the systems administration office of the Malawian Central Bank. On the technical side, our District nutrition coordinator for Balaka Whitney Mphangwe resigned to take a District Health Officer position with the government and Blessigs Nkane, a nutrition assistant from Balaka was hired away by PCI Njira.

By the end of the quarter we had hired a new IT Administrator, a new accountant and a new grants accountant. Our search for a local communications specialist is live and the position is expected to be filled by the first week of August. We are recruiting supplemental nutrition assistants for the Southern scale up Districts and have reorganized our nutrition team somewhat through internal promotions and reassignments. Thus the Balaka DNC position has been filled by promoting Ignatio Maneya from his nutrition assistant position. Two of our gender officer positions were filled internally as well and a second DNC, Marin Jeremiah Phiri was promoted to nutrition specialist

responsible for the Southern scale up districts to be based in our newly opened Liwonde Office. Our southern district nutrition staff report being actively solicited by newly funded USG programs implementing in the same districts as INVC. Save the Children is also actively approaching INVC staff for new nutrition programs funded by the World Bank. Several staff, including nutrition staff at Nkhoma have left, or are planning to leave, for other projects, several of which are paying staff salaries in Kwacha equivalents of the US dollar exchange rate at the date of payment.

INVC benefited from a number of STTA during this quarter for both administrative and technical assistance. Representatives of INVC's HQ backstop team including the assistant program manager and program director visited the program. We received assistance to reinforce our accounting team in our field accounting software (FAS) as well as in the design of a strategy to align grantee reconciliations with the grant advances they have received. Further Paul Rippey returned for a second STTA in support of our Village Financial Platform activities.

During the quarter, three (3) high level USAID field visits were conducted.

The first visit was by Principal Deputy Secretary of State, Rob Jackson who visited Kalumbu GAC, Group Village Headman Kalumbu in Lilongwe South on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2015.

The second visit was by a team of 50 delegates from Innovation Lab Partners from USA. The visit took place at Chikanda and Kambirimbiri GACs in Chigonthe EPA, Traditional Authority Chitukula in Lilongwe North.

The third visit was by a team of Congressmen/women and other leaders of international organizations who visited Chimwemwe Care Group, Msanga GAC, Nasala Village, Traditional Authority Malili in Lilongwe South on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2015. The group of congressmen/women were led by Deborah Wasserman Schultz. In all the visits, delegates were presented with background information about FtF-INVC project in Malawi, care group activities which included a package of food processing, cooking demonstrations and theatre performances. All these were meant to give a clear picture of what the project is doing in Malawi.

The Innovation Lab Partners also visited OFSP field where they were briefed on different varieties the project is promoting to its beneficiaries in collaboration with CIP. These varieties include *Mathuthu*, *Anakwanire*, *Chipika*, *Zonden*, *Kadyaubwelere*, and *Kaphulira* and have high nutrition content in terms of Vitamin A.

The Chief of Party attended an inclusive economic growth conference at DAI's expense in London during late April. The conference focused on lessons learned across our EG portfolio as well as exploring possible synergies between programs in the same geography and refining our understanding of the nexus between Markets for the Poor and Value Chain strategies within program implementation. In June the COP attended the Regional Feed the Future Conference in Pretoria South Africa and presented INVC's experiences on integrating nutrition with value chains. This conference which brought together implementers, private sector actors, multi-lateral donors as well as USAID and USDA staff from Washington, the Bureau for Food Security, and bi-lateral missions from Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa as well as representatives of the Regional Bureau and South African Trade and Investment Hub was a great learning experience. Exchanges were both passionate and fruitful.

A quick review of results from this quarter reveal that:

In **Gender** our sensitization activities for 116 project and partner staff focusing on definitions of equity, equality, gender mainstreaming, women's empowerment and gender based violence. Gender constraints were identified at the household, community and project level and a number of

knowledge gaps were filled. Planning for GALs leadership training and gendered literacy/numeracy progressed and the team made a number of important contacts within the government leading to INVC participation in gender technical working groups.

**Our Village Financial Platform** activities progressed. By the end of the quarter we were assisting with the rehabilitation of 339 savings groups with 6,168 beneficiary members of whom 5,303 (86% are female). There is currently an 11% correlation between VFP members and those in beneficiary farm clubs while 6% of members are also members of nutrition care groups. The average savings group contains 18 members. In total, 80 village VFP agents volunteered to assist in rehabilitating the groups. In sum 22% of the groups lack savings transparency, 8% need to improve record keeping, and 23% are victims of late payments. During the quarter refresher training was offered to VFP field officers and we began to see visible proof that VFP serve as an entry point for integration within the community. In several instances VFP members in Mchinji were brought together to learn food processing technologies for soy milk and peanut butter, VFP members are actively volunteering to teach their neighbors these techniques and 12 women community members mobilized through the VFP were trained in dietary diversity and food processing by the local Nkhoma nutrition assistant and the Community's Lead Mother. Further, 150 NASFAM legume farm club members have been sensitized on the VFP concept and the benefits of community mobilization of funds.

**In Value Chain Competitiveness** the buyers tours were much appreciated by the participating private sector companies, farmers and district extension and elected officials. The three tours brought 30 processors, buyers, traders and transporters in contact with 1725 lead farmers in 11 EPA of 3 districts (Dedza, Mchinji and Lilongwe). As a result of the buyers tours four contracts have been signed between private sector processors and farmers associations. These contracts were for 70 mT of shelled and 100 mT of unshelled groundnuts and 165 mT of soybeans. The total value of these contracts was 91.8 million MKW or appx. \$204,000 USD. In addition new partnerships developed because of the tour with ACE agreeing to assist EStrell Ltd. and AFRINUT with bridge financing and AFRINUT agreeing to advance 1 million Kwacha (appx. \$2222 USD) to an association on a revolving basis to assist with the aggregation of 5mT of product at a time. Inter-IP integration occurred as Pakachere community theater accompanied the tour and offered skits promoting collective behavior for groundnut and soy marketing as well as general management and problem solving skills. During this period NASFAM Commercial with a reported 638 market centers procured only 1,038.9 mT of Soybeans from 10,250 farmers. Prices paid ranged from 135 MKW/kg to 210 MKW/kg.

Aggregation of product has been limited across the project zone excepting in EPA where Farmers Union is operating. In these 10 EPA 754.94 mT of soybeans have been aggregated. From this 620.1 mT have been sold for over 105 million kwacha (appx \$235,000 USD), principally to Sun Seed Oil at prices between 200 and 300 MKW/kg.

During this reporting period three training sessions related to aflatoxin control, management and mitigation technologies were hosted in collaboration with the South African Trade Hub. A total of 105 extension staff from CADECOM, FUM and NASFAM 42 of whom are women attended training on sorting, detection, conditioning, removal and bleached roasting of groundnuts to mitigate aflatoxin contamination at the farming household level. The trainees who are all lead farmers or AFO/FOF are expected to cascade this training out to their respective farm club members. Forty two people, 31% of whom were women, mainly private sector actors including AFRINUT, EXAGRIS and Valid Nutrition attended a session on Blue Box Technology for instant screening of aflatoxin contamination at a much more sensitive environmental level.

Warehouse receipts facilitated 2810 mT of commodity deposits during this period of which soybeans represented 2,570 mT (or 91.5%). Of the soybean mobilized under WRS 1,460 mT or 56.8% came from the INVC ZOI. During the quarter ACE facilitated 116 contracts for 6,815 mT of products at a

USD value of \$3,306,946. Of these 49 contracts for 4,361 mT and representing \$903,679 USD came from the INVC ZOI. Five tenders were also offered under Bid Volume Only (BVO) auctions. Four of these were tendered by World Food Program for cowpeas while Chibuku products had one tender for maize. The WFP tenders were worth \$509,252 USD while the Chibuku tender was worth \$664,368 USD. Volumes tendered were 763.15 mT and 7,000 mT, respectively of cowpeas and maize.

Sensitization on structured trade attained 2,483 farmers and key informants of whom 45.5% were women. During this quarter only 182 farmers frequented market information points (MIPS). There is a decline in the use of these facilities by an alarming 84% over the previous quarter.

Consultative meetings with Commercial Financial Institutions yielded no results and highlighted a general reticence to finance farmers or their associations due to their lack of classic collateral mechanisms. . Further any collateral presented must be present in urban, not rural areas. Low reimbursement rates on previous loan facilities by farmers have discouraged the banks.

During this reporting period ACE has managed to secure two lines of credit one for \$4.3 million USD to facilitate collateral financing and a second worth \$4.4 million destined primarily to support forward contracts.

Under our **Improving Agricultural Productivity Component** the true impact of INVC recommended practices for grain legume crop production became visible as harvest is underway. Technologies showing the best results were double row planting and inoculum of soybeans, where planting densities and agronomic rate recommendations were followed. Key activities undertaken this reporting period included the cascading of harvest and post-harvest crop management trainings from 8,292 lead farmers , of whom 49.5% were female to 49,622 follower farmers, 56.4% of whom were female; eight joint demonstration and field days with FtF-MISST on soybeans, groundnuts and Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato, IPM demonstrations using Actellic Gold for post-harvest storage, and the gross margin survey on groundnuts and soybeans.

A total of 1,299 demonstration plots, of which 76.3% were for soybeans, were established throughout the project zone. Initial results, while highly variable suggest that double row soybeans with inoculum application out yielded single row planting by 63% when averaged across our ZOI.

Soybean seed recovery rates are only 50% of anticipated across the NASFAM assisted districts in our ZOI. Highest reimbursement is in Mchinji, lowest is in Balaka. While environmental factors may account for some of this dynamic, there is strong indication that frustration, governance issues and donor dependitis all negatively affected farmer's motivation to repay.

Gross margin analysis reveal that soybean yields are 47% higher than last season while groundnut yields under improved technologies are 68% higher than 2014. Other findings indicate most of our farmer beneficiaries rely on family labor without mechanization, and animal traction is primarily used for transportation, not for field operations.

In this reporting period **our nutrition activities** exhibited significant progress toward the achievement of objectives. In total 11,576 new beneficiaries were registered, 15,589 Care Group members (65.3% women) participated in food processing and dietary diversification training; 455 back yard gardens were established and 6,263 households adopted at least one sanitation or hygiene mitigation measure including pit latrines, hand washing stations, dish racks or rubbish pits.

INVC contributed to Child Health Day campaigns in four districts and 445,666 children under five benefitted from Vitamin A supplementation and de-worming. Growth monitoring sessions occurred in four districts and 41,892 children under five were screened monthly for acute malnutrition. During

this period only 3,921 (9%) lost weight, of these, however, 60% were girls. In total 404 children were referred to medical facilities for clinical attention. Training in SUN/ENA in two districts grouped 3,349 lead mothers. Additionally 39 promoters were trained as trainers in SUN/ENA by the Ministry of Health.

Three radio jingles and public service announcements targeting smallholder farmers concerning aflatoxin its effects on health, mitigation measures, harvest/post-harvest crop management and collective marketing were aired a total of 532 times.

Formative Research in the Southern Scale Up Districts (Balaka, Machinga and Mangochi) revealed that knowledge of the six food groups is elevated, a majority of households have sanitary facilities and practice exclusive breast feeding. Some women avail themselves of ante-natal care but the frequency of visits is erratic. Further, cultural beliefs are still restricting the consumption of protein rich foods during pregnancy. Knowledge of complementary feeding practices and timing remains low, and groundnuts and soybeans are often sold off to meet pressing household needs rather than being saved and conserved for household consumption.

This reporting period our **local capacity activities** focused on developing the capacity of our implementing partners to develop cogent workplans and budgets, to procure and to monitor, evaluate and report. Long discussions were held relative to program management and the supervision of administrative and technical activities by our IP. CISANET performed a mid-term strategic review and Nkhoma Hospital completed the development of their new strategic plan (2015-2019). In addition, in collaboration with STEPS and USAID we began the process of piloting the Organizational Performance Index with two of our implementing partners- NASFAM and Pakachere..

During the current quarter our **Monitoring & Evaluation** team was occupied preparing the rollout of GIS data collection, cleaning data for the unique ID rollout, conducting a gross margin spot survey and preparing the procurements for both the Agricultural and Nutrition outcome surveys. According to the Spot survey gross margins are better across the board this year due to better yields and higher market prices. Soybean yields averaged across our ZOI are 46.9% higher than last year at 982.5 kg/ha. Groundnut yields, at 1,456 kg/ha, are 68% higher than last year.

We have presented a number of success stories after each component chapter, suggesting that our efforts to deepen impact are beginning to take hold.

Our IP grantees still struggle with financial reconciliation and have shown themselves weak in financial forecasting and work planning. Further, execution against work plan is a challenge and appropriation and true “ownership” of the program remain tepid.

Substantial progress is being made in the field but there still remains a lot to be done. Unfortunately, our runway under INVC is getting shorter. We are convinced, however, that the program will end strong and produce tangible results as well as serving as a platform for future endeavors of this sort.

# Cross Cutting Initiatives

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## Gender

### Introduction

Strengthening the capacity of partners and secretariat staff starting with gender sensitization is an important first step in implementing project wide gender initiatives. This quarter the project conducted sensitization training with all project staff and the staff of our IP grantee partners. The Gender team also has two new staff who will be working specifically on adult literacy and leadership training. These staff members, promoted internally following a competitive process, add both depth and diversity to our gender team.

### Accomplishments

#### Project Wide Gender Sensitivity Training

The Gender team has made significant strides in ensuring that all FtF-INVC staff have an awareness of gender inequalities and have acquired basic strategies for mitigating gender constraints for beneficiaries within nutrition, agriculture production and value chain competitiveness components. This was achieved by organizing a gender sensitivity training session within each district of our ZOI.

The training aimed at assisting FtF secretariat staff, partner program staff, including field officers, to meet the project's institutional and programmatic goals of ensuring there is equal access to resources and opportunities for all beneficiaries and to make gender equality, gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment a tangible priority when designing and implementing projects/activities and when communicating with beneficiaries.

This was a two-phase approach with the first taking place this quarter from June 16 to June 25. Four sessions occurred in Lilongwe, 1 in Mchinji, and 1 in Dedza/Ntcheu.



Group discussion during gender sensitivity training at INVC conference in LL. A participant making presentation during the training at INVC LL

Phase 2 will take place in the beginning of the fourth quarter and will include training of staff in Balaka, Machinga and Mangochi.

Future training will concentrate on individual component or sector challenges.

A gender consultant team was hired to facilitate the trainings. They also performed a rapid assessment in order to identify shortfalls in staff capacity and to meet the Feed the Future Malawi-Integrating Nutrition with Value Chains(FtF-INVC) objectives of the trainings. This was done with series of interviews with staff, including partner program management, field officers and staff throughout the secretariat. Their findings were captured in an inception report.

### Gender consultant inception report

Several issues were highlighted in the gender consultant's inception report. These are:

1. There is a low understanding of gender concepts, particularly of gender mainstreaming and gender responsive programming. There is a need for an introduction to gender equality and women's empowerment issues.
2. There is low knowledge of gender issues and socio-cultural causes of gender inequality in Malawi and within the FtF-INVC project.
3. There is need for concentrated capacity building of staff within each component to accurately address specific gender constraints of each sector. (i.e. low participation of men in nutrition activities, marginalization of women in value chains)

These findings were taken into account when customizing the training curriculum.

At the end of the phase 2 training, which will take place in the southern districts in July, the consultants will make recommendations for next steps for building staff and partner capacity. This will be invaluable for the gender team in the upcoming months when creating remedies to challenges in programming.

### Phase 1 Training

The initial trainings began in Lilongwe over a four-day period, which included all FtF secretariat staff--including program management, administrative support, operations and finance department--and partner management staff as well as field officers from the district.

This was a deliberate effort to not only integrate all levels of staff and partners into each training session but also to incorporate staff from each component to ensure that participants gained insight into constraints from each sector.

This integrated approach also took place in subsequent trainings in Mchinji and Dedza.

Overall, 116 total participants (39 Females and 77 Male) have been trained this quarter. The sessions also invited and included district government officials within the FtF zone of influence from the ministries of agriculture, health/nutrition and gender. The presence of district government officials at the sessions contributed to the potential for further collaboration and efficient coordination of upcoming activities within the districts. Their presence also provided FtF staff with a unique perspective for how gender constraints affect beneficiaries and the community-at-large. FtF staff also gained knowledge for how the ministries pursue alleviating these gender challenges.

The trainings began with introducing participants to key gender concepts to provide participants with a framework to discuss and analyze gender equality and women's empowerment issues in Malawi and later narrowed its focus to address specific issues within FtF. This process also provided a clear pathway for how and why these ideas are relevant within the context of FtF programming.

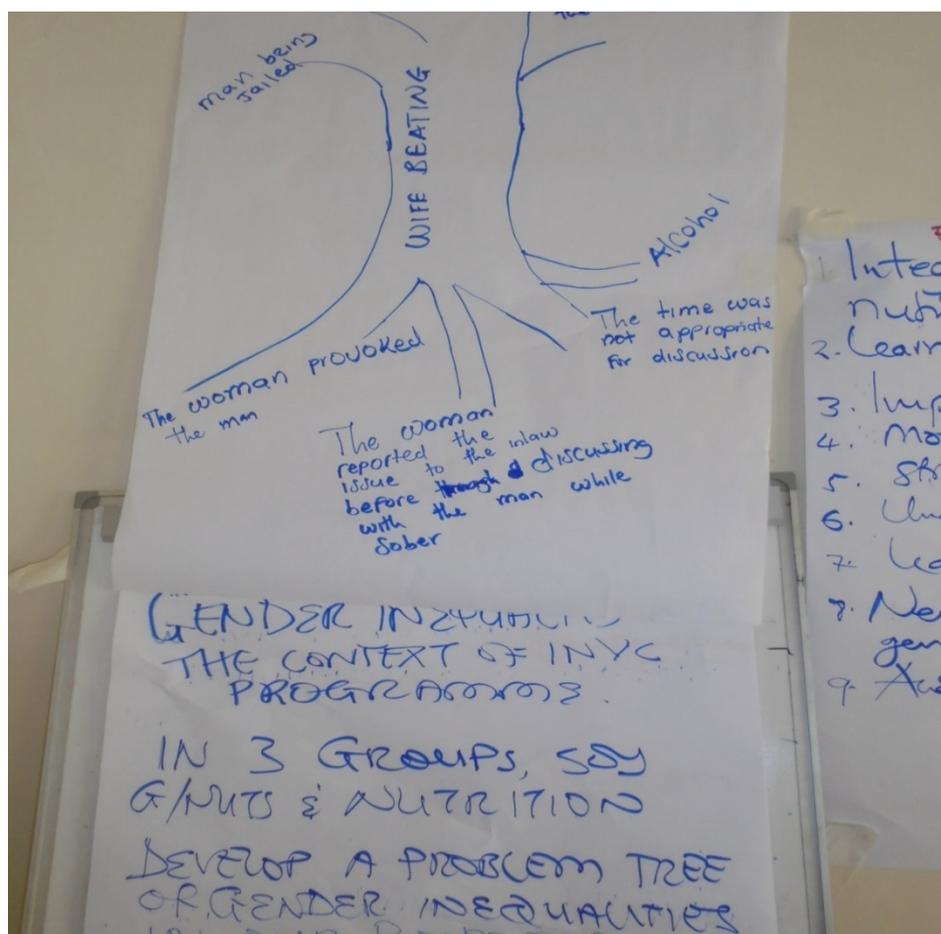
As a result, participants were empowered to unpack gender constraints that affect beneficiaries and the productivity of FtF.

Gender constraints were identified at the household, community and project level and are listed in the table below.

**Table 1:** Gender constraints identified by level

Household Level	Community Level	Project Level
Low decision making abilities for women	Norms and traditions that affect women productivity	No clear tools to use to address gender constraints
Gender Based Violence	Social events that demands women labor	
Limited access and control to productive resources and assets by women	Unavailability of by-laws to promote gender equality among men and women	
Unequal division of labor	High levels of illiteracy	
Restraining women from undertaking agribusiness ventures	Few women in leadership and decision making bodies	

This gender analysis was conducted via a problem tree approach (see in table below) and enabled participants to not only recognize challenges but also assisted them in creating deliberate actions plans that are gender responsive and improve outcomes.



Problem tree for Gender based violence, which is an issue many field officer report has affected beneficiary participation.

Selected Comments from participant regarding training:

“I will be able to include topics on gender during my meetings with farmers to make sure that they also understand these concepts”

“This training has increased and improved my understanding and perception about gender- I will look at it positively now”

“In this training, we really talked about gender unlike in other trainings were you only talk of women. This approach is good”

“I now know why I should be an advocate of gender equality for our program. It is very important for any project”

“HHMs are key for poverty reduction, gender equality and economic empowerment – we needed this approach yesterday.”

At the conclusion of each training during Phase 1, the facilitators conducted formal evaluation to assess course quality as well as uptake of teaching. The following recommendations can be drawn thus far. Further recommendations will be contained in the final report, which will be disseminated next quarter.

1. The gaps in understanding of gender concepts are still persistent in some of the staff and this will require a reference manual that they will need to use on a regular basis. Staff will need to be oriented on how the gender reference manual will be used.
2. INVC envisioned more objectives for the training and to fully cover all the six objectives at least three days could have been set aside for the training.
3. There is need for a Gender Technical Working Group within the INVC program to promote sharing of gender responsive program implementing techniques among partners.

These suggestions present FtF with further insight into constructing a roadmap for building capacity that assists partners in creating gender responsive activities.

### Leadership Parity Assessment

Project partners were contacted in order to develop a snapshot of where FtF-INVC is in terms of gender parity in leadership positions out in the field. Preliminary numbers from this exercise which were collected from partners as of June 2015 have been tabulated to see how the gendered data on membership of the farmer groups, compared to the number of men and women in leadership positions.

The table below shows the results of this tabulation.

<b>Table 2: GENDER SUMMARY SHEET FIELD STAFF</b>				
NUTRITION	POSITION	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
	District Nutrition Coordinator	3	3	6
	Nutrition Assistant	11	10	21
	Promoters	175	125	300
	Lead Mother/Father	173	9,363	9,536
	Theatre Groups	39	46	85
	Subtotal Nutrition	401	9,547	9,948
AGRICULTURE	Cooperative Membership	17,100	22,905	40,005
	Association/Chapter Membership	34,362	44,774	79,136
	IPC Coordinator	8	0	8
	Association Business Mgr	4	2	6
	AFO	46	23	69
	Assoc Executive Committee	519	277	796
	Lead Farmers	1,268	694	1,962
	Assist. Lead Farmer	2,967	6,671	9,638
	Subtotal	56,274	75,346	131,620
GRAND TOTAL		56,675	84,893	141,568

Note that there are more female than male members of the farmer groups but there are a disproportionate number of males in the various leadership positions. For the remainder of the project we will be working to move these numbers toward parity through our various gender initiatives such as sensitization, adult literacy and Gender Action and Learning System (GALS) activities.

### **GALS and Adult Literacy**

On June 15 and June 25, 2015 respectively, FtF- INVC brought on board two new officers. These officers will head up the GALS and the Adult Literacy initiatives for the project. The fully formed gender team is now poised to move forward faster and more efficiently in implementing its gender activities. The two officers were hired internally and possess an extensive background in nutrition which will be invaluable on several priority fronts such as; identifying gender constraints that lead to low participation of men as beneficiaries within nutrition activities, identifying male champions to support women's empowerment, and creating strategies to increase women's decision making

within households, which will lead to greater nutrition for families and greater participation by women in marketing and in the upper portion of the value chains.

Furthermore, their addition will ensure that every component has concentrated attention and will assist in addressing the specific gender issues and constraints that are particular within each sector. These efforts go hand-in-hand with the gender sensitivity training that was implemented this quarter.

Some activities performed by the new gender staff include; familiarization with essential gender workplans, budgets and reports. The new officers also facilitated a meeting with NASFAM on 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2015 at NASFAM office to discuss the status of the budget, development of GALS indicators and to get a sense of the current gender activities that NASFAM is currently implementing. During the meeting NASFAM indicated some of the activities that are currently being implemented such as Role Modeling, Leadership skills, Village Savings Loan Groups, Community Sensitization and Adult Literacy.

### Networking and Collaboration

Since last quarter, the gender team has proactively sought out several organizations and individuals for potential collaborations and who are best equipped with knowledge, skills and ability to provide technical assistance. This has continued into the third quarter.

- RTI to discuss adult literacy within the FtF zone of influence as well as connecting with officers for potential activities that connect care givers of children under 5 with disabilities on information and resources. Also potential for assistance in adapting marketing materials and curriculum for low literacy beneficiaries.
- IFPRI to discuss conducting focus group discussions throughout districts to investigate constraints for using market information points, particularly for women.
- NASFAM Gender Officers continued discussion regarding implementation of leadership training collaboration as well as further plans to bolster the training by creating mentorship network.
- Office of National Coordinator for Adult Literacy to discuss government curriculum and areas in which literacy courses are located within Feed the Future zone of influence
- Malawian Law Commission. Participated in the Workshop for Special Law Commission on the Review of the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act to gain overview of issues within districts as well as possible stakeholders and resources available to beneficiaries.
- South African Trade Hub consultants to discuss FtF gender analysis and aflatoxin messages to women in nutrition care groups as well as feedback for strategies to increase leadership roles and decision making for female beneficiaries.

### Constraints and challenges

- Gender is a complex subject and the team had to balance between overwhelming project staff with gender issues or starting with an introduction with more targeted training later.
- The time was insufficient to accommodate the quality and quantity of all items identified in the gender curriculum.
- More time is needed to accommodate for varying levels of staff comprehension as well as for the volume of information.

## Lessons Learned

Two days of accommodation was needed for some partner staff that were traveling long distances to attend the training. All participants were invited to stay one night, either before the training or the night of the training. In many instances, those who arrived the day before the training needed additional accommodation due the length of time of the training. This was also exacerbated by many participants arriving late. This prevented the facilitators from starting on time, particularly when the majority of participants were absent at the start. This compromised the knowledge gained by some of the participants.

## Observations from the Quarter, conclusions and recommendations

As a project, there is more capacity building needed to equip staff with ability to identify gender constraints and more training should be developed to educate staff in order to use appropriate methods for treating challenges once they are identified.

Though most participants found the gender sensitivity training useful, it should be recognized as merely an entry point for building further capacity.

For integration, it was very useful to have staff from each component and partner to participate in trainings together. It was particularly valuable to split senior staff among each session so that they were not participating in one training together, but rather dispersed between all trainings to provide a variety of viewpoints and understanding.

It was also beneficial to include district officials in the trainings as they were able to see not only commitment of FtF partners but also the commitment of the project as a whole to collaborate with government.

Further gender trainings should continue to create cross- pollination across components to ensure that all staff gain an awareness of constraints that will affect their activities' success. By the end of the training each participating organizations such as; NASFAM, Nkhoma Hospital, FUM, ACE, FtF-INVC, MoH and Agriculture came up with a plan of action which will be included in their daily work plans in their respective organizations and communities. Most participants indicated that the training was a great achievement and necessary to change/improve their work/objectives.

Since this training was conducted across FtF-INVC staff, partners and stakeholders, follow-up is needed by the respective INVC staff and each partner organization. There is a need for a point person to take the lead in developing action steps to ensure that gender is being sensitized and mainstreamed across all sections of the project and according to the action plan drawn during the training.

## Principal activities planned for Q4

In the upcoming months some of the primary areas of focus by the gender team will include; adult literacy, creating strategies for women's access to leadership roles and increased decision making, understanding and impacting women's access to markets, and networking with stakeholders via a gender lens in order to connect partners and beneficiaries with appropriate resources that increase women's empowerment.

The following activities are planned to be implemented under GALS component.

1. Supervision of gender sensitivity training that will be facilitated by DMT Consult from 01 and 02 July, 2015 in Liwonde and Mangochi districts.
2. Compile names of participants that will be trained in gender sensitivity for phase II by disaggregating data by sex.
3. Review gender sensitivity training reports from DMT consult from phase I and phase II.
4. Conduct joint meeting with NASFAM, FUM and FtF-INVC –M&E section and develop GALS indicators that will be tracked monthly and quarterly.
5. Planning and developing GALS community mobilization and sensitization budget together with NASFAM and FUM. This includes the recruiting of GALS champions.
6. Conducting GALS community mobilization and sensitization with the key informants in INVC zone of influence in Mangochi, Lilongwe and Mchinji districts.
7. Creating strategies for women's access to leadership roles and increased decision making using GALS concept as well as gender balance tree.
8. Will be working with the value chain team to begin to understand the barriers to women's access to markets, and networking with government stakeholders and VSL groups in order to connect partners and beneficiaries with appropriate resources that increase women's empowerment.
9. In collaboration with Pakachere develop the PDI tools to capture gender disparities, economic empowerment, as an individual, at household level as well as at the community level.
10. Plan a positive deviance inquiry jointly with Pakachere to identify male participation in Care Group Activities.
11. Encourage male participation in care groups by involving partners' staff from Nkhoma Hospital to mobilize male counterparts to take part during food processing and nutrition meetings. This will also be achieved by registering male care group cluster members as GALS champions in order to improve their perception in decision making as well as their attitude of child caring and feeding as a woman's job.
12. Introduce GALS approach to District Executive Committee meetings in all the FtF-INVC zone of influence where GALS will be implemented to ensure ownership, participation and good communication and collaboration with various stakeholders at district level.
13. Participate in gender technical working group meetings with government staff and other stakeholders.
14. Conduct supervision of leadership training for beneficiaries leveraged by NASFAM and FUM.
15. Conduct baseline survey on GALS champions to measure their access to resources, leadership as well decision making at household/community level.
16. Conduct regular monitoring and supervision of partners as well as beneficiaries.
17. Conduct quarterly review meetings with partners (NASFAM, FUM, Nkhoma Hospital) and community beneficiaries.
18. Develop 2015/2016 annual gender work plan and budget.

Adult Literacy component has planned to carry out the following activities namely;

1. Meet with partners (Government, NASFAM, Nkhoma Hospital, FUM, AAM) to explore collaboration on adult literacy.
2. In collaboration with partners, select areas to implement adult literacy. Ideally these are areas with high illiteracy levels
3. Conduct community mobilization/sensitization meetings – to the selected EPAs only
4. Recruit learners to attend the adult literacy courses
5. Recruit and train instructors

6. Identify areas to implement reflect circles – this will only be done in two districts namely Lilongwe and Dedza
7. Recruit and train facilitators for reflect circles
8. Procure learning materials (utilize existing materials)
9. Monitor and supervise adult classes to track progress of activities
10. Develop tracking tools together with M & E team
11. Provide support to commemorate an Adult Literacy day

# Village Financial Platform

## Introduction

The Village Financial Platform is developing into an activity that is showing very good results as well as an excellent place to integrate messages on agriculture, nutrition and financial literacy.

Field officers in Mchinji are actively working with savings groups, signing up new groups and assessing existing groups. This quarter FtF-INVC recruited a new Village Financial Platform Officer to oversee the work from this activity. The new officer has an extensive background in finance, entrepreneurship and in establishing savings groups that will ensure well equipped field officers and financially healthy savings groups. There is also building excitement regarding the 1TOP video messaging project.

During this quarter Paul Rippey returned to assess progress being made in the rehabilitation of existing VSL groups and assist INVC in refining our approach. A copy of his trip report is presented as Annex 1.

## Accomplishments

### Data Management and Capacity Building

The M&E team has developed a spreadsheet database that includes all the information from the “Diagnosis and Recommendations” form, which is part of a series of data collection tools to monitor and track project savings groups. The database is designed to track trends over time as each group is visited quarterly. Currently it allows users to look at a snap shot of aggregated practices across the mass of VFP with whom FtF is working. Preliminary results as of the end of this quarter from this activity are as follows:

- There are a total of 339 savings groups, 339 are existing groups and no brand new groups
- Currently there are 6,168 beneficiaries within the VFP structure.
- The average savings group size is 18.25 members
- There are a total of 865 male and 5.303 female members
- 80 Village Agents in Mchinji volunteer for the VFP project

Below are three key indicators from the thirteen that we track with our assessment tool. We will be working to improve on these numbers and will compare the numbers below with another snapshot of where these savings groups are on these three indicators as of the end of this quarter. In 6 months we will provide another snapshot which should represent improvement.

- 22 percent of groups lack savings transparency
- 8 percent need to improve record keeping
- 23 percent need to improve late payments

In terms of integration with other INVC activities currently 11 percent of beneficiaries are farm club members and 6 percent of the members are also members of nutrition care groups.

As stated in the list above, the database alert system has identified low performance of saving transparency, poor record bookkeeping quality and late repayments as three key areas where savings groups as a whole need capacity building. These are typical challenges for village savings and loan groups that when left uncorrected can erode their stability and performance. This quarter has

focused specifically on addressing these roadblocks. The improvement is a two pronged approach which has started first with building the capacity of the VFP field officers.

### VFP Field Officer Refresher Training

A 2-day refresher training course for VFP field officers was designed and planned to bring all of the field officers up to speed on the methodology. The workshop took place on June 30<sup>th</sup> and July 1<sup>st</sup> to cover topics such as:

1. Sensitizing savings groups to observe that savings are recorded correctly
2. Improving the skills of the savings group record keeper,
3. Strengthen calculation ability to conduct share outs
4. Developing skills to improve saving group dynamics
5. Improving field officer facilitation skills

The field officer training was facilitated by the new VFP Officer and took place in Kamwendo. The next phase of training will take place next quarter and will see the VFP field officers transferring their skills to the volunteer village agents.

### VFP as a Point for Integration and Collaboration

The VFP has served as an easy entry point for integration. Via the VFP “Inventory” form, FtF has learned that several savings group members in Mchinji already participate in some aspect of FtF activities, whether care groups or farm clubs. As a result the VFP team has pushed hard to actively ensure that all VFP members gain knowledge and access to opportunities that FtF has to offer. Thus, VFP field officers, nutrition assistants and lead farmers have all been connected in order to provide micro trainings for savings group members, the first of which took place this quarter in Chiosya.

VFP members and care group members were brought together to learn food processing on soya milk production and peanut butter. Village agents were asked to bring representatives from saving groups who would be willing to teach their fellow members the food processing techniques upon their return. The agents brought a total of 12 female beneficiaries to be trained. A nutrition assistant and some of the lead mothers facilitated the 1-day training.



Village Agents, Care and Saving group members processing soya for milk

There has been additional collaboration as approximately 150 NASFAM farmers on two separate occasions who were attending other agricultural training were sensitized by VFP officers on the VSL concept and the benefits of savings groups.

### **Constraints and challenges**

- VFP field officers continue to use bicycles to navigate to their designated areas making it very challenging to travel long distances. However, the beginning of next quarter will resolve this issue as the CADECOM grant will be finalized and will commence management of the field officers providing motorcycles.
- The data entry clerk's progress has been hampered by two key issues; cuts in electricity in Mchinji area where the office is located, and the CADECOM computer has severe issues and appears to be infected with a virus.
- Field officer mobile phone GPS applications for recording the location of savings groups continue to have problems. New phones are in the process of procurement to allay these challenges.
- There has been a delay in procurement of 1TOP phones. They have not yet been issued to village agents which hampers communication with field officers.

### **Lessons learned**

- VFP is an excellent entry point that FtF can use for integrated messaging.
- The Implementing Partner – CADECOM is willing to work with us as well as the communities out there and there is good communication and coordination from both sides.
- Village Agents are very willing to work with the Project and have shown this interest by visiting VFP groups with their own transport.

### **Observations from the Quarter, conclusions and recommendations**

- The VFP is an innovative approach that is becoming an obvious entry point for integration of nutrition and agriculture. Savings group members have expressed interest in other aspects of FtF activities and have requested to learn some of the technologies used within agriculture and nutrition.
- It has also been noted that with field officers have been conduits of information exchange regarding the prices of commodities, particularly for groups that do not have access to competitive market price information. More investigation will be done to provide an accurate and detailed account of this observation.

### **Principal activities planned for Q4**

- Building capacity of VFP groups in three areas: late payments, savings transparency and record keeping.
- Training of Village Agents
- Launching of first information video in first week of August
- Distributing the videos to Field Officers and Village Agents
- Report on video feedback from field to video committee.

## Success Story

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Steven Phiri is a member of Tithandizane VSL in Uraya Village in Mkanda EPA. Through his participation in the savings group, he was able to purchase an oxcart, a sewing machine and some livestock. With the profits Steven made using his newly purchased goods, he has now transitioned from an employee to an employer having recently hired people to assist him. “At first I used to do piece work for other people in their fields, but now people are coming to my field to do work. Now I am the boss.” We look forward to hearing more about his progress.

## Partnership- the 3 C's

### Introduction

INVC collaborates with many partners across a wide spectrum within our Zone of Influence. This includes Government Ministries, USAID Implementing partners (both Malawi specific and regional) and other donor funded initiatives. In addition we have a number of private sector partners, local implementing partners, technical solution providers and collaborators. This section of the report attempts to capture initiatives undertaken during this reporting period. Details on these initiatives are discussed at length in the sections relative to the particular technical component.

### Ministries and Government Institutions

#### Bunda College

Collaboration on the nutrition outcome survey (currently underway). Discussions are on-going to support the agricultural outcome survey as well.

#### Malawi Bureau of Standards

Discussions on Trade Standards, quality systems and food safety.

#### Office of the National Coordinator for Adult Literacy

Discussions on the government curriculum for literacy, availability of pedagogical materials and presence of on-going initiatives within the project ZOI

#### Ministry of Health

Participation in national level technical working groups on nutrition

#### District Health Officials

Collaboration on Child Health Days in Balaka, Machinga, Lilongwe and Mchinji. Growth Monitoring exercises with Health Surveillance Agents (HSA).

#### District Agricultural Services

DADO and AEDO participated in both Farmer field days organized by INVC and in the buyer's tours in Dedza, Mchinji and Lilongwe as well as Balaka, Machinga and Mangochi. They also participated in OFSP harvest activities on Mother and baby plots in Balaka, Dedza, Mchinji and Lilongwe.

#### District Executive Board members

Participated in buyer's tour activities organized in 6 districts. Assisted in finding and procuring office space in Liwonde to act as a hub for our activities in the southern scale up districts.

## NGO and Project partnerships

**Table3:** INVC partnership/activities matrix Q3FY15

NGO/Project	District	Activity undertaken during Q3FY15
Baylor Tlmgathe	Lilongwe	Two integration meetings held. Discussion on the use of Care Groups to increase community sensitization on HIV/AIDS; Use of community theatre to disseminate appropriate nutrition information for rural people living with HIV/AIDS
Feed the Children	Lilongwe, Mchinji	Growth Monitoring Learning Exchange visit with INVC and Nkhoma Hospital Nutrition Promoters, District Nutrition Coordinators and Health Surveillance Agents
IFPRI	Lilongwe	Focus group discussions on constraints to women's use of market information points (MIP); Presentation made at IFPRI sponsored conference on Agriculture and Nutrition
International Potato Center (CIP)	Balanka, Dedza, Lilongwe	Participation in the harvest of mother and baby plots for Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato. Training of participating farmers in efficient data collection and record keeping.
MISST	Ntcheu, Machinga, Lilongwe	Joint farmer field days at demonstration sites. Mostly concerned collaboration with ICRISAT and IITA
Malawi Law Commission	Lilongwe	Participation in a workshop on the prevention of gender based and domestic violence.
RTI- Early Grade Learning Activity	Lilongwe	Discussion concerning literacy in the iNVC ZOI. Connecting with caregivers of children with disabilities. Discussion on potential collaboration on the adaption of curriculum, technical and extension materials for low literacy rural beneficiaries
South African Trade Hub	Lilongwe, Mchinji, Dedza,	Consultations on gender analysis and aflatoxin messaging to women in nutrition Care Groups and strategies to increase women's participation in leadership roles and decision making. Training provided to INVC beneficiaries on Aflatoxin mitigation and management. Co-organization and facilitation of the "Blue box" technology workshop on improved technology responses for aflatoxin detection. Coordination on SUAP compliance.
STEPS		Piloting of the Organizational Performance Index (OPI) assessment tool with NASFAM and Pakachere
World Food Program	Mangochi and Dedza	Potential for linkages between WFP's Home Grown School Feeding (HGSEF) program and INVC

## Lessons Learned

- Building productive partnerships takes time and human resource capacity in addition to unanticipated resource allocation. Fruitful partnerships require constant, open, fluid communication.
- Partnership requires a trusting relationship. Going forward it is recommended that USAID include a no poaching clause for personnel in all of their agreements. There are alternative ways of leveraging competency which exist in the environment than hiring it away.
- There is a tendency for new actors in a zone to ride along for free on the foundational efforts of pre-existing actors. It is understood that existing implementing partners have a lot of expertise, knowledge and connections to share as a result of their tenure. However, positive synergies require that all parties both contribute and see some benefit from the partnership.

# INVC Indicators

Output Performance Indicator		INVC Achieved		
		FY 15 Q3	FY 15 Year to Date	LOP Results to Date
1	Number of rural households benefiting directly from USG interventions	102,589	236,792	267,118
	<b>Gendered Household Type</b>			
	Adult female no adult male	19,429	15,747	
	Adult male no adult female	8,746	14,681	
	Male and female	73,908	163,339	
	Child no adults	506	15,526	
	Disaggregates not available		27,499	
	<b>New/Continuing</b>			
	New			
	Continuing	102,589	236,792	
Disaggregates not available				
2	Number of individuals who have received USG supported short-term agricultural sector productivity or food security training	20,053	47,981	181,773
	<b>Sex</b>			
	Male	9,041	21,114	
	Female	11,012	26,867	
	Disaggregates not available			
	<b>Type of individual</b>			
	Producers (Farmers)	20,053	47,896	
	Government staff (Extension, EPA etc.)			
	Private Sector (Processors, service providers)			
	Civil Society (NGO' CBO, FBO, research etc.)		85	
Disaggregates not available				
3	Number of private enterprises (for profit), producer organizations, water users associations, women's groups, trade and business associations and community based Organizations (CBOs) receiving USG assistance.	367	5088	11,783
	<b>Organization Type</b>			
	Private enterprises for profit			
	Producer organizations	367	5088	
	Women's groups			
	Trade and business Associations			
	CBO			
	<b>Duration</b>			
	New			
	Continuing	367	5088	
Disaggregates not available				

4	Value of new private sector investment in the agriculture sector or food chain leveraged by FTF implementation			-- \$ -
5	Value of agricultural and rural loans	\$ 313,760	\$ 384,819	\$ 8,341,662
	<b>Type of loan recipient</b>			
	Producers	\$ 312,617	\$ 335,700	
	Local Traders/assemblers	\$ 561	\$ 48,536	
	Wholesalers/processors			
	Others	\$ 582	\$ 582	
	Disaggregates not available			
	<b>Sex of recipient</b>			
	Male	\$ 223,842	\$ 237,200	
	Female	\$ 84,067	\$ 94,322	
	Joint	\$ 5,851	\$ 53,296	
	Companies			
	Disaggregates not available			
	<b>Size of Loan Recipient</b>			
Micro	\$ 312,617	\$ 335,700		
Small	\$ 561	\$ 48,536		
Medium	582	582		
Other				
6	Number of children under five reached by USG-supported assistance (through care group model)	98,885	117,792	121,107
	Male	47,764	56,991	
	Female	51,121	60,801	
	Disaggregates not available			
7	Number of children under five reached by USG-supported assistance (through Child Health Days)	445,666	445,666	445,666
	Male	202,872	202,872	
	Female	242,794	242,794	
	Disaggregates not available			
8	Number of people trained in child health and nutrition through USG-supported programs	136,714	229,820	322,058
	Male	51,295	89,191	
	Female	85,419	140,552	
	Disaggregates not available	-	79	
9	Number of MSMEs, including farmers, receiving business development services from USG assisted sources	154	210	677
	<b>Size of Enterprise</b>			
	Small	143	180	
	Medium	8	14	
	Large	3	13	
	<b>Sex of Enterprise Owner</b>			
	Male	79	103	
	Female	23	36	
	Joint	52	71	
	<b>Type of Enterprise</b>			
	Ag. Producer	143	180	
	Input trader			
Trader	7	12		
Output processors				
Non- Ag.	4	18		
Other				

Comments	
1	With the exception of the nutrition scale up districts there were no new beneficiaries reported in the quarter April - June for both Agriculture and Nutrition interventions. Nkhoma and in the scale up districts registered 11,576 new households. These new
2	The quarter has seen a scaling down of training numbers primarily due to partners challenges with proper liquidation of funds. Since partners did not have funds they were unable to report on activities that took place out in the field. Significant time h
3	This indicator has not changed. In the quarter we had 367 GAC's continuing to receive support.. We will continue to train the partners on the changes we have made on reporting this indicator as we finish the fiscal year. Note that the 5,088 figure contain
4	Since the internal DQA conduct at ACE partners are strategizing to start reporting on this indicator. We will intensify mentoring towards the fiscal year on how this is reported. Despite being a challenge in the short period in remaining fiscal year it is
5	The recent internal DQA at ACE has further helped disaggregation by commodity on the indicator. We are now very confident on the numbers being reported on this indicator and will have excellent results for the final FY15 numbers.
6	Despite the fact that Nkhoma was implementing most of the care group model activities very little of this activity was reported. Field staff had a challenge to document and gather the forms because of the lack of fuel, stationery and other supplies. We an
7	Lilongwe Child Health days have not yet been reported. We look forward to compare the highest number from child health days in the first campaign and second campaign and report on the highest figure between these two reports.
8	These are cumulative figures from the training cards that were conducted. These reports are coming from volunteer reports
9	The internal DQA conducted for this indicator has indicated that all implementing partners should be reporting on this indicator. ACE has been the only partner reporting on this indicator but this quarter includes numbers from NASFAM. Moving forward FUM,

Table 4: INVC PROGRESS TOWARD FISCAL YEAR TARGETS			
Indicator	FY 2015 Target	Achievement To Date	Percentage Achievement
Number of rural households benefiting directly from USG interventions	290,000	267,118	0.92
Number of individuals who have received USG supported short-term agricultural sector productivity or food security training	130,000	181,773	1.40
Number of private enterprises (for profit), producer organizations, water users associations, women's groups, trade and business associations and community based Organizations (CBOs) receiving USG assistance.	9,500	11,783	1.24
Value of new private sector investment in the agriculture sector or food chain leveraged by FTF implementation	2,000,000	-	-
Value of agricultural and rural loans	6,500,000	8,341,662	1.28
Number of children under five reached by USG-supported assistance <b>(through care group model)</b>	175,000	121,107	0.69
Number of children under five reached by USG-supported assistance <b>(through Child Health Days)</b>	-	445,666	
Number of people trained in child health and nutrition through USG-supported programs	250,000	322,058	1.29
Number of MSMEs, including farmers, receiving business development services from USG assisted sources	650	677	1.04

## Accomplishments vs Planned Activities for Q3 FY 15

Component	Planned activities for Q2 FY 15	Accomplishments in the quarter
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+Focus group discussions with farm club beneficiaries to improve market information systems</li> <li>+Gender Sensitivity Training for all program staff</li> <li>+Leadership training for beneficiaries leveraged by Nasfam and FUM</li> <li>+Collaboration with RTI/Early Grade Learning Activity to review management training materials for possible adaptation</li> <li>+Positive deviance inquiry to identify men to participate in Care Group Activities</li> <li>+Adult literacy training</li> <li>+Financial literacy training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+Not accomplished</li> <li>+Accomplished</li> <li>+In preparation</li> <li>+In process</li> <li>+Not accomplished</li> <li>+In preparation</li> <li>+Not accomplished</li> </ul>
Village Financial Platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+Grant agreement signed with Cadecom</li> <li>+Approximately 6,000 beneficiaries served by end of quarter</li> <li>+Distribute mobile phones to Village Agents</li> <li>+Disseminate 2 videos within the quarter</li> <li>+Office space secured for data entry</li> <li>+STTA consultant returns to evaluate pilot and make recommendations</li> <li>+Collaborative agreement with another savings group stakeholder secured for expansion into a second district</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+In draft, ready for review and signature</li> <li>+Achieved (6,168)</li> <li>+Procurement underway</li> <li>+Not accomplished, however the video company has been contracted and a draft script for the 1<sup>st</sup> video has been approved.</li> <li>+Accomplished</li> <li>+Accomplished</li> <li>+Not accomplished</li> </ul>

Component	Planned activities for Q2 FY 15	Accomplishments in the quarter
Value Chain Competitiveness	+Linking farmer associations and cooperatives to identified end markets like Buyers Tour	+Achieved
	+Assessing regional end markets (desk study)	+Achieved
	+Reviewing quality management systems, food safety and food standards of soybeans and groundnuts	+ Achieved
	+Facilitate SATH/INVC aflatoxin training for farmers	+ Achieved
	+Collaborate with Southern Africa Trade Hub and Malawi Bureau of Standards on preparation of training materials on trade standards, quality systems and food safety.	+ Partially Achieved
	+Negotiating with commercial banks on access to credit by farmer associations and cooperatives	+ Achieved
	+Linking farmer associations and cooperatives with banks	+ Not achieved because consultative meetings with banks were not conclusive
Agricultural Productivity	+Meet with IPs to develop an improved seed revolving system	+A meeting was held but was inconclusive. No IP to date have provided draft strategies for review
	+Meet with IPs to update and improve the training material on land preparation and crop management in time for printing it as a booklet and distribution to the beneficiaries before the start of the next season	+In process
	+Discuss plans for sourcing and distributing inoculum to soybean (and possibly groundnut) farmers.	+Not accomplished
	+Plan and implement the OFSP demos for the dry season in the Dambos	+Partially accomplished
	+For new certified seed to be procured with INVC funds through IPs, start the process to obtain any required waiver from USAID.	+ IP have yet to provide their "gap" estimates and strategies
	+Continue discussion for an arrangement to scale up IPM training e.g. with SAIOMA.	+Not accomplished
	+Conduct the Gross Margins survey with M&E team, including yield measurements of randomly selected fields.	+Accomplished
	+Measure yields of selected IPM demos, OFSP demos, and 'success story' farmers.	+In process
	+Carry out the final IPM demo (on pest control in warehouses) with FOL using Actellic Gold.	+Accomplished
	+Assess or measure knowledge of improved technologies retained by extension staff and LFs/ALFs, to understand how well they understand the principles and to help steer future training in the right direction.	+Not accomplished
	+Conduct an environmental mitigation training for IPs (and invite other USAID project too).	+Not accomplished
	+Hold the 8 <sup>th</sup> TWG meeting around the end of May or mid- June (to be chaired by CADECOM).	+Accomplished
	+Continue collaborating with MIST and other USAID projects in the agriculture/NRM sector.	+Continuing.

Component	Planned activities for Q2 FY 15	Accomplishments in the quarter
Improved Community Capacity to prevent under nutrition	<p>+Roll out implementation of care group activities in Impact Evaluation areas in Lilongwe and Mchinji districts.</p> <p>+Coordinate Performance Evaluation for the project commissioned by USAID.</p> <p>+Continue with food processing and utilization training as well as SUN/ENA refresher training session for promoters and lead mothers.</p> <p>+Print Recipe Book and Training Manual for TOT on Food Processing and Utilization.</p> <p>+Revision of SBCC Strategy.</p> <p>+Consult with DNHA-OPC concerning Policy constraints and initiatives to be undertaken in Food Fortification as the activity did not take place in the previous quarter.</p> <p>+Carry out community cooking demonstrations on improved recipes in all intervention areas following the training of District Nutrition Coordinators, Nutrition Assistant, promoters and some lead mothers in food processing and utilization.</p> <p>+Produce agriculture value chain messages on harvesting and post-harvest handling, collective marketing and aflatoxin and conduct theatre performances in Lilongwe, Mchinji and Dedza as part of enhancing overlay of agriculture activities and nutrition.</p> <p>+Institute Nutrition Technical Working Group (TWG).</p>	<p>+In process</p> <p>+Accomplished</p> <p>+Accomplished</p> <p>+Submitted for Ministry of Health Review and concurrence prior to proceeding with publication</p> <p>+Not accomplished</p> <p>+Not accomplished</p> <p>+Accomplished</p> <p>+Partially accomplished</p> <p>+Not accomplished</p>
Local Institutional Capacity Building	<p>+Organize training courses for partners on identified administrative and programmatic challenges/gaps</p> <p>+Conduct field appraisal meetings with farmer associations and cooperatives on the implementation of business plans.</p> <p>+Pilot the application of OPI tool in Malawi as an approach for assessing performance of organizations as a result of the INVC capacity building interventions.</p> <p>+Undertake key capacity reinforcement actions with IP and TSP in accordance with the OCA analyses and strategic development plans already negotiated</p>	<p>+Three training courses were conducted for partners on Program Management, Procurement and M&amp;E. Guidance materials and templates on the subject areas were distributed to all INVC partners as reference material.</p> <p>+Joint monitoring visits (INVC and NASFAM) were made to six NASFAM IPCs namely: Mchinji, Lilongwe North, Lilongwe South, Ntcheu, Balaka and Namwera. The visits were done to mentor on the implementation of business plans. Action plans were developed for implementation</p> <p>+INVC jointly with USAID and STEPS piloted the administration of OPI tool on NASFAM and Pakachere.</p> <p>+CISANET finalized its midterm strategic plan review; and development of Business Plan. Key positions at Nkhoma ie Project Accountant, M&amp;E Coordinator were filled. Nkhoma Strategic Plan developed</p>

# Component 1: Advancing Value Chain Competitiveness

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## Introduction

The current reporting period extends from April-June 2015. This is the third quarter of FY2015 and is a beginning of marketing season in Malawi. Component 1 activities focused on marketing and food safety. This component promoted collective marketing. The component linked processors, buyers, traders and transporters to small-scale farmers. Farmers were trained on aflatoxin control and management in groundnuts. Efforts were made to consult commercial banks on linkages with farmers and this is an ongoing exercise.

## Accomplishments

### Development of Markets

During the period under review, INVC piloted a Buyers' Tour (BT) in Mchinji, Lilongwe, Dedza, Ntcheu, Machinga and Mangochi. The project BT took 30 processors, buyers, traders and transporters (Annex 2) to meet with farmers at village aggregation center level.

The new approach of bringing buyers together with farmers in their communities offered beneficiary farmers of NASFAM, FUM and CADECOM options to market their products. The buyers interacted with 1,725 lead farmers (870 men and 855 women) in 11 extension planning areas (Table 1). These EPAs are Chafumbwa and Kanyama in Dedza, Mlonyeni, Kalulu and Mkanda in Mchinji, Malingunde, and Chiwamba in Lilongwe, Nsipe in Ntcheu, Nampeya in Machinga, Katuli and Ntiya in Mangochi.

During the BT, business deals were negotiated and agreed.

For example, Afrinut entered into a supply agreement with Lifidzi Farmers Association to supply 100 MT of unshelled groundnuts at MK230,000 per MT giving a total value of MK23,000,000. Afrinut advanced the association MK1 million to supply 5 MT of groundnut on revolving basis at a time.

Estrell Ltd. arranged to source 50 MT of shelled groundnuts from Chafumbwa EPA at MK450,000 per MT giving a total value of MK22,500,000 and 20 MT from Mkanda EPA at MK450,000 giving a total value of MK9,000,000. Estrell secured a bank loan facility of MK37 million from Indebank to be used to purchase groundnuts (100 MT).

Sunseed Oil Ltd bought 165 MT of soybeans at MK220,000 per MT worthy MK37,300,000 from farmers in Kalulu EPA. Sunseed Oil Ltd offered to enter into contract farming with soybean farmers in all the 11 EPAs visited.

ACE agreed in principle to support Estrell Ltd. and Afrinut with bridging finance to source groundnuts from the visited areas.

NASCOMEX offered to buy groundnuts and soybeans from its own EPAs like Nsipe, Nampeya, Ntiya, Katuli, Malingunde, Chiwamba and Mlonyeni. NASCOMEX bought 1,027 MT of soybeans directly from all it's over 60 EPAs including from those visited and promised.

The buyers held business discussions with district council officials including District Agriculture Officers in the districts visited. The project BT was a pilot that will be scaled up by NASFAM, FUM and CADECOM in the coming fiscal year.

**Table 5.** Lead Farmers Attendance during the 2015 Buyers' Tour

Extension Planning Area	District	Partner	Men	Women	Total
Dedza	Chafumbwa	CADECOM	135	82	217
Dedza	Kanyama	CADECOM	92	145	237
Mchinji	Kalulu	FUM	83	76	159
Mchinji	Mkanda	FUM	45	91	136
Mchinji	Mlonyeni	NASFAM	104	68	172
Lilongwe	Malingunde	NASFAM	88	62	150
Lilongwe	Chiwamba	NASFAM	73	42	115
Ntcheu	Nsipe	NASFAM	86	34	120
Machinga	Nampeya	NASFAM	41	134	175
Mangochi	Ntiya	NASFAM	75	40	115
Mangochi	Ntiya	NASFAM	48	81	129
Total			870 (50.43%)	855 (49.57%)	1,725

## Collective Marketing

During the period under review, Pakachere Travelling Theatre and Pakachere Community Drama Groups were used to promote collective behavior in crop marketing of soybean and groundnuts. The marketing messages covered structured trade like Offer Volume Only, Bid Volume Only, Warehouse Receipt System, and market/sales options like buyers, traders, and processors. Pakachere also provided marketing messages through radios like Zodiak Broadcasting Corporation and community radio in Mchinji. Behavior change messaging by Pakachere through drama was effective in conveying general management principles and problem-solving skills for illiterate and innumerate farmers.

Pakachere, as one of the Technical and Service Partners with INVC, accompanied the processors/buyers on the buyers' tour of the 11 EPAs where dramas on collective marketing were performed. The messaging focused on collective behavior for crop marketing and promotion of structured markets like the warehouse receipt system and commodity auctions. This approach of using live drama performances to assist in focusing on collective marketing was effective and captured the interest of audiences in all the 11 EPAs visited. The implementing partners will collaborate with Pakachere to scale up the live drama performances on collective marketing through Pakachere's rural (community) drama groups. This will supplement the radio messages on collective marketing that are currently being broadcast on MBC 1, Radio Maria, Mudziwathu and Zodiak radio stations by Pakachere on behalf of INVC.

During the period under review, all the 10 EPAs of FUM aggregated a total of 754.94 MT of soybeans. Out of this, 620.10 MT of soybeans were sold, principally to Sunseed Oil Ltd (95%) at market price range of MK200,000 - MK300,000 per MT (Table 6). From Table 6, we can see that soybean sales started in April with prices of MK200,000 per MT, picked up to MK300,000 in May before dropping and stabilizing at a price of MK220,000 in June 2015.

There is an exceptional case in Mngwangwa EPA in Lilongwe where Tidziwane Cluster sold 14.15 MT of soybeans out its aggregated stock of 23.5 MT at MK185,000/ MT in May 2015 when all clusters were selling at market prices above MK200,000 per MT including its neighboring Nathenje Cluster that sold its 15 MT of soybeans at MK250,000 per MT in the same month of May 2015. On investigation, Tidziwane Cluster sold at the lowest price to an individual vendor/trader, Mr. Lattif.

The highest price registered (MK300,000 /MT) was paid to Nachichi Cluster in Chitsime EPA in May 2015 who sold 11.84 MT of soybeans out of their aggregated stock of 26.84 MT in May 2015. Sunseed Oil Ltd sourced over 90% of its soybeans from these EPAs with the assistance of FUM. In terms of aggregation, FUM performed extremely well with its well organized, skilled and disciplined cooperatives. Farmers Union ran its VACs effectively and efficiently due to the fact that their VACs are managed by professional cooperatives with sole aim of marketing as a business. Each cooperative maintains business records and are trained to access markets.

**Table 6.** Soybean Sales in FUM’s Extension Planning Areas (EPA)

District	EPA	Quantity Aggregated (MT)	Quantity Sold (MT)	Quantity Unsold (MT)	Price (kg in MKW)	Month sold
Dedza	Kabwazi	19.5	9.5	6	200	April
Dedza	Mayani	55.25	38.25	17	208	April & May
Dedza	Linthipe	50.5	40	6	215	May
Dedza	Lobi	41.5	29	0	N/A	N/A
Mchinji	Mkanda	20	20	0	220	May
Mchinji	Kalulu	165	165	0	220	May
Lilongwe	Mngwangwa	62.85	53.5	21.2	204	May & June
Lilongwe	Chitsime	187.34	116.84	70.5	254	May & June
Lilongwe	Chileka	39.5	39.5	0	213	May & June
Thawale	Soybeans	113.5	99.5	4	212	May & June
Total		754.94	611.09	124.7		

During the period under review, NASFAM implemented a “One-GAC-One-Marketing Center” strategy where farmers from a particular GAC sold their produce to a single market designated for that GAC by NASFAM. People from the local areas were recruited by NASFAM as market clerks and trained on how to facilitate crop marketing activities at a market center. The clerks reported to IPC staff. The IPCs received money from NASCOMEX to source directly from farmers. A total of 638 market centers were established in all the 6 IPCs. Only 65% of the established market centers were in operation during the period under review. In total 1,038.9 MT of soybean (Table 7) was marketed through these marketing centers. A total of 10,250 farmers (5,135 men and 5,115 women) as shown in Annex

3 sold their soybeans to these centers. In essence the markets were designated by NASCOMEX in order to protect its default NSAFAM/NASCOMEX monopoly. In total NASFAM purchased 1,038.9 MT of soybeans at price range MK135,000 – MK210,000 per MT. There is no evidence of aggregation of soybeans by farmer associations in all NASFAM EPAs. NASFAM through NASCOMEX purchased their soybeans directly from individual farmers. Table 7 below shows quantities of soybeans sourced by NASFAM directly from farmers.

**Table 7.** Soybeans purchased by NASFAM Disaggregated by District and Gender

District	Men	Women	Total # of farmers	soybean sales (MT)
Mchinji	508	391	899	280
Lilongwe	2,118	1,981	4,099	338
Ntcheu	614	661	1,275	120
Balaka	192	180	372	10.7
Machinga	391	309	700	26.9
Mangochi	1,303	1,602	2,905	263.1
Total	5,135	5,115	10,250	1,038.7

In comparison to FUM, NASFAM performed minimally at 1,038.9 MT of soybeans purchased from over 60 EPAs as compared to FUM's 754.94 MT from 10 EPAs. In terms of prices, FUM's farmers were able to bargain better prices from different buyers and they fetched better prices than those offered by NASFAM. NASCOMEX was a single buyer for NASFAM who offered low prices to farmers compared to market prices. The conflict of interest between NASFAM and NASCOMEX disadvantaged beneficiary farmers and discouraged the spirit of collective marketing and the principle of village aggregation centers. This may explain the low volumes of soybeans purchased by NASFAM in this quarter, and the non-existence of village aggregation centers. NASFAM has no village aggregation centers but operates marketing points to serve the interest of NASCOMEX.

During this quarter, CADECOM focused on identification of storage space for groundnuts as much of the groundnut crop was still in the field. A total of 30 storage structures were identified and renovated in readiness for aggregation of groundnuts by farmer associations. The distribution of the 30 small warehouses are six (6) in Mtakataka, six (6) in Bembeke, five (5) in Golomoti, six (6) in Kanyama and seven (7) in Chafumbwa EPAs. CADECOM did not rent warehouse space from ADMARC as planned due to estimated low volumes to be aggregated this year. Out of the five EPAs in Dedza, four were adversely affected with poor rainfall. These are Golomoti, Kanyama, Bembeke and Mtakataka EPAs.

During the quarter under review, only Chafumbwa started aggregation of groundnuts under a supply contract with Afrinut Ltd. They aggregated 11 MT of groundnuts to supply to Afrinut. In total 241 MT of groundnuts are estimated to be aggregated by all the five EPAs assisted by CADECOM in Dedza. The estimated volumes are 50 MT for Golomoti, 100 MT for Chafumbwa, 50 MT for Mtakataka, 6 MT for Bembeke, and 35 MT for Kanyama. The production of groundnuts has been drastically reduced in Dedza due to poor rainfall. The rains started late (in the last week of December), so planting was delayed from the normal agricultural calendar in this area. There were good rains for the months of January and February only with little, poorly dispersed rains thereafter.

## Food Standards and Safety

During the quarter under review, a series of aflatoxin control and management training sessions were held for field staff and farmers. From 4 to 5 May, 2015, 50 extension staff (29 men and 21 women) drawn from Farmers Union (FUM) and CADECOM were trained on a low cost technology for sorting aflatoxin contaminated groundnuts using a mild heat treatment (roasting) at Afrinut Groundnut Factory in Lilongwe.

A similar training was held from 6 to 7 May, 2015 at Afrinut Groundnut Factory in Lilongwe that was attended by 55 extension staff (35 women and 20 men) drawn from NASFAM.

Both training sessions were facilitated by Professor Archileo Kaaya of Makerere University, a professor of food safety and head of Food Science and Technology. Professor Kaaya is a regional expert of the low cost technology in removal of aflatoxin contaminated nuts using a mild heat treatment of raw groundnuts, removal of the skins, and manual removal of contaminated nuts based on discoloration. The 105 trainees (64 men and 41 women) acquired knowledge and skills in sorting, detection and testing for aflatoxin contamination. The trainees will up scale the training to increase the impact of, and adoption of the technology. This will eventually increase the quantities of compliant groundnuts available for home consumption and to the markets. This training was collaboratively conducted by INVC and Southern Africa Trade Hub. A program is planned to follow with the trainees in their respective associations and cooperatives in the next quarter.

On 15 May, 2015, 42 people (29 men and 13 women) attended a one day Blue Box Technology Workshop training at Crossroads Hotel in Lilongwe. These were lead farmers and extension staff drawn from NASFAM, FUM, CADECOM and ACE. Some participants came from Afrinut, Exagris and Valid Nutrition.

The aim of the workshop was to introduce a new technology for managing aflatoxin contamination in crops. The technology is an Intertek solution for on-site and instant screening of aflatoxin contaminated groundnuts by using rapid field tests. The tool kit is popularly known as "Blue Box Technology" because the original box was painted in blue color. The box contains equipment for sampling, grading and testing, and miscellaneous utensils including power solution. The main equipment is a Rida Quick Aflatoxin Testing Kit that can be sourced separately from open market. The participants practiced use of Blue Box Technology by sampling, grading, testing and interpretation of results of contaminated groundnuts during the training. The workshop was facilitated by Charles Botha of Intertek Agricultural Services in South Africa and John van Vet, a consultant. The Blue Box Technology is suitable for farmers, warehouses, distributors and any groundnut chain stakeholder. The workshop was organized collaboratively by INVC and SATH in order to promote testing of aflatoxin contamination in groundnuts at the farmer level before home consumption and sale.

During the quarter under review, a series of meetings were held with the Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS) and Southern Africa Trade Hub (SATH) on exploring collaboration areas with regards to trade standards, quality systems and food safety. MBS is already certifying NASFAM and expressed interest to include FUM and CADECOM in its certification scheme.

According to meeting held at MBS head office in Blantyre in May, 2015, MBS will collaborate with INVC in areas of food safety training, and analysis and testing for aflatoxin using their newly acquired HPLC testing equipment. The new machine is capable of detecting up to 4 parts per billion of specific aflatoxins.

SATH will collaborate with INVC on aflatoxin control and management by provision of short term technical assistance to train extension staff and farmers in Malawi. INVC and SATH collaboratively

prepared training materials on aflatoxin management and planned for scale up aflatoxin training at district level in the next quarter (Q4) including training on Disposal of Aflatoxin Contaminated Material.

## Sales and Market Options

### Warehouse Receipt System

This quarter is the marketing period for soybeans, maize rice as well as tobacco. As a result, ACE facilitated a total of 2,810 MT of commodity deposits comprising of 2,570 MT of soybeans and 240 MT of maize, rice and beans. Out of 2,570 MT of soybeans, 1,460 MT came from INVC's ZOI representing 56.8% of soybeans on WRS. The deposits were dominated by soybeans because the soybeans were already harvested and ready for the market while other crops were still in the field. The deposits of soybeans increased from 500 MT in last quarter to 1460 MT an increase of 292% in this quarter. This is peak period for sales of soybeans in Malawi. The drawdowns from warehouses amounted to 3,714 MT comprising maize grain, soybeans, pigeon peas and rice compared to 618 MT comprising maize grain, soybeans, pigeon peas and rice in the last quarter. By the end of the quarter, ACE's certified storage sites/warehouses had a total volume of 9,713.79 MT with 6,694.02 MT (68.9%) in the INVC ZOI.

### Contracts

Table 8 shows that this quarter ACE facilitated a total of 116 contracts on its trading platform comprising normal trade, forward contracts and Bid Volume Only (BVO) contracts. The total volume traded was 6,815 MT worthy a dollar value of \$3,306,946 compared to 53 contracts for 2,640MT and a dollar value of \$1,317,014 in the previous quarter. Results from the current reporting period represent a 258.14% increase over last quarter in terms of volumes. The volume from INVC zone represents 64% of the total volume of contracts facilitated. The value from INVC zone is 27.33% of the total dollar value while the number of contracts negotiated from the INVC Zone represents 42.2% of all contracts.

**Table 8.** Contracts Facilitated by ACE

Contract Type	Facilitator	Contracts	Volume (MT)	Value (MK)	Value (USD)
Any	Rural Trade Agent	6	59	9,246,000	21,255
Normal Trade	Trade office	85	2,895	734,063,938	1,652,497
Forward Contracts	Trade office	18	1,525	665,206,815	1,538,940
BVO	Trade office	7	3,863	691,424,000	1,589,480
Total		116	6,815	1,438,521,785	3,306,946
INVC Total		49	4,361	393,100,576	903,679

### Bid Volume Only Auctions

The World Food Program and Chibuku Products tendered seven Bid Volume Only (BVO's) sessions in this quarter. On 24 May 2015, WFP bid the 4 tenders of 763.15 MT for cowpeas worthy \$509,251.72. Chibuku Products tendered 7,000 MT of white maize worthy \$664,367.81 on 25 June 2015. The bids were conducted on ACE's online trading platform.

## Market Information System

### *Sensitization and Training on Structured Trade*

During this quarter, sensitization, awareness building and training on structured trade were carried out by ACE in collaboration with NASFAM and FUM. A total of 2,083 farmers and stakeholders (1,007 men and 1,076 women) were reached in this quarter compared to 2,483 farmers and key stakeholders (1,354 male and 1,129 female) in the last quarter representing a decrease of 16% in total participation. There was an increase of 26% of women participation as most of them became less busy with field operations in this quarter. Out of the 2,083 farmers and stakeholders who participated in the sensitization and training in this quarter, 1,210 farmers (943 men and 1051 women) came from ZOI of INVC representing 94% total participation of beneficiary farmers from ZOI. 98% of the women who participated in the sensitization and training came from ZOI.

During this quarter, 68 people (48 men and 19 women) were sensitized on the Market Information Points (MIPs). Out this, 19 were beneficiary farmers from ZOI representing 28% of total participation. During the same period under review, the rural MIPs were patronized by 182 farmers (114 men and 68 women). Out of this, 16 farmers (6 men and 10 women) patronized MIP in Dedza in the ZOI. In spite of being a marketing season, farmers and stakeholders did not fully patronize MIPs. In last quarter 421 people (271 men and 150 women) patronized the MIPs. This is a decline of 84% in the participation of people in the MIPs. This may be because of the faulty equipment in 2 MIPs which were not functional during the period under review. Out of the existing 3 MIPs, only one in Dedza was functional in this quarter. Historically, the performance of the MIPs is declining reflecting on the conduct of ACE to provide this crucial service to farmers.

During this reporting period ACE profiled and uploaded a total of 429 farmers in its database compared to 1,313 farmers in last quarter. This is a reduction of 73% in registration and profiling of farmers in this quarter. The farmer registration did not perform well in this quarter. Historically, ACE has registered and profiled the lowest number of farmers in this quarter in spite of the opportunity of uploading NASFAM, FUM and CADECOM beneficiary farmers who are not accessing market information and trading opportunities on the ACE trading platform. ACE claims that this is due ongoing upgrading of MIS by a consultant at its head office

## Financial Services

### *Commercial Bank Linkages*

During the quarter, consultative meetings took place with First Merchant Bank (FMB) and Opportunity Bank of Malawi (OBM) on access to credit/loans by farmer associations and cooperatives.

On 29 April, 2015, meeting was held with FMB at their City Centre Branch in Lilongwe where the bank indicated that they do not finance farmers due to their lack of collateral. FMB further indicated that they cannot extend the USAID Development Credit Authority loan guarantee facility to farmers for the same reasons of collateral. FMB offers DCA facility to ACE. NASFAM was offered the facility but they did not utilize it. FMB is interested and willing to extend the DCA facility to FUM and CADECOM.

On 8 May, 2015, a meeting was held with OBM at their regional office in Lilongwe where the bank stated that they are phasing out financial assistance to farmers directly due to failure of farmers to repay loans. OBM further stated that they cannot consider collateral from farmers if the collateral is in rural areas. The collateral should be in towns preferably cities of Lilongwe, Blantyre, Zomba and Mzuzu for easy sale if the farmer fails to repay the loan. The bank prefers to offer loans to farmers with a guarantee in cash or kind from organizations like an arrangement made with Total Land Care

(cash guarantee) to offer loans to farmers in Dedza through CADECOM. OBM charge interest rates in the range of 48 - 51% which are prohibitive.

The negotiations, with both FMB and OBM are ongoing. Discussions are also going on to convince ACE to extend its bridging finance to farmer associations/cooperatives of NASFAM, FUM and CADECOM. ACE is sitting on bank financing facilities in excess of \$5.9 million and is also one of partners of this project.

### *Collateral Financing Facilities*

During the period under review, ACE mobilized MWK1,900,000,000 (\$4,369,813) to facilitate collateral financing from FMB, EDF and CDH. Table 5 below shows the financing lines in place in this quarter. In this quarter, two new facilities have been made available to beneficiary farmers. These are Margined Forward Contract and EDF Warehouse Receipt Financing. The Margined Forward Contract is like the Forward Contract Facility except that the brokers/traders using this facility contribute 15% of the value of the loan.

This quarter ACE has secured a credit facility worth \$4.4 million of which 52.63% is destined for forward contracts. In total \$1,538,940 of this facility was utilized in the quarter. For soybeans, the utilization figures were \$292,415.15 on bridging finance, \$40,658 on 70% warehouse receipt financing and \$1,226,671 on forward contracts. Collateral financing for soybeans totaled \$1,538,940. Out of this, 15 farmers (8 men, 5 women and 2 joint venture business) in our ZOI benefited for a sum total of \$313,760.

**Table 9.** Bank Financing Facilities Facilitated by ACE

Purpose	Target Amount in USD	Actual Amount in MWK	Actual Amount in USD
Bridging Finance	500,000	150,000,000	344,985
Warehouse Receipt Financing	1,500,000	300,000,000	689,970
EDF Warehouse Receipt Financing		300,000,000	689,970
Forward Contracts	3,000,000	1,000,000,000	2,299,902
Margined Forward Contract		150,000,000	344,985
Total	5,000,000	1,900,000,000	4,369,813

### *Innovative Value Chain Financing*

During the period under review, an innovative value chain financing mechanism was discussed and deliberated which involves a triangle of financier, buyer and seller (farmer). This idea will be developed into a concept note for further discussions in the next quarter. The consultative meetings will include financiers like ACE, buyers like Afrinut and Sunseed Oil, and sellers (farmer associations and cooperatives like Lifidzi Farmers Association in Chafumbwa EPA in Dedza). We are planning to pilot this with ACE to extend its credit lines of \$4.4 million to farmer groups as bridging finance or to processors like Afrinut and Estrell Ltd. to source from farmer groups. Another interested and willing financier in this innovative value chain financing is Sunseed Oil Ltd who is interested in financing the soybean value chain. Sunseed Oil will partner with Standard Bank of Malawi and implementing partners will identify the farmers groups.

## Constraints, challenges and solutions

**Lack of business skills both among partner IP and farmer groups.** INVC should develop and strengthen basic business skills of IP and farmer groups. FUM and CADECOM should engage the professional services of marketing officers. NASFAM needs to dedicate its marketing officer to the activities of INVC.

**Side selling** of agricultural commodities by farmers due to higher market prices at the time forward contracts is due and relative inflexibility to adjust terms and conditions of forward agreements in light of dynamic changes in marketing conditions. Side selling is also common because the farmers need immediate cash to meet their needs. The farmer groups should be empowered to buy the small volume of produce from their members with cash and to provide “small” loans to meet the immediate needs of their members. INVC should promote beneficiary farmers to borrow money from microfinance institutions including village financial platforms.

**High transport costs for both farmers and buyers/processors.** INVC should continue to promote village aggregation centers and to bring buyers/processors to the village aggregation centers.

**Lack of available bridging financing for farmers and aggregators.** INVC should design and implement an innovative value chain financing in collaboration with partners like SATH that will allow farmer groups to access finance from ACE, and to encourage FUM and CADECOM to offer third party guarantee to their cooperatives/association. INVC should also facilitate grants or revolving funds directly to farmer groups. INVC should facilitate buyers/processors to offer trade credits and loans, and contract farming scheme to farmer groups.

**NASFAM has a commercial arm NASCOMEX whose role is to buy and market product produced by their NASFAM subscribers.** Unfortunately NASFAM's marketing value proposition/model is to buy low and sell high with none of the value addition being returned to the farmer producers. NASFAM is hesitant to offer their farmer alternative choices for marketing their products because to do so is contrary to their business model and the interests of the NASCOMEX shareholders who expect maximum return on their investment and dividends to be paid on their shares. INVC does not work with NASCOMEX and thus does not know what they are capable of buying this season. Conversations held in the field, however, lead us to believe that NASCOMEX is unable to purchase all production from NASFAM members. INVC should address the default NASFAM/NASCOMEX monopoly. NASFAM needs to support and empower farmer members as decision makers to make the best reasoned choice for marketing channels as NASCOMEX profits do not necessarily accrue to the farmer beneficiaries.

## Observations from the quarter, conclusions and recommendations

- Weak marketing teams within IPs – only NASFAM has a full time INVC supported marketing officer who apparently does not dedicate all his time to INVC's activities. CADECOM and FUM have no marketing personnel on INVC activity.
- Lack of focus in marketing activities – because of weak or inexistent marketing teams within partners, marketing activities are treated as peripheral to the core mission of our INVC IP grantees.
- Conflicting roles within partners like NASFAM Development versus NASCOMEX
- Unwillingness of NASFAM to open the legume market within their geographical area to competitors. This contradicts the spirit of competitiveness promoted by INVC.

- Reluctance of some partners to guarantee loans for their member associations and cooperatives like the Development Credit Authority loan guarantee facility which ACE and NASFAM are underutilizing, and not extended it to farmer associations and cooperatives.
- Component 1 should continue with end market analysis focusing on the regional market, market linkages like buyers' tours, opening up the legumes market to many players including different competitors, and help farmer group to access affordable credit/loans.
- Component 1 should continue with cascading the aflatoxin training to farmers in all 65 EPAs in ZOI.
- Component 1 through management should continue to resolve to NASFAM/NASCOMEX conflict of interest, and brokering actions of CADECOM and FUM.

### Principal activities planned for Q4

- Organize and facilitate scale up aflatoxin training for 800 lead farmers drawn from NASFAM (500), FUM (200) and CADECOM (100) at least one training per district in the ZOI in July to September 2015.
- Organize training on disposal of aflatoxin contaminated material for 25 people drawn from implementing partners in July 2015.
- Arrange for innovative groundnut value chain financing facility with ACE or processor
- Evaluate existing 5 MIPs
- Assess 750 village aggregation centers performance in ZOI
- Complete assessment exercise on regional end markets of soybeans and soy cake (desk study)

## Success story: Buyers' Tour makes farmers "millionaires"

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Smallholder farmers in Kalulu EPA in Mchinji made millions of Kwachas from sale of soybeans this year. They sold 165 MT of soybeans at whopping MK220 per kg making a cool MK36,300,000 for their Kalulu Farmers' Cooperative. In the past three years, they lost money. According to the chairperson, "we hardly made half million Kwachas in the past three years". They sold to vendors/traders who offered them low prices.

This year the Kalulu farmers did something different. They heeded the advice of Farmers' Union of Malawi to aggregate their produce collectively and sell as a group. They set up 5 village aggregation centers in their cooperative. Each center was managed by a cluster. End result was that Chitunda Cluster aggregated 40 MT, Kapiri North 35 MT, Zimu 40 MT, Chankhanga 30 MT and Chisewa 30 MT. The cooperative bulked the produce aggregated by clusters to make the 167 MT. The cooperative negotiated for better prices with buyers who toured their cooperative on May 11, 2015.

"It was our first times seeing various processors come down to us. They told us that all the village vendors who buy from us end up selling products to them" said vice chairperson. The treasurer chipped in "They told us that they will pass to us the price they would have paid the middlemen". True to their word, Sunseed oil Ltd, a cooking oil processor, offered and bought the 165 MT at MK220,000 per MT.

The good news is that Kalulu farmers saved a lot of Kwachas on transport costs. Sunseed Oil Ltd picked up the bulked produce. Sunseed Oil Ltd also saved money as they got the bulked produce at one place for their easy pickup.

Kalulu farmers like other farmer groups benefited from INVC's pilot project that brought buyers to farmers at a village aggregation center. The Buyers' Tour (BT) started on April 23, 25 in Dedza. The project B took 30 processors to 11 extension areas including Kalulu EPA which was visited on May 11, 2015. The farmers were able to strike business deal like the spot market of 167 MT of soybeans of Kalulu farmers.

The project BT helped to improve prices offered to farmers. At the start of the tour in Dedza, soybeans were selling at MK120 per kg. Immediately news spread that processors were on the market themselves, the prices rose on a daily basis to MK300 per kg in May 2015 and stabilized to MK220 per kg after the tour. The reason is that vendors/traders panicked in buying in order to hoard the produce. They later realized that the processors were buying directly hence the stabilized market prices.

FUM's cooperatives are all in smiles. All cooperatives aggregated their produce and bargained their prices with the processors. 90% of their soybeans were to directly to processors at a competitive prices.

The project BT provided market options to farmers and informed the farmers about end market requirements on quality and quantity. FUM will pick up from here to scale up the project. And so will CADECOM.

## Component 2: Improving agricultural productivity

### Introduction

Most of the agricultural training activities concluded in the previous quarter and during the third quarter focused on cascading down training to farmers and harvesting activities. The impact of the INVC-recommended practices on crop production was most visible, particularly with the double-row planting and soybean inoculum. Lead and assistant lead farmers who successfully managed demonstration plots were able to show thousands of farmers the differences in production where these practices had been applied.

Collaboration with Feed the Future Malawi Improved Seed System Technology project (MISST) continued during this period. Joint field days using demonstration plots showed a range of different legume varieties with different characteristics and adaptability to climate change across the Feed the Future zone of influence (ZOI). In addition, distribution of Orange-Fleshed Sweet Potato (OFSP)



for planting during the winter season started during this quarter and will continue in the next.

Finally, in collaboration with USAID, INVC and partner ACE develop a Safer Use Action Plan (SUAP) that is now in place and used at different warehouses.

The following were key activities undertaken during this quarter:

Picture 1. Groundnut farmer field visited in Mayani EPA Dedza

- Cascade down harvest and post-harvest training to lead farmer (LF), assistant lead farmers (ALF) and farmer beneficiaries.
- Joint demos with MISST on soybean, groundnuts and OFSP
- Distribution of OFSP to partners CADECOM-Dedza and Nkoma Hospital
- Development of a SUAP for warehouses with ACE and USAID
- IPM demos on Actellic Gold for best storage practices
- Gross margins survey of soybean and groundnut production

### Accomplishments

#### Extension staff and Farmer training

During this quarter, trainings cascaded down from extension agents (field officers, assistant field officers, etc.) to LFs, ALFs and finally to farmer beneficiaries. The most important training was the

follow up on crop management (Phase II) which started in September 2014 and included the following topics:

- On-farm Aflatoxin management for groundnuts
- Proper harvesting techniques for groundnuts and soybean
- Drying groundnuts and soybeans (in the case of groundnuts construction of Mandela cock)
- Proper storage of groundnuts and soybeans
- Disease control and management in soybeans and groundnuts production

In addition, farmers received training on IPM management for storage, production of OFSP, and more aflotoxin management which were not originally included in Phase II training.<sup>1</sup>

Across the ZOI, the first set of training included 8,292 beneficiaries. Farmers Union of Malawi (FUM) field officers (FOs) trained 5,045 LF and ALFs out of which 2,548 (50.5 percent) were male and 2,497 (49.5 percent) were women. The National Smallholder Farmer Association of Malawi (NASFAM) Agricultural Field Officers (AFOs) in Mchinji, Ntcheu and Namwera trained 3,247 farmers --1, 867 male (57.5 percent) and 1,380 (42.5 percent) female farmers. According to NASFAM, other IPCs were unable to train more farmers in May due to lack of funding from INVC and their associations. During this quarter, the Catholic Development Commission of Malawi (CADECOM) Dedza did not report FOs training of LF and ALFs. 10 below presents the break down by partners, districts and beneficiary gender.

**Table10.** LF and ALF Trained in Harvest and Post-Harvest Management by Implementing Partner (IP), District, and Gender, 3rd Quarter 2015

IP	District	LF and ALFs		
		Male	Female	Total
FUM	Dedza	1,090	1,233	2,323
	Lilongwe	99	67	166
	Mchinji	1,359	1,197	2,556
NASFAM <sup>1</sup>	Mchinji	1,028	571	1,599
	Namwera	168	203	371
	Ntcheu	671	606	1,277
TOTAL		4,415	3,877	8,292

<sup>1</sup>NASFAM uses IPC rather than district level reporting

Sequentially, LF and ALFs trained fellow farmers reaching out to 49,622 farmers. Out these beneficiaries 21,637 (43.6 percent) were male farmers, and 27,985 (56.4 percent) were female farmers. CADECOM conducted trainings in all the five Extension Planning Areas (EPAs) during this reporting period. Trainings included 1,126 male lead farmers (36 percent) and 2,030 female famers

<sup>1</sup> Different aflatoxin training were mentioned in component 1 activities because they were tied to marketing groundnuts.

(64 percent) for a total of 3,156 farmers. FUM and NASFAM did not conduct trainings in all EPAs and provided no explanation as to why the trainings did not cascade down in all EPAs. The table below presents the break down by district and male and female participants.

**Table 11.** Farmers Trained in Crop Management (harvest and post-harvest management) by Implementing Partner, District and Gender, 3rd Quarter 2015

Partner	District	Male	Female	Total
CADECOM	Dedza	1,126	2,030	3,156
FUM	Lilongwe	1,682	1,569	3,251
	Mchinji	6,317	7,260	13,577
NASFAM <sup>1</sup>	Balaka	803	713	1,516
	Lilongwe	1,692	3,280	4,972
	Mchinji	2,192	2,180	4,372
	Namwera	6,256	8,563	14,819
	Ntcheu	1,569	2,390	3,959
TOTAL		21,637	27,985	49,622

<sup>1</sup>NASFAM uses IPC rather than district level reporting

In addition to the Phase II cascade down training on crop management, other trainings included safe use of pesticides for storage and joint field days with MISST. In total, three field days were dedicated to the safe use of Actellic Gold<sup>2</sup> for control of warehouse storage pests. Farmer Organization Limited provided the training which among other things explained the benefits of Actellic Gold, proper use of PPE (gloves, facemask, cap, long-sleeved shirt, long pants, and boots), proper mixing process, risks of Phostoxin (the most commonly available phosphine fumigant). The table below summarizes IPs participation by district, EPA and attendee numbers.

**Table 12.** Field Day on Actellic Gold, 3rd Quarter 2015

IP	District	EPA	Date	People attending		
				Male	Female	Total
NASFAM	Lilongwe North	Chigonthi	18-Jun	31	7	38
NASFAM	Lilongwe South	Nyanja	18-Jun	19	21	40
CADECOM and FUM	Dedza	Linthipe	11-Jun	49	17	66

<sup>2</sup> Actellic Gold is a powder that can be mixed easily with legume grain before storage in the warehouse. It does require all the grain to be mixed and be in contact with the product so is not suitable for large, commercial warehouse operations.

Twelve training and joint field days with MISST successfully took place during this quarter. The table below summarizes the field day activities by IP, district, EPA, partner and technologies demonstrated

**Table 13:** Joint Field Demonstrations with MIST, 3rd Quarter 2015

IP (MISST agency)	District	Date	EPA	Crops	Technologies
NASFAM (IITA)	Ntcheu	April 9	Nsipe	Soybean, Pigeon pea	Double rows, different varieties, inoculum, doubled up legumes
NASFAM (IITA)	Machinga	April 10	Ngokwe	Soybean, Pigeon pea	Double rows, different varieties, inoculum, doubled up legumes
NASFAM (ICRISAT and IITA)	Lilongwe	April 21	Chitowo	Groundnut, Soybean, Pigeon pea	Double rows, different varieties, inoculum, doubled up legumes
NASFAM (CIP)	Balaka	June 2	Mpilisi	OFSP	Different varieties
Nkhoma (CIP)	Lilongwe	June 8	Chiwamba, Chigonthi 1	OFSP	Different varieties
Nkhoma (CIP)	Lilongwe	June 9	Nyanja Chitsime	OFSP	Different varieties
Nkhoma (CIP)	Lilongwe	June 10	Mpenu	OFSP	Different varieties
Nkhoma (CIP)	Lilongwe	June 11	Chigonthi 2	OFSP	Different varieties

During this period, the most successful collaboration was with the International Potato Center (CIP) to expand training and distribution of Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato (OFSP). The training on OFSP aimed at equipping farmers with both the theoretical and practical aspects to effectively establishing and managing their “Mother and Baby Trials” (MBTs). CIP also trained partners on efficient data collection and record keeping. In addition to INVC IPs, the training included participants from the Department of Agriculture Extension Services (DAES) from all the seven Feed the Future districts. With support from INVC, CADECOM Dedza facilitated the distribution of OFSP vines in Golomoti EPA. In total, seven mother trials plots (2m, 5f) were established with six different varieties for each plot. Additionally, 310 baby trials (129m and 181f) were successfully established in Mgundu Scheme in Khwekwerere village. More distributions will be reported in the next quarter with partner FUM.

### Demonstration plots

Demonstration plots are among the most important tools INVC uses to show farmers different technologies to help increase crop productivity. Activities at demonstration plots continue taking place across the ZOI during this quarter. IPs also started to collect data on production and average yield obtained when using the indicated technologies on these plots.

In total, IPs reported results on 1,299 demonstration plots; out of these, 991 (76 percent) were soybean plots and 308 (24 percent) were groundnut plots. CADECOM Dedza only established

groundnut plots (per grant agreement), while NASFAM and FUM have demonstration plots for both crops. The table below presents the total number of plots by IP, district, and crop.

**Table 1.** Active Demonstration Plots by IP, District and Commodity

IP	District	Soybean plots	Groundnut plots	Total
CADECOM	Dedza		240	240
FUM	Dedza	118	95	213
	Lilongwe	153	116	269
	Mchinji	72	22	94
NASFAM	Balaka	143	0	143
	Lilongwe North	57	9	66
	Lilongwe South	91	24	115
	Mchinji	191	10	201
	Namwera	105		105
	Ntcheu	61	32	93
Total		991	308	1,299

<sup>1</sup>NASFAM uses IPC rather than district level reporting

Overall, production and yield data from demonstration plots were encouraging for both soybean and groundnuts. All the technologies INVC promoted and disseminated showed above average yields compared to other farmers in the same districts who did not apply all the techniques. The table below presents NASFAM and FUM reported production and yields for soybean in different demonstration.

**Table 2.** NASFAM and FUM Soybean Demonstration Plot Results, 3rd Quarter 2015

IP	District	EPA	Treatment	Size (ha)	Production (KG)	Yield (KG/ha)
FUM	Lilongwe	Mgwangwa	Inoculum, double row, plant spacing, ridge spacing	0.01	34	3,400
FUM	Lilongwe	Chileka	Inoculum, double row, plant spacing, ridge spacing	0.01	36	3,600
FUM	Lilongwe	thawale	Inoculum, double row, plant spacing, ridge spacing	0.01	34	3,400
FUM	Lilongwe	Chitsime	Inoculum, double row, plant spacing, ridge spacing	0.01	35	3,500
FUM	Mchinji	Kalulu	Double row, ridge spacing	0.01	36	3,600
FUM	Mchinji	Mkanda	Not reported	0.01	35	3,500
FUM	Dedza	Mayani	Double row, plant spacing, ridge Spacing, tied ridges	0.01	22	2,200
FUM	Dedza	Linthipe	Inoculum, double row, plant spacing, ridge spacing, tied ridges, herbicides	0.01	36	3,600
FUM	Dedza	Lobi	Double row, plant spacing, ridge spacing, tied ridges	0.01	20	2,000
FUM	Dedza	Kabwazi	Double row, plant spacing, ridge spacing, tied ridges	0.01	24	2,400
NASFAM	Mchinji		Single row	0.006	7.3	1,210
NASFAM	Namwera		Single row	0.006	4.7	797
NASFAM	Lilongwe North		Single row	0.006	9.8	1,633
NASFAM	Lilongwe South		Single row	0.006	8.7	1,453
NASFAM	Mchinji		Double row	0.006	13.3	2,226
NASFAM	Namwera		Double row	0.006	14.5	2,417
NASFAM	Lilongwe North		Double row	0.006	12.6	2,101
NASFAM	Lilongwe South		Double row	0.006	10.3	1,720

Additionally, NASFAM reported that soybean productivity under double-row planting with inoculation was higher than single-row planting by 63 percent on average across all their IPCs. Although it is fair to assume that double-row combined with inoculation contributed to higher yields during the season, it is also important note some important factors that could have had an impact as well. First, double row and inoculation technologies were applied differently across IPCs. Second, in some cases, farmers applied other inputs, such as manure, which were not properly recorded. Third, climatic conditions during the period were not recorded. According to NASFAM production estimates, floods and the prolonged dry spells in Balaka for example greatly affected crop production, to the point that in some areas such as Chilipa EPA, Nankumba EPA and Rivirizi EPA the yield were almost zero.

Data presented should be considered preliminary. Most detailed demonstration harvest yield data by treatment was not available at the time of reporting and will be completed for our annual report.

In addition to the main demo plots, INVC received yield data for soybean from two IPM demo. Both plots were 500 m<sup>2</sup> in size. These improved plots received the following: seed dressing with SeedMate (an insecticide/fungicide mixture to control seedling pests and diseases), GlyciMax inoculum to increase nitrogen availability to the plant, one treatment with Acetamiprid (against leaf-feeding insects), and one treatment with Folicur (against soybean rust in early March). These demonstration plots were planted in double rows on ridges 75 cm apart. The soybean in the farmers practice plots did not receive any pesticide or inoculum application and were planted in single rows. The soybean in the improved plots in Lilongwe South yielded 36 percent more and in Dedza 100 percent more than the farmers' practice.<sup>3</sup>

In the case of groundnut, erratic rainfall played a huge role in production. CADECOM Dedza FOs conducted yield assessment close to maturity in all EPAs and observed that during flowering period the district experienced a dry spell in all the areas affecting all crops.

CADECOM Dedza reported that although most groundnut plots had not started plucking by the end of this quarter, information from 15 demonstration plots which started production showed average yields of 1,750 kgs/ha (Table 7). This average though positive, does not reflect the overall situation in Dedza. CADECOM reported that the reduction in groundnut production ranged from 40 to 55 percent. Kanyama EPA was the worst performing with losses up to 55 percent followed by Bembeke with 50 percent reduction in production. Chafumbwa, Golomoti and Mtakataka EPAs had reductions up to 40 percent. This situation caused FOs to adjust their yield expectations from 1,500 kg/ha, to 700 to 800 kg/ha.



Picture. Lead Farmer in Kabwazi talking about soybean uprooting during field day

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<sup>3</sup> Note that these results are based on small plot sizes and cannot be extrapolated to yields per ha, nor are the data sufficient to do gross margins analysis. Complicating factors were the source of soybean seed which came for recycled stocks rather than certified seed. However, these results could be used as indication that when properly applied IPM practices could help farmer increase crop productivity.

**Table 3.** CADECOM Dedza Groundnut Demonstration Plot Results, 3rd Quarter 2015

EPA	No. of Demos	Dimension	Size (ha)	Production (KG)	Yield (Kgs/ha)
Kanyama	3	15m x 10m	0.015	27	1,800
		20m x 25m	0.050	87	1,740
		15m x15m	0.023	39	1,733
Chafumbwa	4	20m x 20m	0.040	70	1,750
		15m x 20m	0.030	53	1,767
		20m x 20m	0.040	75	1,875
		25m x 20m	0.050	85	1,700
Bembeke	3	10m x 10m	0.010	18	1,800
		15m x 10m	0.015	25	1,667
		15m x 15m	0.023	38	1,689
Golomoti	3	20m x 20m	0.040	73	1,825
		10m x 10m	0.010	20	2,000
		15m x 15m	0.023	42	1,867
Mtakataka	2	20m x 20m	0.040	72	1,800
		20m x 20m	0.040	69	1,725

Results from NASFAM and FUM on groundnut production showed higher than national average production.<sup>4</sup> However, it is important to note that INVC did not receive from IPs all the details to explain what could cause the highest that average performance. For example, FUM reported 4,300 kg per ha yield in Kalulu EPA and 3,700 kg per ha in Mkanda EPA, both of which seemed unrealistically high compared to the average observed in other areas. The table below presents a NASFAM and FUM demonstration plot summary production.

**Table 4.** NASFAM and FUM Groundnut Demonstration Plot Results, 3rd Quarter 2015

IP	District	EPA	Treatment	Size (ha)	Production (KG)	Yield (KG/ha)
FUM	Lilongwe	Mngwangwa		0.01	17	1,700
FUM	Lilongwe	Chileka		0.01	18	1,800
FUM	Lilongwe	thawale		0.01	20	2,000
FUM	Lilongwe	Chitsime		0.01	20	2,000
NASFAM	Ntcheu		Single row	0.006	4.5	750
NASFAM	Lilongwe North		Single row	0.006	11.0	1,762
NASFAM	Lilongwe South		Single row	0.006	6.8	1,139
NASFAM	Ntcheu		Double row	0.006	10.8	1,792
NASFAM	Lilongwe North		Double row	0.006	12.3	2,053
NASFAM	Lilongwe South		Double row	0.006	12.0	2,000

<sup>4</sup> According to the Ministry of Agriculture, groundnut yields range from 350 to 750 kg/ha in Malawi.

## Soybean Seed Recovery Rates<sup>5</sup>

Use of quality seeds is an important message INVC promotes among beneficiaries. As a result, the project promotes availability and access for all beneficiaries in the ZOI.<sup>6</sup> Under NASFAM, farmers who become members receive 12 kg of soybean (returning 30 kg), and 15 kg of groundnuts (returning 37.5 kg).

According to NASFAM estimates for this season the recovery for soybean should have reached 1,285.5 MT of soybean across six IPCs. However, seed recoveries were much lower than expected. By the end of the reporting period, only 649 MT (50 percent of estimated total) of soybean was recovered. Mchinji has the highest recovery rate (80 percent), and Balaka the lowest (14 percent). Regarding the needs for next season, by the end of the quarter NASFAM was working on their seed strategy and plans.

Two IPCs (Balaka and Ntcheu) experienced floods followed by prolonged dry spells. Nankumba EPA, Nampeya EPA and Chilipa EPA were among those that received a greater share of the seed loans. However, their recovery rate was as low as 10 percent. Data from crop estimates from ministry of agriculture indicates that crop yield in these districts ranged from zero to 500kg/ha.

In other areas such as in Namwera IPC and Lilongwe South IPC, NASFAM farmers were discouraged from paying back the loan because of existing similar projects which give out free seed without the requirement to pay back. Finally, governance issues also affected the recovery rates. For example, some club leaders did not understand their roles and the few club leaders who understood the roles did not have adequate experience to enforce repayment in these areas. By the end of this quarter, NASFAM had yet to provide any strategy either for seed recovery for the 2014/2015 growing season or seed procurement/distribution strategy for 2015/2016.

**Table 5.** NASFAM Soybean Seed Loan Recovery (MT), 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2015

IPC	Target	Recovered	Balance	Recovery
Mchinji	344.6	280.4	64.1	81%
Namwera	189.0	108.0	81.0	57%
Ntcheu	148.6	67.0	81.6	45%
Lilongwe South	290.1	113.5	176.6	39%
Lilongwe North	191.0	56.0	135.0	29%
Balaka	122.4	23.9	98.5	19%
Total	1,285.6	648.7	636.9	50%

## Environmental Compliance

INVC, in collaboration with ACE and USAID, developed a SUAP to allow for fumigation with aluminum phosphides as part of their control warehouse pests in their warehouses. A SUAP is required by the

<sup>5</sup> Groundnuts seed recovery activities usually begin in July.

<sup>6</sup> Different IPs have different schemes to supply seed to their beneficiaries. Only NASFAM provides soybean seed to beneficiaries under INVC. FUM provides subsidized prices to their farmers and CADECOM only supplies groundnuts. Thus, this section only focus on NASFAM recovery rates.

Mission Environmental Officer (MEO) since aluminum phosphide fumigation is prohibited in the current version of the USAID Malawi Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan (PERSUAP). The ACE SUAP was approved by USAID Malawi on June 10, 2015. The SUAP mandates that ACE follows a set of mitigation measures to minimize the risk of exposure to phosphine gas, including PPE and training and certification of a professional pest control operator. Phosphine fumigation is not allowed for any other IP. INVC provided training to NASFAM, FUM and CADECOM on a less toxic alternative for warehouse pests that can infest grain, Actellic Gold. INVC started providing systematic training on the safe use of pesticides for the control of legume pests, weeds and diseases in FY2015 following the list of allowable active ingredients in the 2013 USAID Malawi PERSUAP.

### INVC Gross Margin Analysis<sup>7</sup>

INVC conducted gross margin data collection in Dedza, Lilongwe and Mchinji. Farmers were selected in 2014, and the same randomly selected farmers were interviewed again this year allowing for gross margins to be correlated with adoption of INVC recommended practices. In total, 116 beneficiaries were surveyed, out of which 45 were male and 55 female farmers. Regarding crop produced, 38 percent produced only groundnuts, 29 percent only soybeans, and 33 percent both crops. Although these results are not statistically significant, they do show a positive trend towards increasing yields.

During this season, soybean yields average 983 kg/ha (47 percent higher than last year at the time of agricultural outcome survey). Groundnut yields averages 1,463 kg/ha (68 percent higher than last year at the time of agricultural outcome survey).

Other important findings from the survey are as follow: INVC farmers continue to rely mostly on family labor, labor is done by hand with hoes; tractors are far beyond the reach, and animal traction is used only by some for transportation of inputs or outputs, not for cultivation or weeding operations.

### Constraints, challenges and solutions

#### **The main challenge for INVC partners continued to be timely and accurate reporting**

IPs continue to be late in submitting reports and the quality of reports is still inadequate. For example, all IPs established demonstration plots. However, they only reported about those which have been successfully harvested, leaving important and needed information about those that have been unsuccessful out of the reports. When there are data for demonstration plots, many times it is difficult to corroborate that data because INVC program managers and field officers are slow responding to requests for information. Finally, data from a control demonstration plot or other farmers who did not use the suggested technique are not reported; thus, comparisons are not available. INVC will enforce a monthly reporting to address this issue. The project has provided more funding and will work more closely with project managers to address reporting issues sooner in the quarter.

#### **Record keeping is still not a widespread practice among IPs**

Originally, all partners planned for more demonstration plots than those reported. CADECOM expected to establish 400 demonstration plots, but only 240 plots were effectively established,

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<sup>7</sup> A more detailed analysis is presented in the M&E section.

operated and monitored. According to CADECOM, LFs cited lacked of land for demo plots as one of the main reasons the expected number was not achieved. Similarly, FUM planned 740 demonstration plots across the 10 EPAs translating to 74 demonstration plots per EPA or 3-5 demonstration plots per cluster. However, they only managed to account for 576 demonstration plots. According to FUM, the factors for the decrease included that some of farmers had hoped to receive seed so when they realized that FUM would not be distributing seed decided to drop off their land for the demonstration, other farmers relocated to other areas abandoning the plots and in some cases death of the farmer. Finally, although NASFAM reported that there were 680 demonstration plots across all IPCs, only 292 plots were harvested by the end of the quarter. NASFAM did not provide additional information on the remaining plots. INVC will continue to work with project managers, and involve FOs and AFO's to timely document all these activities, particularly focusing on the next agricultural season. A proper inventory of demonstration plots will be conducted at the time of establishing these plots.

#### **Lack of planning limited seed recovery this season**

Despite repeated efforts from INVC to meet, discuss and establish a proper seed recovery system this season, IPs (NASFAM and CADECOM) and MISST were not able to plan and strategize together a working system. Since March, INVC sponsored meetings and invited different stakeholders to roundtables to address this important issue. However, nothing concrete materialized until the end of the quarter. Currently, there is much confusion about what INVC should be responsible for regarding seed for next season. To this date, NASFAM and CADECOM have not shared with INVC their plans about seed recovery strategies and the gap they expect for next season. In addition, despite repeated requests NASFAM has not provided a well-documented distribution of certified seed and soybean inoculum to beneficiary farmers. INVC will follow up on this issue.

#### **Difficulties in workplanning and budgeting by IP resulting in delay signing grant amendments**

IPs cited shortage of funding as the main reason affecting field activities during this period. One of the most important activities was conducting yield assessments of farmers' fields and demonstration plots. INVC requested partners to provide work plans and activity budgets from March – April and from May –September. IPs did not provide these documentations on time so some activities were not funded at the right time. However, all IPs received their advances for April and had cash available for May activities. Several activities such as the Actellic Gold demos and the OFSP demos had to be funded directly by INVC.

### **Observations from the quarter, conclusions and recommendations**

- INVC still needs to provide basic capacity building support to IPs. For example, INVC should have provided detailed protocols to IPs and their AFOs for the harvesting and yield determinations of the IPM demos. Appropriate weighing scales, for small quantities of grain, should have been made available as plot sizes were small.
- Distribution of inputs such as seed and inoculum needs to be better tracked in the field. INVC would need more dedicated field staff located in the Districts to allow for better tracking.
- Manure application is critical for raising legume yields. It may not have to be done every year but once every two or three years, depending on rates and type of manure used. This needs to be further explored with the Malawian extension service and IPs.

- Development of training material should be IP-driven rather than INVC. This would lead to a higher degree of 'ownership' and interest in further developing the material.
- There has been some yield improvement compared to last year; yield potential has been depressed due to early heavy rains and dry spells later in the season. Gross margins were much better than last year due to higher farmgate prices for soybean (and groundnut, although majority not yet sold).
- Some high-performing farmers who have consistently applied INVC-recommended best practices have achieved soybean yield more than triple the average based on the third spot survey. High application rates of manure may have been a key or at least a contributing factor here.
- From feedback from farmers and extension staff during the gross margin surveys of high-performing farmers, it appears that NASFAM farmers been under-dosing application rates of GlyciMax inoculum by about 2/3 as NASFAM has been providing quantities to lead farmers that were too small to be distributed to farmers under them at the recommend rates (36 gr per 12 kg of soybean seed). This may not have been the case everywhere and needs to be further investigated.
- IPM training and demos should be expanded and continued with Farmer Organization Limited in an arrangement that will be more conducive and beneficial to both parties, possibly through SAIOMA.

### Principal activities planned for Q4

- Planting of OFSP demos for the winter season in 'Dambo's and irrigated areas and monitoring of establishment rates.
- Updating and printing of training material on land preparation, crop management and harvest/post-harvest management for the 2015/16 season. A basic guide on pests and diseases has been developed by the Crop Production Specialist as source material for training. Updates are needed for:
  - How to re-ridge at 75cm? What is the easiest practice?
  - When to re-ridge, depending on crop requirements for the rotation crop of legumes (re-ridging may not always be warranted)
  - More information on manure production, application rates etc. (Note: FUM has a module on manure production)
  - More information on legume varieties in the module on seed conditioning and germination testing (space/time permitting) so that farmers can make informed decisions what to plant (this info is currently included in the harvest/post-harvest module).
  - A simple pictorial briefer on most commonly encountered pests and diseases (source material already prepared). May need to get input from a pest management specialist keeping in mind that the material should remain understandable and practical for farmers.
  - There may be a need to adjust recommendations for planting distances for different types of groundnut varieties and soybean varieties. Currently, for groundnut we use 15 cm and soybean 5 cm. Spreading varieties may need more space. Most farmers also find it too tedious to plant soybean at 5 cm and tend to plant 2 seeds per hole at 10 cm. This needs to be reviewed.
  - The need for different agronomic requirements in different districts has not been really addressed in the training so far.
  - Based on feedback from farmers and extension staff, there may be a need to modify the seed germination test for farmers. Right now the recommendation is 10 rows of 10 planting

stations which gives 100 seeds. This may be considered as too many seed by farmers. However, calculating the % germination is easy with this method.

- Determining quantities of Certified seed required for the next season for NASFAM and ACDECOM based on recovery rates of seed from the 2014/15 season.
- Determining quantities of soybean inoculum needed by IPs and linking them with reputable suppliers so that orders can be placed on time for the next season. Note: INVC has done a cost comparison of GlyciMax from FOL and Nitrofix from AISL, on a per kg seed treated basis. GlyciMax is about half the cost of Nitrofix, per kg soybean seed.
- Linking IPs (NASFAM and CADECOM) with suppliers of quality Certified seed for distribution to member farmers. Obtain the required waivers from USAID. Note: since there appears to be a short-fall in certified seed prosecution (through MISST), seed may need to be ordered from neighboring countries.
- Refresher training by INVC staff for extension staff on land preparation, seed conditioning and seed germination testing. This is to be conducted by INVC staff.
- Extension agent –led training for lead farmers on land preparation, seed conditioning and seed germination testing.
- Monitoring and guiding lead farmers-led training for follower farmers on land preparation, seed conditioning and seed germination testing.
- Refine the gross margin analysis (of the randomly sampled farmers) to link adoption of INVC technologies with yields and gross margins. As double-row planting is the most critical technology, a comparison of yields and gross margins of fields planted in double rows with those planted in single rows would be of most interest.

## Success Story: Follow up on farmer outliers

Some farmers not included in the gross margin survey showed much better results which are worth presenting in this report. We will discuss two such farmers who we came to know through extension staff working with our implementing partners. Both are well-respected farmers with many years of experience and can be regarded as change agents in their communities.

### Farmer Layford Singeleti, Nyongani, Mchinji

Mr. Singeleti did well this season. His yield from a double row planted field of soybeans was 4,685 per ha and from a single row comparison field was 1,400 kg /ha. The fields measured 0.2 and 0.3 ha in size. Mr. Singeleti applied GlyciMax inoculum to the double-row field but none to the single-row field. No pesticides were applied. However, he applied a rather heavy rate of manure to both of his fields, equivalent to 18 MT/ha, (45 ox carts to both field combined). He planted the double-row field with certified Serenade seed (free from NASFAM) but for the single-row field he used market-purchased grain, probably a mixture of Makwacha and other varieties. The amount of GlyciMax inoculum given by NASFAM (was about one-third the recommended rate for his area. His gross margin percentages (Table below) for the double-row field were 54.55% higher than in the single-row field of 31.48%. By conversion to gross margins per hectare, the gross margins are MK510,000 (\$1,172) and MK391,444 (\$900) for double row and single row, respectively. Although this was not an experiment, the farmer's demonstration proves the enhanced action of the improved practices increased gross margin by 23.07%.

Singeleti's soybean	Double row field	Single row field
area (ha)	0.3	0.2
planting date	23-Dec-15	17-Dec-15
harvest date	28-Apr-15	28-Apr-15
Variety	Serenade (Certified)	Nasoko (from market)
Manure	27 oxcarts	18 oxcarts
Inoculum	Applied	not applied
plant population / ha	533,333	266,667
production (kg)	937	420
yield (kg/ha)	4,685	1,400
Revenues (MK)	187,000	86,100
input costs (MK)	33,000	28,000
family labor (MK)	15,000	12,000
Hired labor (MK)	12,000	6,000
Transport (MK)	15,000	7,000
Other costs (MK)	10,000	6,000
Total cost (MK)	85,000	59,000
Gross margins	102,000	27,100
Gross Margin %	54.55	31.48

## Farmer Lemani, Lilongwe South, Natenje

Mr. Lemani a well-known lead farmer with considerable experience in his community. He earned a good income this season from groundnuts that he planted with the very first rains in early December 2014. He planted his groundnuts in double rows and followed all the other INVC recommendations.. The CG 7 seed was recycled (but well kept and sorted) from a previous harvest because he could not access certified seed. Despite this he harvested 27 bags (of 24 kg) from his 0.32 ha plot, or 2,078 kg/ha (unshelled). Again, manure appears to have contributed to this bumper crop. In 2013 he applied, 26 ox carts of manure to the field. This is a practice he does once every three years which, in his experience, is sufficient to guarantee a good production level. He did not apply chemical fertilizer or pesticides. His gross margin was \$841/ha. Note that this is based on an assumed sales price of 390 KW or \$0.87 per kg since he hadn't sold his crop yet.

Lemani's groundnut	
area (ha)	0.32
planting date	December 4, 2014
harvest date	May 23, 2015
Variety	CG7, recycled
Manure	16 oxcarts in 2013
Inoculum	None
rows per ridge	double rows
ridge spacing	75 cm
plant spacing within rows	15 cm
plant population / ha	180,000
production (kg) - unshelled	648
yield (kg/ha) - unshelled	2,078
Revenues	\$1,171
input costs	\$104
family labor	\$115
Hired labor	\$69
Transport	\$11
Other costs	\$31
Total cost	\$330
Gross margins	\$841

What do these examples of the two lead farmers tell? That high yields are possible if best bet practices are applied.

## Success Story: Soy Bean seed loan and agricultural productivity makes life better for Teleza Kambani in Mchinji.



Figure 1: Teleza's new roof

Life for Teleza Kambani, a 38 year old farmer from Mchinji, has never been the same since she joined NASFAM's Chilendo club from Msitu Chapter.

She heads a household of 5 members and always wanted to transform her house from being grass roofed to have iron sheets because it used to leak during the rainy season. Last year she joined NASFAM and became a farmer-to-farmer trainer.

Teleza cultivates on 0.2ha of land and through the soybean seed loan and the training she received, it enabled her to harvest 600kg of soybean. She sold 500kg and earned MK120,000 which she used to buy two bags of fertilizer for the next farming season and 26 iron sheets and other roofing materials for her house.

"NASFAM's seed loan program has transformed life for me and my family. Now I live in a house that has iron sheets and does not leak. I have never been more positive about soybean farming than I am now," explained Teleza. Teleza Kambani, a NASFAM member from Msitu, Mchinji.

Teleza explained that the main benefits from the program are the availability of seed, the training of new technologies that have improved her yield and the provision of a market for her produce.

## Success Story: New farming technologies, a solution to farmers challenges

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Yeremiya Jamisoni is a lead farmer who hails from Chekerani Village, GVH Mkoko, T/A Kalolo, Chileka EPA in Lilongwe district. Yeremiya has been farming using the conventional methods for over 30 years. He enrolled under the INVC project in 2014 and received a variety of trainings after which he adopted new farming technologies which he applied in his soya bean garden. Some of the technologies that he applied include: ridge re - alignment of 75 cm between ridges, application of Inoculants to the seeds before planting, double row planting and

5 cm between planting station as seen above.

Yeremiya Jamisoni planted 6 kgs of Soy bean seed on a  $\frac{1}{4}$  Acre piece of land and he managed to produced 6.5 bags of 50kgs each (325kgs). He sold 5.5 bags of 50kg at MK215 per kg and realized MK59, 125.00 from the sales.

*“After selling the soya, I sat with my wife and agreed to buy a she goat, clothes for my family and household utensils. We have been farming for the past 30 years but our yields were so meager that we could hardly afford basic household needs, thanks to INVC for opening our eyes, we can now see light. My plans are to increase my farming area and intensify the technologies that I have learnt, one day you will find a modern house here”* narrated Yeremiya with great enthusiasm.

## COMPONENT 3: Improving Community Capacity to Prevent Under-Nutrition

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### INTRODUCTION

During the period April to June 2015 most significant accomplishments were made following the granting of 60-day extension of period of performance to partners. The extension of period of performance enabled partners to have sufficient funds for implementation of their planned activities. A number of activities were, therefore, carried out including registration of new beneficiaries; continued rolling out of care group activities at household level; capacity building of various groups such as project staff, promoters, lead mothers/fathers, theatre group members; and airing of radio programs as well as continued support to district assemblies (financial and technical) for Child Health Day Campaigns and growth monitoring.

During this reporting period, 11,576 new project beneficiaries were registered in Balaka, Lilongwe, Mchinji and Mangochi districts. Nkhoma registered 9,348 of whom 8,964 are beneficiaries in the “Treatment Areas” under the Impact Evaluation and 384 are from ordinary intervention areas in Lilongwe and Mchinji. Additionally, 693 and 1,535 new beneficiaries were registered in Balaka and Mangochi respectively. These new registered beneficiaries add to the already existing pool of beneficiaries (pregnant women, lactating mothers and under-five children) which the project has been serving since its inception.

As part of our continued effort of rolling out care group activities at household level, and promoting food processing, utilization and preservation trainings, a total of 15, 899 Care Group members (5523 males and 10376 females) participated in food processing sessions in all the five districts.

A total of 455 backyard gardens were established in Lilongwe, Machinga and Mchinji districts. Care group members took advantage of the relatively wet season to prepare their *dambo* gardens to plant indigenous leafy vegetables which have high nutritive value.

As in the previous quarters, the project also saw certain level of adoption of recommended individual and household practices on hygiene and sanitation. Using the water, sanitation and hygiene card of the Counseling Card document, 6,263 households were reported to have various facilities (173 were maintained and 6090 newly constructed). These included pit latrines, hand washing stations, dish racks and rubbish pits.

A total of 445,666 under-five children ( 242,794 female and 202,872 male) were reached through Child Health Day campaigns in Mchinji, Mangochi, Machinga and Balaka districts where Vitamin A supplementation and Mebendazole were administered to under-five children. At each health centre/facility or outreach site health talks were also given on the importance of accessing Vitamin A and Mebendazole by Nutrition Assistants and promoters.

Growth monitoring sessions were also conducted during the period in Machinga, Mangochi, Balaka and Mchinji and a total of 41,892 under five children were screened during the regular monthly growth monitoring sessions. Out of the 41,892 under five children, 20133 were male and 21,759 females. The results showed that 3921 (1551 male and 2370 female lost weight and 440 (204 male and 236 female) were referred to health facilities for medical attention.

Training of lead mothers in SUN and ENA was facilitated in Lilongwe and Mchinji districts, a total of 3,349 lead mothers were trained (1,142 in Lilongwe South, 1,055 in Lilongwe North and 1,152 in Mchinji). A total of 39 promoters (25 male and 14 female) under Nkhoma Hospital were also trained by facilitators from government in SUN and ENA.

Under the component a number of training sessions were conducted for promoters and lead mothers/fathers. A total of 136,690 people (85,409 female and 51,281 male) were trained on maternal nutrition on foods rich in vitamin A and iron; optimal breastfeeding; early initiation of breastfeeding; and baby positioning during breastfeeding; water sanitation and hygiene; complementary feeding, antenatal care (ANC) and social and behavior change communication (SBCC). The trainings targeted care givers (cluster members), lead parents, promoters and government frontline staff (HSAs and AEDOs). There was deliberate focus on maternal nutrition and exclusive breastfeeding due to ever increasing number of women who are becoming pregnant and giving births more frequently as some do not use contraceptives to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

In addition, 26 people (2 female and 8 male from Lilongwe North; 4 female and 3 male from Lilongwe South; and 4 females and 5 males from Mchinji) were trained in collection of Most Significant Change stories as championed by the University of North Carolina (UNC) and Center for Public Health Policy Research and Development (CPHPRD). The training was organized by CPHPRD to impart skills to promoters from the Impact Evaluation Areas on the gathering of qualitative data using 'Most Significant Change' tool (*attached*) in order to begin identification of notable behaviour outcomes among targeted beneficiaries.

During the quarter, three radio jingles/public service announcements were produced and aired 532 times on MBC Radio 1, Zodiak Broadcasting Station and Mudziwathu Community Radio. The radio messages targeted small holder farmers and concerned harvest and post-harvest management, aflatoxin mitigation and collective marketing. Augmenting the radio messaging were 50 theatre performances which were done in all 17 EPAs in Lilongwe and Mchinji addressing six different food groups, dietary diversity, soy beans and groundnut harvesting, storage, aflatoxin management and collective marketing.

Results of positive deviance inquiry done in Lilongwe and Mchinji; and formative research conducted in Balaka, Machinga and Mangochi were disseminated. Some of the key findings indicate that some women exclusively breastfeed, some visit ANC, knowledge on six food groups is relatively high, most households have sanitary facilities. However, some pregnant women are still restricted on eating some foods due to cultural beliefs like eggs. In addition, knowledge on complementary feeding (when to start complementary feeding) is relatively low; and that there is little emphasis on utilization and consumption of both soya and groundnuts in their everyday diet as the produce are often sold off to get money for other pressing households needs like soap as a result little is saved for home consumption.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### BEHAVIOR CHANGE

#### Dissemination of research results

##### *Positive deviance inquiry (PDI)*

Results for positive deviance inquiry (PDI) conducted in Lilongwe and Mchinji districts by Pakachere Institute of Health and Development Communication were disseminated on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2015. The PDIs were in form of 24 focus group discussions with a group of 10-12 women; as well as 16 in-depth interviews with individual positive deviants (those community members who were seen to show positive practices on behavior under study). The study focused on complementary feeding, importance of accessing ANC services, exclusive breast feeding, and maternal nutrition. The results showed that knowledge on complementary feeding (when to start complementary feeding) is relatively low; some women were accessing ANC services although distance to the nearest health facility was noted as a hindering factor, knowledge on exclusive breastfeeding was high and most were indeed breastfeeding, utilization and consumption of both soya and groundnuts in their everyday diet was relatively low as the produce are often sold off to get money for other pressing households needs like soap as a result little is saved for home consumption in some households.

##### *Formative research results*

Results for formative research done in Balaka, Machinga and Mangochi by The Story Workshop were disseminated on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2015. Some of the key findings for the research show that most women exclusively breastfeed, and that some visit ANC. However, some pregnant women are still restricted on eating some foods due to cultural beliefs like the one that prevents pregnant women from eating eggs that are like to give birth to child without hair. Further, knowledge on complementary feeding (when to start complementary feeding) is relatively low; and that there is little emphasis on utilization and consumption of both soya and groundnuts in their everyday diet as the produce are often sold off to get money for other pressing households needs like buying soap; and little is saved for home consumption. The results of both the PDI and the formative research are being used to develop messages for care group discussions, radio jingles and will also be used to inform further messaging and revision of the Behavior Change Communication Strategy in the next Financial Year (FY16).

##### *Theatre performances*

Fifty theatre performances were done in 17 extension planning areas (EPAs) in Lilongwe and Mchinji districts. Of the 50 performances, 34 were on the promotion of recommended practices on soy bean and groundnut harvesting, post-harvest handling, storage, aflatoxin management and collective marketing. A total of 16 performances were on educating community members on dietary diversity, complementary feeding and ANC. All the performances were done by 17 community-based drama groups and one by Pakachere Travelling Theater Group. A total of 11,752 people attended the shows (5,065 male and 6, 687 female). The performances created awareness on the importance of following the recommended harvest and post-harvest handling practices as one way of minimizing post-harvest losses on groundnuts and soy beans. They also assisted farmers in understanding the concept of collective marketing as a way of enhancing sales negotiations in order to generate higher revenues as opposed to individual side-selling to vendors leading to low household income. The drama performances also created awareness on aflatoxin and its effects on crop quality, animal and human health, concepts which are not well understood in Malawi among smallholder farmers and community members in general.

### Airing of radio programs and public service announcements/jingles

Communication efforts aimed at educating intended beneficiaries on agriculture value chains and nutrition were intensified during the quarter. Three (3) radio jingles/public service announcements (PSA) were produced and aired 532 times on MBC Radio 1 (157 times), Zodiak Broadcasting Station (123 times) and Mudziwathu Community Radio (252 times). The radio messages targeted small holder farmers. Themes concerned harvest and post-harvest management, aflatoxin management and collective marketing. The radio messages reinforced theatre performance efforts. In addition, one radio jingle was produced by Nkhoma Hospital in collaboration with Mchinji District Assembly to promote Child Health Day which was conducted in the district from 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2015. The jingle was aired 50 times (5 times per day) on Mudziwathu Community Radio Station in the district. The specific message in the jingle was to encourage care givers to take their under-five children to sites where vitamin A and Mebendazole were being administered to the under-five children as one way of preventing vitamin A deficiency and de-worming the children.

Airing of a 30-minute *Tidyenji* radio programs also continued during the first month of the quarter (April) on three (3) radio stations. A total of 6 programs were aired (2 on Radio Maria in Mangochi, 2 on Mudziwathu Community Radio Station in Mchinji, and 2 on MBC Radio 1). The programs were aired:

- on MBC Radio 1 every Monday from 17:03 to 17:33 pm;
- on Radio Maria every Saturday from 14:30 to 15:00 pm; and
- on Mudziwathu Community Radio Station every Monday from 14:30 to 15:00 pm.

The programs focused on maternal nutrition (six food groups) using the 6 food groups and featured promoters, lead mothers, pregnant women and lactating mothers.

### Behavior change communication training

One (1) Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) orientation session was conducted in Mangochi from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2015. The training targeted the Feed the Future Malawi Integrating Nutrition in Value Chains field officers (3 District Nutrition Coordinators, 13 Nutrition Assistants); government partners including: District Environmental Health Officers, Agriculture Officers and Nutrition Officers from Mangochi, Machinga and Balaka. The main objectives of the training were to impart knowledge to the field staff and the government officers on the positive correlation between SBCC and nutrition as well as agriculture value chains; and also to impart knowledge on the fundamental concept of drama (interactive theatre, acting, casting, staging) as well as use of radio which has wider reach; and or use of one-on-one interaction with lead mothers/fathers or project beneficiaries at community level which allows immediate feedback.



Picture: Group work during SBCC training

### **Interpersonal communication by promoters and lead mothers with household members on various behaviors**

In addition to radio programs and theatre performances, individual interpersonal communication (one-on-one/household visits by trained promoters and lead mothers/fathers) were conducted. During these visits, promoters and lead mothers/fathers managed to reach 98,747 cluster members (60,280 female, 38 467 male) with messages on sanitation and hygiene, maternal nutrition, complementary feeding, importance of selling and keeping some soy bean and groundnuts for home consumption. During the visits, it was observed that most promoters and lead mothers/fathers have toilets with hand washing facilities, rubbish pits, dish racks and kitchen hence they live as true role models in their communities. Some were observed to have introduced complementary feeding to their children at the right time (after 6 month of birth); most of them have back yard gardens. The messages are aligned to the 15 key behaviors prioritized by the project. Table below summarizes the number of people trained in ANC, breast feeding, complementary feeding and WASH during the period.

**Table 19:** Participants in nutrition activities, by District and theme, disaggregated for gender, Q3FY15

District	ANC and Diet			Exclusive breastfeeding			Complementary feeding			WASH			TOTALS	
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Lilongwe	413	851	1,264	660	1,218	1,878	458	921	1,379	23	86	109	1,554	3,076
Machinga	1,609	3,103	4,712	9,283	15,353	24,636	3,436	4,979	8,415	2,203	3,759	5,962	16,531	27,194
Mangochi	5,660	6,922	12,582	5,031	10,034	15,065	1,742	3,370	5,112	4,209	11,478	15,687	16,642	31,804
Balaka	4,556	6,373	10,929	5,361	8,716	14,077	6,373	4,556	10,929	246	805	1,051	16,536	20,450
Mchinji							18	1,733	1,751	-	1,152	1,152	18	2,885
Total	12,238	17,249	29,487	20,335	35,321	55,656	12,027	15,559	27,586	6,681	17,280	23,961	51,281	85,409

It has also been observed that due to repeated messaging on ANC services and importance of accessing family planning services, there is noticeable attendance to ANC facilities by both pregnant women and lactating mothers and their spouses. For examples in Balaka, 693 pregnant women were reported attending ANC services during the quarter. This has to be encouraged in all care group session as the population in most communities is very high. However, distance to the nearest ANC facility still remains a major challenge.

## NUTRITION

### Promotion of cultivation of high nutritive-value crops

#### *Backyard Gardens*

Apart from soy beans and groundnuts, the project continued to promote cultivation of highly nutritive indigenous green leafy vegetables such as *nkhwani* (pumpkin leaves), *khwanyanya* (bean leaves) and *bonongwe* (amarathe). During the quarter the project noted that 455 households adopted and maintained backyard gardens (290 in Lilongwe North, 150 Lilongwe South and 15 in Machinga). The most commonly grown vegetables were *bonongwe*, *mpiru* (mustard greens) and *khwanyanya*. It was noted during the period in Machinga district that some cluster members solicited vegetable seed from Government and other implementing partners working in the same area (Emmanuel International) to plant. The vegetables are grown with technical support from NASFAM AFOs, AEDOs and AEDCs from Ministry of Agriculture (Machinga District Agriculture Office). The project has noted that at Sankhwi GAC, Chikweo EPA in Machinga a special backyard vegetable garden club has been established where out of 25 members, 15 are FtF-INVC direct beneficiaries. The intention of the backyard garden initiative is also to sell some of the vegetables grown to earn income.



Picture: Backyard garden in Lipagane village, Machinga

#### *Orange Flesh Sweet Potatoes*

The project also facilitated harvesting of orange fleshed sweet potato (OFSP) varieties like *Zondeni*, *Anaakwanire*, *Mathuthu*, *Kaphulira*, *Chipika* and *Kadyaubwerere* which was distributed to 513 Care Group parent farmers (450 in Lilongwe and 63 in Balaka) earlier this year. OFSP were also harvested from eight mother plots in Lilongwe North (Chiwamba and Chigothi EPAs) and Lilongwe South (Thawale, Mpenyu, Mlomba, Nyanja, Chitsime EPAs). The activity took place from 8th to 11th June, 2015. The OFSP varieties that were preferred by the community members were *Chipika*, *Kaphulira* and *Kadya ubwerere*. Preference for these three varieties was based on their taste, productivity, size of the tuber when mature.



Picture: Harvesting of OFSP in Chiwamba EPA

### Facilitation of food processing

Knowledge and skills transfer on food processing and utilization was intensified during the period. A total of 15,899 community members (5523 male, 10899 female) were trained in food processing and utilization in Mchinji, Lilongwe, Machinga, Balaka and Mangochi districts. It was noted that some non-care group members participated in the food processing and utilization sessions as they were very much interested to learn about food processing and apply the knowledge and skills gained in their households. In Balaka out of 10,929 people (4556 male, 6373 female) trained in food processing, 4484 people were non-care group members (3660 male, 914 female). It has also been noted that males are increasingly getting involved in food processing sessions as they learn new skills on how to prepare foods which they did not know before. Out of 15,889 people who participated in the sessions, 5,523 were males. Specifically, the sessions focused on the six food groups, how to prepare porridge for children aged 6-9 months, groundnut and soy flour preparation, fabricating soy cake and peanut butter (*chiponde*), and preservation of vegetables using a modern solar drier. It was interesting to note that community members managed to mobilize own soy bean and groundnut products for preparation of various recipes.

### Promotion of energy-saving stoves

Shortage of firewood for cooking is one of the many problems faced by project beneficiaries in the districts where we intervene when it comes to preparing nutritious food for the children, pregnant women and lactating mothers. Most female beneficiaries spend about 3-4 hours per day searching for firewood. This comes at the expense of dedicating time taking care of their children; or, for the pregnant mothers to have time to rest. As a way of reducing time that women spend in seeking household firewood, the project is promoting the use of energy saving fuel efficient stoves which are affordable, easy to use and produces less smoke thus reducing risks of contracting pulmonary related diseases. In Machinga district, 29 promoters and 1,044 lead mother/fathers were trained on how to construct the stoves. A total of 649 households constructed stoves in Machinga. In Mangochi, 329 households constructed stoves. In Lilongwe, 206 households have been reported to have maintained the stoves.

### Hygiene and sanitation

A series of demonstrations/campaigns on the establishment and use of hygiene and sanitary facilities at household level were conducted during the quarter. These included construction of pit latrines, rubbish pits, dish racks and kitchens in order to reduce incidences of waterborne diseases

like cholera and other communicable diseases that come due to poor hygiene. In the quarter, a total of 6, 263 households reported maintaining and using the facilities. It was observed during the quarter that facilities which were constructed in the previous quarter are properly maintained and are in use.

### Access to, and utilization of, key nutrition-related services among targeted population including community surveillance and referrals

A total of 63,731 under five children (27, 796 male and 35,935 female) were reached with growth monitoring services at various health facilities in Machinga, Mangochi, Balaka and Mchinji districts. The project collaborated with HSAs in the identification of site for the sessions and in addition our promoters were actually assisting the promoters in the weighing of the children while the HSAs did the recording. Some of the salter scales used are those procured by the project through Nkhoma. Table 20 below summarizes the number of under-five children that were screened, lost weight and were referred for further evaluation.

**Table 20:** Number of under-five children accessing health services

District	No. of under-five children screened			No. of under five under-weight			No. of under-five children referred by HSAs for higher services		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Machinga	4435	4573	9008	527	1144	1671	25	30	55
Balaka	5987	6582	12569	460	550	1010	76	84	160
Mangochi	9588	10351	19939	557	669	1226	99	113	212
Mchinji	123	253	376	7	7	14	4	9	13
Total	20133	21759	41892	1551	2370	3921	204	236	440

In Mchinji, 383 under-five children (123 male and 253 female) attended growth monitoring services at Takumana, Dwamu and Mzama GACs health centres. Thirteen children were referred for higher services (*nutrition rehabilitation*) while those parents with children of moderate weight were advised on preparation of nutritious foods. In Balaka, growth monitoring sessions were accomplished in all 14 health centres and 12,569 under-five children attended the sessions. From this subset of children monitored, 160 children (76 male, 84 female) were referred to nutrition rehabilitation units (NRUs). In Mangochi, 212 under-five children (113 female, 99 male) were referred for nutrition rehabilitation units and some were treated as outpatients. There has been inconsistent trend in the number of children referred during the quarter in Mangochi. It was noted that in Mangochi, the number dropped from 326 in April to 182 in May and rose again to 212 in June 2015. At these growth monitoring sessions nutrition and health talks on six food groups and hygiene practices which are very essential in nutrition and the well-being of children were offered.

Overall, there is an indication that both care group volunteers and their cluster members are getting the messages being disseminated on the importance of growth monitoring as evidenced by the increased trend of women and their spouses participating in the growth monitoring sessions. This is one of the successes of care group model where nutrition interventions are carried out.

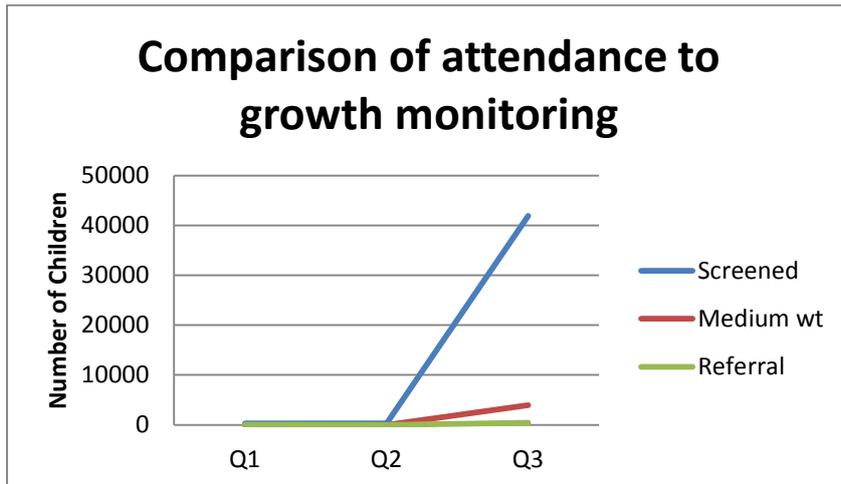


Figure: Trend of growth monitoring results in Mangochi

### Community growth monitoring learning visit

Community growth monitoring using community growth charts is essential to making malnutrition more visible among community members, as they are able to see the growth trend of their children. During the quarter, Nkhoma Hospital conducted one community-based growth monitoring learning visit with the Feed the Children–Tiwalere Project. A total of 15 promoters from Nkhoma impact area, 5 NAs from Lilongwe, 2 NAs from Mchinji, 2 DNCs, 1 Nkhoma M&E Officer and 3 INVC Nutrition staff visited Kumphimbi Community based child Care Centre (CBCC) at Traditional Masula, Mkwinda EPA in Lilongwe South to learn best practices in community-based growth monitoring. The learning visit aimed at equipping promoters, NAs, DNCs and M&E Officer with skills and knowledge on community growth monitoring. It is expected that Nkhoma will emulate the process in the chosen 54 growth monitoring sites in Lilongwe and Mchinji districts. The visit took place on 26<sup>th</sup> May, 2015



Picture: Growth monitoring in session

### Promoting Vitamin A Supplementation and De-worming through Child Health Days

During the quarter, four (4) Child Health Day campaigns were supported by INVC. These occurred in Balaka, Machinga, Mangochi and Mchinji. In all the campaigns, the project collaborated with District Assemblies and other partners, for example: the World Vision GOAL Malawi Project and Project Concern in Machinga; and Support for Service Delivery Integration (SSDI), Project Concern International (PCI), Emmanuel International, Active Source for Every Youth and UNICEF in Balaka. Health talks on hygiene and sanitation, exclusive breast feeding and the importance of consuming a diversified diet were delivered by promoters and Health Surveillance Assistants (HSAs) to mothers

who patronized the services at various health facilities/community-based sites. Various printed education materials e.g. posters sourced from the Ministry of Health were distributed to mothers who could read. A total of 445,666 (202,872 males and 242,794 females) under-five children were reached. Figure...below is an illustration of a child being given Vitamin A supplementation.



Picture: A Child given Vitamin A tablet at Namangwe site in Mchinji

Lilongwe district will hold the second session of the child health day campaign next quarter. The project continues to support the Child Health Days Campaign (*Vitamin A supplementation and provision of deworming tables-Mebendazole*) as part of its contribution to one of USAID's Health, Population, and Nutrition (HPN) objectives of increasing coverage of micronutrient supplementation to the under-five children in Malawi.

### Creating an enabling environment for execution of nutrition activities

Like in the previous quarter, the project held a number of meetings with government, USAID as well as different partners in all five Districts where nutrition activities are underway. The meetings with District Assemblies in Lilongwe, Mchinji, Balaka, Machinga and Mangochi centered mainly on planning for Child Health Days Campaigns in four (4) of the five districts (Balaka, Mchinji, Machinga and Mangochi). Area Development Committees briefing meetings mainly aimed at lobbying community to continue support -INVC project activities as well as mobilizing community members to patronize available health e.g. growth monitoring sessions. Specific meetings were done with assemblies to review of district implementation plans (DIPs) and align partners activities with these DIPs and also to mobilize financial support some planned activities as presented in the DIPs. Other key meetings at which INVC nutrition team participated were District Nutrition Coordination Committee meetings, community sensitization sessions with Village Development Committees, Village Health Committees, and District Civil Protection meetings. Special meetings were also held both at national and district levels with other international NGOs mainly Project Concern International (Njira Project), SSDI, World Vision, Emmanuel International, Concern Universal, International Potato Centre (CIP), Baylor and the implementing partners to enhance collaboration and coordination on project implementation especially those funded by USAID as one way of minimizing of duplication of efforts and resources.

In addition, the project participated in the planning and actual mega launch of the Sustainable Economic Growth Integrated Portfolio where six (6) new USAID funded projects were officially launched (PCI, PERFORM, Feed the Future, FISH, Ubale, and Improved Seed Systems and Technologies). The project had a booth during the launch where it displayed its activities and also

briefed Guests of Honor which included: US Ambassador to Malawi Virginia Palmer; Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Dr. Allan Chiyembekeza; and Minister of Energy and Mining Hon. Bright Msaka (SC). The launch took place at Liwonde in Machinga. The project also participated in the Plan International's SUN Open Day held at Jimu Village Group Village Headman Mtowa, Mngwangwa EPA in Lilongwe on 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2015. Activities during the day included household inspections for toilets, hand washing facilities and water sources. FtF-INVC cluster members displayed different food products made from soy bean and groundnuts.

Although not yet scaled up to the district level, Mangochi FtF-INVC team conducted two (2) community sensitization meetings on the importance of growing orange fleshed sweet potatoes (OFSP) in the coming season. The meeting took place at Mvumba Tsanya GAC in Mangochi where 1,029 people (347 male, 682 female), 2 promoters and one (1) lead farmer and Village Heads attended. It is anticipated that the project will work closely with CIP for sourcing and provision of potato vines for the interested project beneficiaries in the district.

## Integration

The project held two (2) integration meetings with Baylor. During the meetings it was agreed that FtF-INVC would be using *Tingathe* Community Health Groups to talk about HIV and AIDS issues during care group sessions; while Baylor would be using FtF-INVC drama groups and care group members to disseminate information on nutrition as one of the therapies for people living with HIV. Kabudula Health Centre in Lilongwe has been chosen to pilot this type of integration and will commence next quarter.

FtF-INVC, through Nkhoma Hospital, also participated in the growth monitoring learning visit to Feed the Children Project site at Kumphimbi Community-based Child Care Centre, Mkwinda EPA in Lilongwe South as explained under the section on Community-based growth monitoring learning visit above. The learning visit was organized for staff and promoters to learn how community-based growth monitoring is done by Feed the Children so that best practices could be adopted and implemented by FtF-INVC.

## Mentoring, Coaching and Monitoring

In the quarter, 21 coaching and mentoring sessions with project staff (District Nutrition Coordinators and Nutrition Assistants from FtF-INVC and Nkhoma Hospital), theatre members, promoters and lead mothers/fathers were accomplished in all the five (5) districts. The coaching and mentoring sessions with District Nutrition Coordinators and Nutrition Assistants centered on annual work plan development, project and financial management, procurement, integration of nutrition and agriculture value chains, gender, village financial platforms, Monitoring & evaluation and effective supervision.

A total of 17 coaching and mentoring sessions were accomplished with 85 community-based theatre group members in Kalulu, Mlonyeni, Mikundi, Mkanda, Msitu and Chioshya in Mchinji; and Mpingu, Chileka, Chitsime, Mpenu, Nyanja, Chiwamba, Mngwangwa, Ukwe, Chigonhi, Mlomba and Thawale EPAs in Lilongwe on the use of interactive theatre. The mentoring sessions were conducted by Pakchere Institute of Health and Development Communication. The sessions addressed issues of interactive theatre, theatre for development, casting, and acting. Another coaching session was also undertaken with M&E staff on technical reporting, data management protocol and data quality assurance. It also included indicator definitions and disaggregates.

The purpose of the supervision is to give support to field staff, promoters and lead mothers/fathers on how best they can disseminate information and also to ensure that the information that is being delivered is of high quality.

## Rolling out interventions in the Impact evaluation zone

As part of rolling out interventions in the impact evaluation areas, a series of community meetings were held with traditional leaders, NASFAM officials, AEDOs/AEDCs, HSAs, promoters and lead mothers/fathers on the re-entry into care groups where the project had pulled out as they were identified as “Control Areas”. The objective of the meetings was to inform leaders that FtF-INVC would resume its care group activities. One (1) care group and one (1) SUN/ENA training sessions were conducted for 39 newly recruited promoters (13 female, 26 male). Facilitation was provided by officials from the Ministry of Health. These included those from Impact Evaluation Areas as well as those replaced in areas where there were no promoters.

## Distribution of equipment and materials

In the quarter, some project materials were distributed to promoters, lead mothers and fathers in Lilongwe and Mchinji. These included 2100 t-shirts for lead mother/fathers, 1900 satchels, 1478 counselling cards, 2800 meters of branded cloth, and 39 promoter t-shirts. In addition, Nkhoma distributed cooking demonstration utensils which included: 40 pails, 400 plates, 40 small basins and 40 medium basins to 40 promoters (16 female, 24 male) in Lilongwe and Mchinji Districts for Food Processing Training.

## Constraints and challenges

**Drop-out of some promoters especially in Balaka and Machinga** as they are opting to work with other USAID funded partners intervening in the same districts that pay out allowances each time they meet in the communities e.g. in Chikweo EPA. Related to the same, some lead mothers/fathers are facing some resistance from some beneficiary households because they do not benefit from food stuffs from the project like other USAID funded projects in the same area with the similar interventions as INVC that offer handouts.

**In Machinga, some cluster members are not willing to pay this year’s NASFAM membership fee** of MK300 because of last years’ experience as some of them did not benefit from any seed despite being paid up members. This is likely to affect soy bean and groundnut production and subsequent consumption of the associated products.

**Pakachere has reached its grant ceiling and has over \$100,000 is outstanding unreconciled advances, as such, they did not implement most of their planned activities**

**Low patronage of community members including some cluster members in ANC services** despite promoter/lead mother messages due to long distances to health facilities. In Malawi most health centres are far apart and most community walk longer distances to get to the nearest centre for health services. This was largely reported in Mchinji district, Takumana MAC.

## Lessons Learned

Despite some constraints outlined above, presented below are key lessons learnt during the quarter:

- Food processing cascading sessions which are being facilitated by promoters have been appreciated by many in the communities. Most members are aware of some recipes that can be made from locally available foods especially from soy beans and ground nuts.
- Most care group members are constructing and maintaining energy saving stoves. During the period 1184 stoves were constructed signifying relevance among community members.
- It has also been learnt that chiefs who received some project materials e.g. wrappers (*zitenje*) were committed to the project activities and gave promoters full support in mobilizing their people participate care group activities.
- There is increased adoption of sanitation and hygiene practices in most communities as evidenced by increased construction and maintenance of pit latrine facilities, dish racks, rubbish pits, kitchens etc.
- Different varieties of OFSP produce differently based on type of soil and rainfall experienced.
- It has been learnt that there is relatively low adoption on knowledge and skills on maternal nutrition, introducing complementary feeding and ensuring adequate production of breast milk largely due to cultural beliefs that hinder pregnant women from accessing and consuming certain nutritious foods.

## Observations from the Quarter, conclusions and recommendations

- Households are willing to establish backyard gardens but are limited due to inadequate resources (vegetable seed or money to buy seed). There is, therefore, need to provide care group members with startup vegetable seed for their backyard gardens. Related to seed, it has also been noted that there is shortage of water in some areas for watering the gardens. There is need therefore for the project to consider provision of watering cans so that members could use to draw water even from afar with the cans.
- Adoption of hygiene and sanitation facilities by care group members seem to be significantly reducing high occurrences/incidences of water borne diseases as observed by the HSAs from the Ministry of Health. Sanitation and hygiene messaging has to be intensified regardless of this dry season.
- In order to have maximum yield from OFSP, there is need for agriculture value chain specialists (from FtF-INVC and CIP) to study soil type and rainfall patterns for different areas and advise care group members on the type of OFSP vines to plant in the next growing season.
- Conduct more care group sessions on maternal nutrition, introducing complementary feeding and ensuring adequate production of breast milk as they are some of the hallmark for the dietary diversity for pregnant, lactating mothers and less than 6 months old children.
- In FY 16, the project should consider provision of promotional materials to traditional leaders where care groups are established as part of motivating them to continue

supporting the project activities. There is also need to consider provision of water cans for backyard gardening.

### Principal activities planned for Q4

- Training sessions for AEDOs/AEDCs, members of people living with HIV, and HSAs in Care group model, SUN and ENA and Food processing in all the five (5) districts.
- Intensify promotion of backyard gardens as this is the lean period for vegetable until the first rains.
- Conduct more community-based growth monitoring sessions in Lilongwe and Mchinji districts.
- Hold quarterly meetings with promoters, VHC, ADCs, and community drama group leaders about progress on referrals.
- Engage a local partner to implement SBCC intervention in Balaka, Machinga and Mangochi.
- Continue rolling out and monitoring implementation of care group activities in the Impact Evaluation areas in Lilongwe and Mchinji districts (**Treatment Areas**).
- Translate into Chichewa and print Recipe Book, and Training Manual for TOT on Food Processing and Utilization.
- Continue participating in high level nutrition meeting organized by Government (DNHA-OPC, MOH, MOASF etc.).
- Fund Pakachere so that SBCC activities continue.

## Success story: Estery Justin, Leading by Example

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Estery Justin, who lives in Chipamba village, Group Village Headman Magadi, Traditional Authority Sithola in Machinga leads by example in her real life.

A mother of two, Estery got married to Justin Puto and joined the Feed the Future Malawi Integrating Nutrition in Value Chains Project in September 2014 as a lead mother.

Picture: Estery Justin holding her baby Zizwani at 6 months

At that time Estery had only one child and was expectant of her second. She was selected as a lead mother at Mwaiwathu Care Group. She underwent various training sessions with her Promoter, Chrissie Iman, addressing all nutrition and health modules as stipulated in the Counselling Cards including exclusive breastfeeding, dietary diversity maternal nutrition and hygiene and sanitation. While educating her cluster members, she also had concerns about the health of her unborn baby as the first one was growing up matching the age. She really wanted the baby to be born to be healthy.

Being a Lead mother, she trained her cluster members and at the same time she used the information on good nutrition for pregnant woman on herself. She made sure to consume healthy meals from the Malawi six food groups every day. She used the counseling cards which she had received from the project as training guide to sensitize her cluster households. The cards have pictures which demonstrate the habits in the communities and is easier to follow by both literate and illiterate people. People at her cluster are receptive as they welcome her to their homes and recommend that it is very important that they are visited at their homes, as this has never happened before. Advice on nutrition and health issues was previously received only at the Health Centers, but now this has changed as the visits are door by door.

Estery eventually gave birth to a healthy bouncing baby boy, Zizwani, in January 2015. Estery adopted the technique of breastfeeding the child in the first 30 minutes after birth and continued exclusive breastfeeding without introducing other foods until six (6) months. This has helped the baby to grow healthier than her first because breast milk contains all the necessary nutrients for the baby's growth, satisfaction and brain development. Breast milk is cheap and readily available for the child.

Estery further explained that the baby kept on growing healthier as compared to her first born child after six months because she gradually started to introduce complementary foods to the baby starting with porridge twice a day. Zizwani has separate utensils for feeding and are always kept clean for hygiene purposes.

Estery continues to encourage other women to follow suit for them to give birth and raise healthy babies in order to reduce malnutrition in the area.

## Component 4: Developing Local Capacity

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### Introduction

The current reporting period presents progress made in developing the capacity of partners in administrative and programmatic areas. Three courses (one each month) were conducted for partners, focusing on issues that were identified as gaps during the OCA as well as through INVC continued interaction with its partners. The training courses were on Program Management, Procurement and Monitoring & Evaluation. The mid-term strategic plan review of CISANET, including the development of Business Plan was concluded. Nkhoma Hospital also finalized the development of the new strategic plan (2015-2019).

INVC was involved in series of preparatory meetings for the piloting of Organizational Performance Index (OPI) tool to generate experiences and lessons learned for adaptation in Malawi. The OPI was eventually piloted jointly with USAID and STEPS on two partners: NASFAM and Pakachere. The data from the assessment is being analyzed and the report will be ready for sharing during next quarter.

INVC conducted joint monitoring field visits with NASFAM to Namwera, Balaka, Ntcheu, Lilongwe South and Lilongwe North IPCs. The objective of the visits was to assess the status of implementation of the Business Plans that were developed with financial support from INVC as well as sensitize the IPC Boards on the use and management of groundnut shellers and oil expellers that were still at IPC offices. The visits culminated in the development of detailed management plan per IPC on the implementation of the business plan as well as delivery and skills development on use of the equipment.

INVC remains committed to building capacity of implementing partners with emphasis on the systemic challenges faced by partners. Therefore, INVC continued mentoring and guiding partners on individual basis on issues related to financial liquidation, workplan development and budgeting as well as mainstreaming of gender in programs.

### Accomplishments

#### Improving Partner Organizational capacity to manage grants

FtF-INVC conducted training for Programme Managers, Procurement Officers and Accountants drawn from its six Partners namely: NASFAM, FUM, ACE, Dedza CADECOM, Pakachere and Nkhoma PHC. The course was conducted on May 20, 2015 in the INVC Conference Room and was attended by 33 participants (20M, 13F). The training course focused on discussing challenges in procurement experienced by partners and highlighting best practices in procurement with specific reference to procurement of restricted commodities, consultancy services and general goods. The methodology used was mainly going through and elaborating step by step on key expected processes and standards partners should abide with in procurement. Reference sheets and procurement template forms that are commonly used in procurement were discussed and eventually shared. Participants commended highly the content of the course as it addressed pertinent issues that partners have been struggling with to meet USAID procurement compliance standards.

## Building Organizational Capacity of Partners

FtF-INVC conducted a one day training on Program Management for INVC Program Managers and their Supervisors within partner institutions. Participants were drawn from NASFAM, FUM, ACE, Dedza CADECOM, Pakachere, Nkhoma PHC and CISANET. INVC technical staff that work with partners on program activities also participated. In total, there were 28 participants (20M, 8W). The course was held on April 16, 2015 in the INVC Conference Room. The training covered two main objectives:

- To clarify and enhance understanding on the roles and responsibilities of INVC Program Managers within partner organizations;
- To enhance skills in developing Workplans and Budgets.

The training approach included small group discussions and plenary sessions on each key topic as well as case study exercises. This was done to allow and encourage participants to share their experiences related to respective issues with particular emphasis on developing actionable recommendations. Participants collectively discussed Program Manager's roles, characterized the type of engagement within partner organizations and with INVC and thereafter identified priority issues looking forward. In general, participants recommended that both partners and INVC should develop the attitude of working collaboratively as a team aspiring that the partners should progressively own program activities with INVC doing more of the facilitation and mentorship roles. Emphasis has to be on proper planning and effective communication between partners and INVC.

INVC organized another training course in Monitoring and Evaluation on June 18, 2015 at INVC conference room. The course covered three main objectives: to provide guidance on good technical reporting; to discuss data management protocol; and to provide guidance on data quality. Participants to the course were INVC Program Managers and M&E Coordinators from the 6 INVC partners (NASFAM, FUM, ACE, CADECOM, Pakachere and Nkhoma). District Nutrition Coordinators (DNCs) from Mangochi, Balaka and Machinga also participated including DNCs under Nkhoma from Lilongwe (North & South). There were in total 30 participants (21M, 9F).

The current reporting period also gives *continued* updates on progress made in the implementation of short-term OCA action plans that were developed in the OCA done in October 2014 as shown on table 21 below.

**Table 21:** Some key partner capacity building plans and updates for the quarter (*italics bold*)

Partner Organization	Capacity dimension	Capacity Gaps	Planned Actions	Target Date	Progress made In the quarter
CISANET	Organizational Management	No business Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct Mid-term strategic plan review</li> <li>Develop Business Plan</li> </ul>	March 2015	Mid-term strategic plan review finalized; Business Plan development completed and New Conditions of Service Manual developed.
NKHOMA	Organizational Management	Strategic plan expired in 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop new Strategic Plan</li> </ul>	Feb. 2015	The Strategic Plan has been developed (2015-2019)
	Project Performance Management	No M&E Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fill the position</li> </ul>	Feb. 2015	M&E Officer position filled
ACE	Governance	Inactive Board of Directors – irregular meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CEO to present OCA findings to the Board for attention</li> </ul>	Dec. 2014.	ACE Board met and endorsed the OCA recommendation of meeting twice a year.
	Financial Mgt	Financial procedures between ACE Ltd and ACE Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate ACE Ltd &amp; Trust in SAGE Guideline</li> </ul>	March 2015	The SAGE financial package installed within ACE
	Administration	No guidelines/policy for Branding and fixed assets control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guidelines/policy drafted</li> </ul>	Feb. 2015	Guidelines have been developed and incorporated into administration manual.
Dedza CADECOM	Project Performance Mgt	Project implementation and data quality control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hire M&amp;E Officer</li> </ul>	Dec. 2014	M&E Officer recruited
	Administration	No policies on cost-share, branding and Volunteers/Interns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop policies/guidelines and incorporate into HR/admin. manual</li> </ul>	Feb. 2015	INVC provided guideline documents to CADECOM on developing cost-share, branding and volunteer policy
NASFAM	Organizational Management & Governance;	Redirecting NASFAM towards its core identity – which is to be more business oriented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue with the Transformation Change Process of NASFAM</li> <li>Identify guiding coalition sub-teams</li> </ul>	December 2015	Guiding Coalition Sub-teams for transformation change identified The Organizational Performance (OPI) conducted at NASFAM to assess its effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability. The results of the OPI exercise are being analyzed and report will be ready in the next quarter
PAKACHERE	Project Performance Mgt	Project implementation and data quality control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hire M&amp;E Officer</li> </ul>	March 2015	Not yet done due to lack of funding
	Organizational Performance				The OPI was carried out for Pakachere. The report will be ready in the next quarter
	Project Performance Management	Weak M&E system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and institutionalize feedback mechanisms for client satisfaction</li> </ul>	Dec. 2014	New M&E Officer identified Concept note for the development of the New Strategic Plan for FUM has been developed

## Collaboration with STEPS Project

INVC continued collaborating with STEPS Project in institutional capacity development of local partners. INVC and STEPS have been working together on the piloting of the OPI tool on NASFAM and Pakachere. The two projects held several preparatory meetings on the piloting of OPI tool. A technical task force comprising Capacity development and M&E Officers from both projects was

formed to jointly spearhead the piloting of the tool. The task force also included the M&E Specialist from USAID. The Taskforce was chaired by the INVC Capacity Building Specialist. The technical task force on regular basis presented their activities to Management of both projects and sought guidance on the same. So far, the two projects completed the OPI exercises on the two organizations and are in the process of compiling the reports. The reports will also highlight the experiences and lessons during the application of the tool, recommendations on the adaptations that should be made for Malawi to make the tool more useful under Malawi conditions.

### **Building governance and business management capacity of Farmer associations and cooperatives:**

INVC in collaboration with NASFAM engaged the services of two Business Development Service Providers to assist Innovation Productivity Centres (IPCs) which are implementing INVC programme in the development of Business Plans for the IPCs and their respective Associations. The IPCs facilitated with Business Plans were; Namwera, Balaka, Ntcheu, Lilongwe South, Lilongwe North and Mchinji. Since the time when these business plans were developed, the level of the implementation of the developed business plans was not yet established. Hence these IPCs were visited during the quarter to ascertain the level of implementation and be able to make the necessary recommendations and develop action plans for the successful implementation of the business plan.

The discussions during the IPC visits revealed that, generally, all IPCs had not started implementing the short term proposals/activities included in the business plans. The reasons for this as per our discussions and observations were:

- The joint board members never discussed issues related to the Business Plans whenever they met. Probably, this was not taken as a priority and also may be due to lack of sense of full ownership and responsibility of the business plans.
- The joint boards lacked direction and advice from NASFAM staff regarding the way forward with the Business Plans.
- Most of the substantive activities of the Business Plans require large sums of money that would need getting loans from financial institutions which the associations don't have adequate capacity to manage loans.
- Some of the IPCs still don't have final copies of Business Plans and these are Lilongwe South, Ntcheu and Balaka. NASFAM hasn't yet cleared and signed off the business plans as the consultant is yet to incorporate the comments from NASFAM.
- The distributed equipment (g/nut shellers) at Lilongwe South, Lilongwe North, Balaka and Mchinji are still idle at IPC offices; only the g/nut sheller in Balaka was delivered to Chilipa but developed fault when testing.

Based on the above observations, the following recommendations were made:

- The IPC joint Board members were advised to be including discussions of Business Plans in their preceding agenda meetings so that they can start actioning the issues in the Business Plan with a full sense of ownership and responsibility.
- The ABM Managers should actively act as link between IPC Boards and NASFAM headquarters as well as other financing institutions on Business Plan related issues.
- NASFAM to speed up finalizing the Business Plans with Target Consulting and distribute the copies to respective IPCs as quickly as possible.
- All the IPCs to prioritize identifying land/plot for installation of the proposed processing machines and the land could be used as an asset when negotiating with financial institutions for support.

## Institutional capacity building of District Councils

INVC has been exploring possibilities of improving its visibility in the districts through its decentralized staff allocation. Within the quarter, INVC secured an office space in Liwonde as hub for co-ordinating the nutrition activities in the southern districts of Mangochi, Machinga and Balaka. It is hoped that with this development, coordination and capacity building efforts with District Councils will be enhanced.

## Constraints and challenges

**Training offered to national partner staff doesn't quickly translate to improvements in partner's performance.** It still requires INVC to put more effort in following up and guiding in implementation. This may be due to the laissez-faire culture to program implementation that is enshrined in local partner. Capacity development therefore requires more time and effort to change behavior and culture of the local partner organizations.

**Regular staff changes within partners** negatively impacts capacity building efforts and program follow-ups.

## Lessons Learned

- The monthly training courses that INVC has been organizing has helped to improve communication and understanding between INVC and Partners. Partners are progressively taking ownership of the INVC programme due to improved understanding as well as increased capacity in compliance requirements of USAID.
- Partners have within the quarter struggled to develop workplans and budgets which denotes that INVC still needs to continue building skills and coaching partners in these areas.
- The OPI tool piloted on NASFAM and Pakachere has shown great potential in determining the performance of the organization as a result of the capacity building initiatives. Hence, it would be worthwhile using this tool in parallel with the OCA during the next partner assessments.

## Observations from the Quarter, conclusions and recommendations

Partners still experienced challenges in developing workplans and budgets for the 5 months period (May-September) and this affected timely conclusion of the process and disbursement of funds to partners. The monthly training courses on targeted topics that INVC has been organizing for partners have greatly been appreciated and have helped to further build the relationship on the INVC programme. INVC will therefore continue organizing strategic and topic specific monthly training courses in addition to providing coaching and mentoring services to partners.

## Principal activities planned for Q4

- Conduct organizational capacity assessments (OCA) of all its partners: NASFAM, FUM, Pakachere, CAEDCOM, Nkhoma and ACE. This time, the OCA will be done at the same time with the OPI in order to determine the capacity development outcomes as well.
- Continue organizing monthly training courses on targeted topic for partners.

# Monitoring and Evaluation

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## Introduction

This report covers the April through June time period which is the third quarter of Fiscal Year 2015. The project has been spending time preparing for the rollout of GIS data gathering, cleaning data for the unique ID rollout, conducting a gross margin spot survey and preparing procurements for the Nutrition Outcome survey and Agricultural Outcome survey. The team realizes that we will be very busy from now till the end of the project with various M&E efforts and initiatives.

## Accomplishments

This quarter we completed the gross margin spot survey and selected the survey team for our nutrition outcome survey. The team conducted a partner wide M&E training and held a workshop on Geographical Information Systems here at the FtF-INVC office in Lilongwe. These and other activities accomplished this quarter are summarized below.

## Data Quality, Data Entry and Unique ID

The nutrition team has finalized design and printing has begun for lead mother and promoter form booklets. This should greatly help the project to obtain data from the field. The printing of these forms will be completed next quarter and the booklets will be distributed.

Electronic data entry of registration and training data was outsourced to a local firm so we could be caught up with the electronic data entry for all of our partner data. The data entry is completed and unique IDs have been assigned to all INVC beneficiaries. This process has been delayed due to problems with the quality of the data and incomplete source documents. The data has been cleaned as far as the team can go with it and further modifications will be needed as the IDs are rolled out in the field.

## Nutrition Outcome Survey

The nutrition outcome survey has been solicited and from a group of respondents a selection was made for a team from Bunda to conduct our Nutrition Outcome Survey. This is the same team who conducted the nutrition baseline survey for the scale up districts. This survey will take place in all five of FtF-INVC's nutrition districts and data will be gathered for all of the outcome indicators in time for FTFMS reporting. Data will not be gathered on the stunting indicator which has been baselined and will be measured at the end of the project. The survey originally planned for June is slated to begin in July.

## Gross Margin Spot Survey

The Gross Margin Spot survey was completed this quarter in Lilongwe, Mchinji and Dedza districts with 115 farmers. Data from this survey is discussed in more detail in the Agriculture Productivity section of this report. Gross margin data for groundnuts was very thin with only five respondents having any data on groundnut sales. This was due to the fact that groundnuts were still being harvested at the time of the spot survey with much of the crop still in the field. Better data for groundnuts should be available by the time of the Agricultural Outcome survey in August.

Below is a table showing project gross margin per hectare numbers from baseline, last year's outcome survey and this year's spot survey:

<b>Table 22: INVC Gross Margin Per Hectare Performance since inception</b>			
	Baseline Timeframe 2013 Data	2014 Ag Outcome survey	2015 Gross margin spot survey <sup>1</sup>
Dairy <sup>2</sup>	\$93.00	\$447.00	n/a
Soybeans	\$151.00	\$170.24	\$382.00
Groundnuts	\$340.00	\$318.92	\$472.00

<sup>1</sup> Spot survey sample gross margin for groundnuts is very small (n=5)

<sup>2</sup> Source for gross margin is MMPA

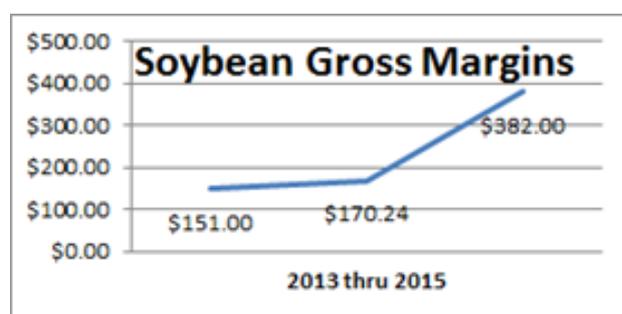
<sup>3</sup> 2015 Ag Outcome survey will begin in August

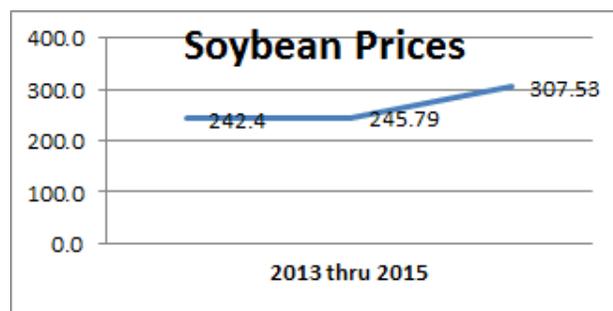
Note that the gross margins per hectare are better across the board for 2015 verses 2014 and the numbers for Soya have more than doubled in 2015 verses 2014. This can be attributed to better yields and also an improvement in the price for soya this year over last year. Below is a comparison of yields as well as prices for both soya and groundnuts over the same periods.

<b>Table 23: INVC Yield and Price Data 2013, 2014 and 2015</b>			
	Baseline Timeframe 2013	2014 at time of Ag Outcome Survey	2015 at time of spot survey
Soybeans Yields mt/ha	0.870	0.669	0.9825
Soybean Prices <sup>2</sup>	242.4	245.79	307.53
Groundnut Yields mt/ha <sup>1</sup>	1.520	0.865	1.4563
Groundnut Prices <sup>2</sup>	222.42	236.53	304.83

<sup>1</sup> Groundnut data is for unshelled groundnuts

<sup>2</sup> Prices are Retail in Malawi Kwacha per kg





The above graphs illustrate that prices went up from 2013 to 2015 with gross margins going up by a larger percentage. By looking at the data you can see that from 2013 to 2015 prices increased by 27 percent (some of this due to inflation) while gross margin went up over 100 percent. The gross margin increase can be attributed to the increase in price and yields. The improvement of yield (47% for soy and 68% for groundnuts) has been substantial this financial year and can be attributed to the adoption of technologies by farmers. With groundnuts the trend is also positive although not as pronounced. This is a positive development that we will explore with additional analysis after the outcome survey when groundnut data is more definitive and the sample size is larger and includes the projects entire zone of influence.

The Gross Margin spot survey was also utilized to test the data gathering process for the new FtF indicator “Quantity of nutritious crop set aside for consumption”. The M&E team worked with the SPRING project to add questions that would probe for this indicator. Because harvest was on going it was difficult for farmers to estimate the quantity of groundnuts that they would consume. A total of 81% of the groundnut farmers and 82% of the soybean farmers were planning to consume at least part of their harvest. These figures were estimates and will likely change since the amount of a crop planned for consumption can be much different from the amount actually consumed given that many village households experience unexpected events that require additional cash by the household such as funerals and weddings. The data gathering methodology for this indicator will be tested further during the Agricultural Outcome Survey. The SPRING team intends to visit the survey team during this time to assist in this activity.

Another goal of the spot survey was to obtain information on farmer’s ability to estimate their farm size since hectares is an important component of the gross margin calculation. The results were somewhat inconclusive with soybean farmers overestimating their farm size by 18% and groundnut farmers underestimating their farm size by 5%. Farmers may have been better at estimating their groundnut farm size since they were closer to the harvest of this crop. More work is needed in order to draw conclusions on Malawi farmer ability to estimate farm size. We plan to do more work on this during the Outcome Survey to take place in August.

### GIS Pilot and Training

With the assistance of the local firm Agronomy Technology Limited (ATL), INVC conducted a pilot with five AFOs from NASFAM in the Mlomba and Malingunde EPAs. A list of 130 lead farmers were pulled

from the current INVC spreadsheet database and each of these lead farmers were assigned to the appropriate AFO. Each lead farmer was assigned a unique ID and QR code which could be scanned to produce a given lead farmers unique ID utilizing the Samsung devices. A QR (Quick Response) code is a two dimensional code that is a machine readable optical label containing information about an item. There are freeware apps available that can be installed on most android phones for reading these codes. We decided that it was impractical to move forward with the assignment of these codes because every field person would have to be issued a device to read these codes which would be cost prohibitive. The training for the pilot began last quarter with the actual data gathering this quarter. A document with the lessons learned from this exercise can be found in the appendix of this report.

This pilot exercise was followed by in depth training delivered by agronomy technology with INVC M&E staff including partner M&E staff June 9 through June 11th. We were trained utilizing tools that streamline data capture with a modified version of the Open Data Kit (ODK) software and google earth. Data can be displayed spatially utilizing the KML file structure of google earth and project staff can convert this data to shapefiles utilizing the QGIS software to share with USAID. During this training USAID M&E staff gave a presentation on data requirements and file formats for GIS data reported to USAID. This will be helpful as we gather the GIS data and prepare it for integration into the USAID GIS information database. Next quarter we will be drafting a protocol for gathering project GIS data.

Next quarter we will fine tune the gathering tools in the ODK software and commence GIS data gathering in Lilongwe and the scale up districts.

### Staffing

One of the INVC M&E team members has left the project and is being replaced by a person with more GIS expertise. This quarter we narrowed down a list of candidates and selected finalists for interviews for this GIS position. Interviews have been conducted and what is left is to make an offer to the best candidate. It is our plan to have this new person on board by the middle of next quarter as we roll out the GIS data gathering in the project zone of influence.

### Data Quality Assessments

USAID conducted DQA visits at the FtF INVC secretariat and also at ACE, FUM and CADECOM. Overall the feedback was good with some action points noted by the DQA team. The USAID DQA follow up noted that all the action points that were drawn during the 2013 DQA had been addressed by the partners.

This quarter we conducted an internal DQA at Nkhoma in Lilongwe north and south now that they have their new M&E officer. Overall the data quality at these locations was the same as that of Mchinji which had an internal DQA last quarter. The overall findings were that data is not secure, it is not properly organized or filed, the data gathering protocol is not being utilized, there are no quality checks on the data and there appears to be many gaps in the data. These issues have been pointed out and the new Nkhoma M&E officer is working with the Nkhoma team to address these issues. This DQA was performed with the assistance of one of the Value Chain M&E Coordinators. This represents our effort to cross check data between the different M&E teams to help improve objectivity and therefore data quality.

An internal DQA was also conducted in April at CADECOM Dedza and all five of the field offices. This was an opportunity for the new M&E officer to come up to speed and to understand the requirements for data quality. One of the nutrition M&E coordinators accompanied the team on the first visit similar to the Nkhoma DQA to promote the cross checking of data between different M&E teams. Also the new M&E officer observed the first two DQAs in the first two EPAs and then conducted the remaining DQAs for the other EPAs on her own with support from the FtF-INVC M&E Coordinator which was an excellent capacity building opportunity. She is now prepared to perform the DQAs on her own data. The eventual goal is to have all partners performing their own internal DQAs.

The results overall from the Cadecom internal DQA were positive. Some of the issues noted were that, QC is not properly documented, many lead farmer training forms are not adequately filled out for example the training given is not always clearly written down on the form and farmers do not distinguish between sensitization and training. It should also be noted that as partners improve in their data quality the INVC team is becoming more stringent during the internal DQAs. The team was pleased with the results and next quarter there will be a follow up DQA to be sure that all issues have been attended to.

### **M&E Partner Training**

Last quarter on June 18<sup>th</sup> we held a full day of M&E training for all INVC staff. The topics covered were full descriptions and discussions of the INVC output indicators, data gathering protocols, reporting requirements and data quality issues and challenges. The training was capped off with a game of M&E jeopardy. More training is planned for field staff so we can improve the quality of the data reported in the next quarter.

### **Constraints and challenges**

- The unique ID roll out process is pointing out the holes in our data due to incomplete forms, multiple place spellings and spelling variability with names and beneficiary drop off
- The holes in the data, farmer drop outs, and name spellings are making the unique ID roll out process a time consuming one
- Similar to the roll out of unique IDs, GIS data gathering is going to be a time consuming process as project sites are visited and georeferenced
- We have noticed that many forms are not filled out correctly by field staff often with missing fields and incomplete descriptions
- NASFAM lost their M&E officer which will delay some of the planned activities to improve M&E out in the field

## Lessons Learned

- The Partner M&E training was well received and now we will have to focus on uptake on the part of the partners and improved data quality in the field with additional M&E training to be rolled out for field staff
- One M&E officer at NASFAM is not enough M&E support for the breadth of NASFAM activities. Better M&E support could be given if there was one assigned to each IPC or if the IPC coordinators were given more M&E responsibilities.

## Observations from the Quarter, conclusions and recommendations

- Partners are making progress on improving data quality in the field.
- Preliminary results from the Gross Margin spot survey show an improvement over last year but this finding will need to be validated at the conclusion of the Agriculture Outcome survey (after groundnuts have been harvested) which is to occur in August and will include the entire project zone of influence and not just three districts.

## Principal activities planned for Q4

- Commence on the roll out of GIS data gathering starting in Lilongwe which will start in July
- Roll out Unique IDs
- Nutrition Outcome Survey will start in July
- Agriculture Outcome Survey will start in August
- More M&E training is planned for FUM and also for nutrition staff in the scale up districts of Balaka, Machinga and Mangochi.
- Plans are also in process for NASFAM training which will be scheduled once the new M&E officer is selected and in place.
- Hire a new member of the M&E team who specializes in GIS data

## M&E Success stories from Q3

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### Story 1

During the gross margin spot survey we conducted a field check to monitor the survey in Mchinji District. Elisa James is one of the farmers that was interviewed. He is from John village, Mlonyeni EPA in Mchinji district. He is a member of NASFAM in Tayambako 3 club in Kalanzi GAC. He had two fields of soybeans; in one field he planted double rows and in the other field he planted single rows. The double row field was half the size of the single row field but he harvested twice as much as the single row field. When asked about these results he indicated that he regrets not planting everything in double row because of the improved yields and that next year he is going to plant all of his soybeans in double rows.

### Story 2

Following the action points from the DQA that was performed in October 2013 by USAID, on the indicator number of under five children reached with INVC supported programs, INVC was tasked to find a way of tracking sex disaggregation of the children reached during the child health days (CHD). Over the last two years, INVC nutrition and M&E staff have been working with the Ministry of Health (MoH) to redesign their data gathering forms for Child Health days so that they may report on gender disaggregated data. INVC piloted the collection of sex disaggregated data in 2014. The MoH asked INVC to present their experiences and lessons learned in collecting this data to the child health day task force. Following these discussions in the 2<sup>nd</sup> CHD campaign for 2015 the Ministry of Health informed INVC that they have added gender disaggregation to their forms.

Despite logistical challenges by the Ministry to supply stationary adequately and timely to all districts Mchinji and Mangochi field teams testified that the new sex disaggregated tally sheets were used for the most recent CHD campaign.

## Conclusion

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As the preceding pages attest INVC is a complex project run across a wide geographic area with a number of visible and latent components with multiple implementing partner grantees, an overlay of local solutions and a diverse web of partnerships and collaborative mechanisms. Telling our tale, warts and all, in a compelling quantified fashion which honors the efforts invested and the commitment of our staff, partners and beneficiaries is in a word, complicated.

This reporting period at the nexus of harvest and marketing was a challenge as we sought to collect, vet, analyze, and interpret diverse data sets. This report provides preliminary data analyses which will be completed with a series of case studies by the end of this fiscal year.

Great strides are being made on multiple fronts and we appreciate the confidence and interest USAID has shown in our program. Much time has been invested in consultations, field visits, querying and reflection, and the INVC team, our partners and beneficiaries have profited greatly.

As we undertake the fourth quarter of this fiscal year implementation must continue and accelerate even while we reserve time for partner consultations and work planning. The perspectives shared by the recent performance evaluation are being digested as we consider the principal thrusts and focus areas for the coming year. At the end of the day, one thing is ultimately clear- integrating nutrition in value chains is a superb learning laboratory and we must maintain our curiosity, creativity, flexibility and innovative spirit in order to learn from our experiences- both good and bad – in order to better serve the needs of our targeted beneficiary/client population.

## Appendixes

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- 1) Trip Report, Consultancy to Village Financial Platforms
- 2) List of Organizations participating in the 2015 Buyers Tour
- 3) NASFAM –purchases of soybeans by IPC and Association
- 4) Public Service Announcements
- 5) Jingles
- 6) SBCC Radio Program Concepts Matrix
- 7) Lessons learned from GIS pilots
- 8) Grants Management

## Appendix 1: Trip Report Consultancy to the Village Financial Platform component of FtF/INVC

**Malawi**

15-26 June 2015

Paul Rippey, consultant

### Summary

The consultant, Paul Rippey, visited the INVC project from 15-26 June 2015. The TOR and Deliverables of the mission appear below. During the mission, the consultant worked closely with the new Village Financial Platforms Officer, made three trips to the project site in Mchinji, met with the project's Video Committee and the Contractor chosen to produce videos, and visited CARE and USAID.

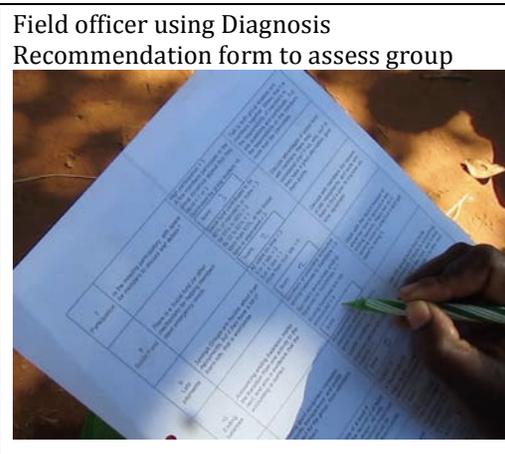
The timing of the mission was ideal, with the arrival of the new VFP Officer, the launch of the Video Committee, the contract with the video production firm, and planning of the training of Field Officers and Village Agents all occurring during the two-week visit.

A word of appreciation is due to the outgoing VFP officer, Gena Pearson, who visited the field staff frequently during the time between launch and this mission making the good results to date possible, and who has been gracious in finding the time during a busy period to transfer her wide knowledge to her successor.

This report consists of a summary of observations, followed by more detailed discussions of Training and Skills Transfer; Video Production; the VFP Database; Expansion Options; a workplan for the VFP Officer through September 2015; and TOR for an expansion contract. A resume of activities, and a review of the TOR and Deliverables of this mission, complete the report.

### Observations

- Based on a non-random sample of prepared visits to VFPs in Mchinji District, which may have been somewhat biased in favor of groups that were likely to show well, the approach we introduced in March appears to be being followed. The Field Officers have largely internalized the system. The field staff are engaging, articulate, energetic and despite several logistical and implementation delays, their morale is high.
- There are nonetheless some issues in terms of understanding of the program. A careful review



of videos taken during visits to the groups suggest that most of what the FOs are saying is what we would want them to say, and the rest is more likely to be irrelevant than harmful information.

- The training style that was observed during the field visits tends towards long lectures and little participation from group members. The few questions that are asked to participants tend to be Yes or No questions. Some feedback given to the FOs during the visits seems to have resulted in a somewhat more participative style; much more can be done to make the style more engaging and effective.
- The recruitment of John Wisiki to be the new VFP Officer seems to be a very good choice. He has absorbed a great deal of information very quickly, his previous career as well as what I have seen suggests that he is at home in the field as well as in more formal venues, and he has made a number of suggestions and remarks that suggest that he is a keen observer of group dynamics and committed to the quality of VFPs.
- The VFP Officer reports to the Deputy Chief of Party for Agriculture and Value Chains. This is an appropriate place in the hierarchy, giving the VFP Officer the support and access he needs to excel.
- The VFP project has underperformed quantitatively. According to the projections that we made after consulting CADECOM in February, we should have reached 5000 people by the end of June. In fact, the number is likely to be somewhere in the mid-3000's. The activity started slowly for various reasons, and the pace of reaching new members appears to be quite high at present (please see the remarks on the data base below).
- The VFP Database is well maintained, and credit is due to the M&E department for developing it, and the data entry clerk in Mchinji for maintaining it, despite having to work on a slow and virus-infested computer with irregular electricity. The database contains much good information, and it is highly desirable that that information be extracted, synthesized and used in management.
- The project has been showing groups videos produced in Zambia designed to improve group management. There is no question whatever that group members watch the videos with great interest, and it seems from impressionistic research that they follow and understand the videos. In some cases, members reported after watching the videos on ways that their own groups could run better. The arrival of INVC videos in July will be an exciting step, and is the last key missing element in the VFP program.

## Training and skills transfer

A training of Village Agents had been projected to occur during my mission, but after consultation it was agreed to postpone it, making a number of changes to the training design.

The project uses a cascade training system, in which information passes through the four Field Officers to the eighty Village Agents. Cascade systems notoriously suffer from message deterioration at each level. Besides reducing the number of levels, which is not an option here, the solutions to reduce message drop-off are:

- Strengthen expertise at the higher levels of the cascade.
- Standardize and support training at each level by providing appropriate materials

We will take steps to put in place both of these solutions.

To strengthen the higher level of the cascade, that is Field Officer level, the VFP Officer will conduct a two-day training workshop with the Field Officers from 30<sup>th</sup> June to 1<sup>st</sup> July. Terms of Reference are attached. It should be recalled that the Field Officers were offered a three-day induction training from March 9-11 2015, and have had weekly visits from the former VFP Officer since then. They have internalized the training and generally are doing a robust and enthusiastic job of following the system. However, there are, as noted in this report, some systematic shortcomings, and also, one of the four Field Officers was recruited after the training, and so was trained by the other FOs. The need for a formal refresher and reorientation is quite clear.

To standardize and support training of VAs, the VFP Officer will work with the FOs to develop a formal training plan with written objectives, description of activities, and assessment criteria.

The VFP Officer will not proceed to the VA training until two key pieces of promised infrastructure are in place: Chichewa versions of forms and the VFP manual; and the Android phones necessary for the video 1TOP program. (A reminder of the multiple benefits of the phones: first, they are source of motivation, as they will be provided to those VAs with at least 100 members in the VFP program; second, they increase the standing and prestige of the VA; third, finally, they are the conduit by which project information will be transmitted to groups through the production and distribution of videos.)

## Video Production

As the contract with Imageworks has been signed, clock is ticking on their performance milestones, ours. We assembled a Video Committee made up of Chizimba, Lourdes Martinez, Francis Banda, Charity Henry Gaga, plus John Wisiki, Gena Pearson, and Rippey, met on Tuesday, 23 June 2015. Absent members were briefed in person after the meeting. important input from the committee, the VFP and consultant revised the video themes and talking twice, and sent them to Imageworks on Friday 26

The themes and talking points sent to Imageworks attached in Annex.

Group members watching video in Mchinji



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## VFP Database

The M&E department has developed an Excel based database including all the information from the “Diagnosis and Recommendations” form. We witnessed data collection in the field, and believe that it is

being done assiduously. We discovered that two questions on the form were given to misinterpretation, because the questions had been poorly drafted. They both turned on the use of the word “and” instead of “or”: we asked the field officers to check a sample of passbooks and a sample of ledger pages; in fact, not all groups use both, and those with only one – passbooks or ledgers – were being marked down by the agents. The form has been corrected, and the VFP officer will explain the change during the FO training scheduled for next week.

The database is designed to allow us to track trends over time, as each group is visited quarterly. In the short run, however, it also allows us to look at a snap shot of aggregated practices across the mass of VFPs we are working with. The following are some salient data from the MIS:

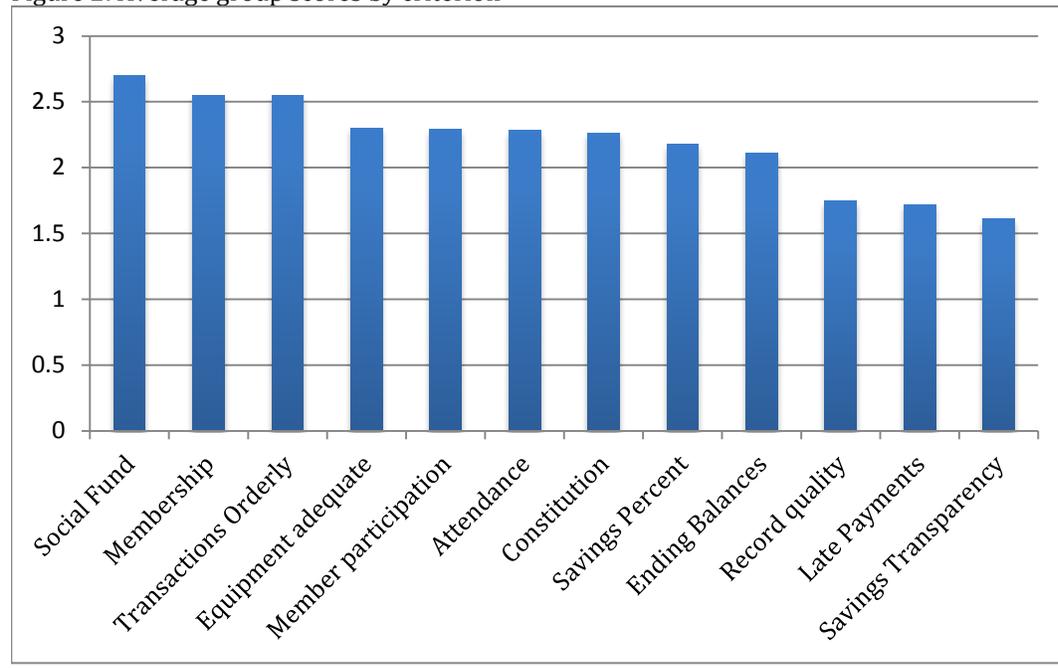
Outreach: we compared the database at two time points 16 days apart: 18 May and 3 June 2015. Table 1 shows the growth in *recorded* number of groups and members that have been reached. During this period, the project was inducting 367 new members a week; this number may not be very representative of what is actually happening, and over such a short period, the results may be due to the presence or absence of bottlenecks in data entry as much as field realities. The project should continue to track growth in outreach regularly.

	Groups	Members
18-May	72	1395
3-Jun	103	2234
Change	31	839
Change (%)	30.1%	37.6%
Average weekly change	13.6	367.1

The average group has 21.7 members, and at the meeting at which the group was inventoried, attendance was 76.2%. These data are quite typical for SGs across Africa. It will be interesting to note if SGs begin to add members, as a result of the attention they are receiving from the project.

Figure 2 shows the relative scores of the 103 Savings Groups inventoried by the project. The scores are based on the zero-to-three scale developed by the project. These relative scores need to be considered with great caution, and the reader should not assume that a “2” given for the *Transactions Orderly* indicator is equivalent to a “2” given for, say, *Record quality*. Nonetheless, in developing the diagnosis form, care was paid to normalize the scoring criteria as much as possible, and to reserve scores of less than 2 for situations or practices which indicate a real threat to members’ savings or to the group’s durability. In light of this, it is noteworthy that three categories stood out from the others as risk points: Record quality, late payments, and savings transparency.

Figure 2: Average group scores by criterion



The VFP Officer will concentrate on these areas in the Field Officer and Village Agent trainings. The solutions to these issues vary:

- Savings Transparency is the easiest to improve, and usually requires simply a change to meeting procedures, sensitizing each member to observe that her savings are recorded correctly.
- Record quality requires the Village Agent or the Field Officer to work with the group Secretary to improve the latter's skills. Often, the Village Agents do not have the skills to do this, and the job falls to the Field Officer. A net improvement should be possible with an investment of attention and effort.
- Late repayments require a commitment from the group. Often late repayments are due to a complicity among members, who are reluctant to be very demanding out of fear that when they have difficulty, the group will be strict with them. This is a slippery slope that must be avoided, and the VFP Officer will raise an alarm with the FOs and the VAs to improve performance in this critical area.

## Expansion Options

The VFP pilot is off to a generally good start after a somewhat slow launch, and the arrival of a full-time Chichewa-speaking VFP Officer with a background in Savings Groups promises to raise the field performance from "generally good" to a higher level. The approach is appreciated by villagers, and relatively low-cost, and promises to provide a good means of strengthening the integration of the different project components. It is innovative in two ways: first, it builds on the existing networks of

Savings Groups, and can be an important model for countries like Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda where the sector is nearing saturation; second, the 1TOP element can bring information to thousands of people at progressively diminishing marginal cost, since much of the expense lies in the one-time development of videos. For all these reasons, the VFP approach seems worthy of expansion into other districts.

The timing and sequencing of expansion within a busy project is a management decision that cannot be addressed here. However, during the mission a new approach to expansion, called “Expansion Lite”, came to the fore. The “lite” refers to low cost and low administrative burden, not to light quality or outreach.

The outlines of Expansion-lite were discussed with Auster Gondwe of CARE during a courtesy visit on 23 June, who reported that he finds the idea attractive, and would like to pursue collaboration in Lilongwe and Machinga Districts.

The intention of Expansion-lite is to maximize the value that the project derives from its investment in system development and video development, with the least administrative burden, by partnering with other projects working in its ZOIs under agreements through which INVC provides initial training and other inputs, while the partners assure implementation and reporting.

The participation of other projects depends on their assessment of the value proposition that INVC offers them. Other projects working with SGs generally welcome innovations that add value to their groups, and are likely to appreciate the VFP approach because:

- It includes an efficient way to address problems of group quality, which exist in every project
- It provides them with a quantified measure of group quality with which to monitor improvements
- The systems are light in terms of workload and administration
- Most SGs appreciate integration with programs that address other concerns of their members, and essentially all group members will have concerns about agriculture, marketing, and child health.
- The videos are entertaining and modern, appreciated by groups, raise the prestige of the Village Agents, and are likely to make their SGs more attractive to existing and new members.

As their part of an agreement, potential partners would need to be able to supply the following:

- Substantial presence of Savings Groups in our ZOI’s, with networks of village agents.
- Some paid staff (“Field Officers”) supervising the village agents now, and projected for at least 18 months after we start.
- Adequate competence and professionalism to execute well and to submit timely accurate reports.
- No conflict with our messages, if they are also working in agriculture or nutrition.

Expansion-Lite will depend on a partnership with existing SG implementers, with the two parties making the following contributions:

FtF INVC	Partner SG implementing organisation
The approach, or the intellectual property, including the VFP manual, the Inventory form, DR form, Video Dissemination Tracking Form. These all exist in English and Chichewa. The VFP database template Training in the use of the system Periodic videos	Correctly execute the approach according to an agreed-upon program Submit periodic reports including outputs, quality tracking, and narratives

Most projects will have a challenge paying for phones as they will have existing budgets that do not include them, and changing procurement line items is difficult. On the other hand, almost all projects will have a budget for training, so new partners are more likely to be able to pay for training than phones.

Any partnership will have to be carefully negotiated on a case-by-case basis. A draft TOR schema is in annex, and could be a starting point for negotiations with potential partners.

### Proposed workplan for now until September 2015.

	Recurring tasks	Special tasks
July 1-15	Weekly visits to field. Note and correct quality of training and data collection, and oversee transfer of progressive responsibilities to Village Agents. Concentrate on the three risk areas identified, that is, late repayments, record keeping and savings transparency. Assure proper execution by both parties of the contract with Cadecom. Submit weekly, monthly and quarterly reports. Monitor the project MIS and use it to identify areas where concentration are needed, and identify and report on trends. Keep VFP international consultant informed of activities, challenges and successes.	Complete translation of manual and forms into Chichewa. Training of Field Officers.
July 16-31		Training of Village Agents. Distribution of phones to VAs. Assure mastery of use of GPS.
Aug 1-15		Launch first video. Prepare and distribute talking points in Chichewa for FOs and VAs.
Aug 16-30		Report on Video feedback from field to Video Committee. Meet with Supervisor and COP as necessary about expansion.
Sep 1-15		Introduce second video, along with talking points. Prepare and organize meeting of Video Committee for next scripts. Feed information into INVC quarterly report.
Sep 16-31		Next script ideas to Imageworks. Work on expansion of project as needed and directed.

## TOR for an Expansion-lite contract or MOU

Following is a framework for the TOR section of an MOU or contract with a potential partner under “Expansion-lite”.

This agreement between DAI/FtF/INVC (FtF) on the one hand, and \_\_\_ on the other hand, addresses collaboration to share the technology developed by FtF called Village Financial Platforms (VFP). The agreement begins on [date] and continues to [date] unless extended or shortened by mutual consent.

### Introduction

A Village Financial Platform is a Savings Group that meets basic standards of safety for its members, and is sufficiently stable that it can be used as an entry point for other activities; initial field assessments suggest that although there are a large number of SGs in project areas, many may profit from capacity building to help them reach peak performance. Savings groups throughout Malawi and elsewhere have shown that they can help to increase household resiliency and provide access to lump sums through share outs and small loans; lump sums enable households to pay school fees, meet emergency expenses, and invest in agriculture and small enterprises.

In most cases, groups were formed by development organizations, then graduated out of active assistance, and left to function independently or with the assistance of a local Village Agent, a specially trained volunteer. Experience has shown that often, groups drift away from the practices they were trained in, and sometimes have problems as a result.

Also, groups are excellent platforms for delivering messages because of the possibility of reaching 20 people at a time, and because the group’s solidarity provides mutual reinforcement to members in trying new behaviors.

The VFP project therefore has two innovations to address these needs and opportunities.

First, it works to upgrade the quality of existing Savings Groups by using a “Diagnosis and Recommendations” form, which gives quantified scores to groups on 13 key indicators, and to track changes in those assessments over time; and, to use Savings Groups systematically as a platform for messages about agriculture and nutrition.

Second, it uses VFPs as a platform for delivering messages related to agriculture, health, nutrition and gender through short videos in Chichewa, delivered on smartphones.

Purpose of this agreement:

This agreement outlines the ways that FtF and \_\_\_ will collaborate to bring the VFP approach to Savings Groups formed and supported by \_\_\_, within the Zones of Influence of FtF.

It applies to the following Districts and TAs: (list)

\_\_ reports having formed [number] Savings Groups in these areas with [number] members. Under this agreement, \_\_ will deliver the VFP to approximately 80% of these groups and members, according to the following schedule:

Date	[date]	[date]	[date]	[date]	[date]	[date]
Groups reached	[number]	[number]	[number]	[number]	[number]	[number]
Members reached	[number]	[number]	[number]	[number]	[number]	[number]

#### Responsibilities of the two parties

##### Feed the Future

- FtF will provide and make available for use the approach, or the intellectual property, including the VFP manual, the Inventory form, DR form, Video Dissemination Tracking Form. These all exist in English and Chichewa.
- FtF will train the Savings Group management team, and the field officers, in the use of the above system during a training(s) to be organized on [date and location].
- The FtF VFP Officer will visit \_\_ at a frequency of [Quarterly? Monthly? Weekly?] to assess progress and make recommendations for improvements.
- FtF will share the VFP database template and train \_\_ IT staff in its use, and be available for on-going consultations and trouble shooting.
- FtF will supply \_\_ with [monthly] videos that will be downloaded to FO and VA phones and provide Chichewa talking points.
- FtF will supply \_\_ with appropriate phones on the following schedule and to the following people under the following conditions [specify]

[Partner]

[Partner] agrees to make its staff available for training, and will supply the training venues and meet all other expenses apart from the expenses of FtF staff.

[Partner] agrees to faithfully execute the program according to the schedule given above.

[Partner] will inform FtF of both success stories and problems encountered in a timely fashion.

[Partner] will submit periodic reports including outputs, quality tracking, and narratives according to the following schedule [insert reporting schedule]

## Activities

Following is a summary of the activities of the consultant during this mission.

Sunday 14 June 2015	Arrival
Mon 15	Install in office. Meet with COP, M&E officer, VFP/Gender officer. Review of documents.
Tues 16	Trip to Mchinji. Observe groups and VFP procedures. Discussions with Field Officers.
Wed 17	Met with new VFP officer, provided orientation to project, discussed accomplishments and challenges.
Thu 18	Met with new VFP officer, provided orientation to project, discussed accomplishments and challenges.
Fri 19	Field trip to Michinji, introduced new VFP officer to Field Officers, attend one meeting.
Sat 20	Met with new VFP officer, discuss field trip, review video taken in field to note nuances of FO communication.
Sun 21	
Mon 22	Prepare for Video Committee meeting and produce a manual for the Village Financial Platform Video Committee. Meeting with Imageworks, mutual acquaintance and briefing.
Tues 23	Visit to CARE to discuss the sector, and possibility of collaboration. Meet with committee. Revise proposed scripts and re-submit to committee.
Wed 24	Trip to Mchinji with VFP Officer. Observe and film meetings. Interview Village Agent with large number of groups. Discussions with three of four Field Officers on training, forms, procedures.
Thurs 25	Review and revise manual, forms. Plan training of Field Officers and Village Agents. Review video committee progress. Courtesy visit to USAID.
Fri 26	Review database with VFP Officer. Plan way forward. Report writing.
Sat 27	Wrap up writing. Departure.

## Scope of Work

The following tasks constitute the scope of work of the consultant:

Meet with FtF/INVC staff, in particular the Chief of Party, the Gender/VFP Officer and the Monitoring and Evaluation Department, to assess progress to date. This will include a review of the VFP database, which includes assessments of all the groups collected during the Diagnosis phase.

Visit field operations in Mchinji to assess the reactions of VFPs to the project, and interview group members, volunteer and paid field staff, and partner management to determine any improvements that can be made in service delivery, including an assessment of the adequacy of training of the field staff, paid and volunteer.

Review management structures for the VFP project within FtF/INVC and, with project staff, assess them for adequacy.

Determine, with project staff, the most efficient and expeditious way to script, shoot, produce and distribute additional videos, adapted to the project and agricultural calendars.

Determine, with project staff, the optimum institutional arrangement for expanding into other Districts, and discuss possible collaboration with potential partner agencies.

## Deliverables

Following are the deliverables due under the contract for this mission.

1 A report on the mission including:

Findings from the field visit

Relevant findings and recommendations for improving service delivery

An analysis and recommendations on the VFP management structure within FtF/INVC

An assessment of group quality based on analysis of the project data base and recommendations if any for improvements in the advice being given to groups

Recommendations to accelerate and routinize video production

Recommendations on the optimum institutional arrangements to expand into other districts.

2 A draft contract or contracts with potential partner agencies

3 Revised forms and procedures manuals where necessary

4 A detailed workplan for the period from the mission until the end of September 2015.

## Annex: TOR for Field Officer training

### JUSTIFICATION FOR VILLAGE FINANCIAL PLATFORM TRAINING OF FIELD OFFICERS

The Village Financial Platform pilot in Mchinji started in March 2015 and has successfully worked with more than 3,000 village savings members. There are currently four field officers who work with approximately 80 Village Agents in Mkanda, Mikunki and Chisohya. The Field Officers are under short term technical assistance contracts with FtF; the village agents are volunteers who have agreed to work with Feed the Future, Malawi in order to implement the VFP activity.

The Field Officers have demonstrated a high level of engagement and willingness, and despite having a late start and not having the motorcycles which they are intended to receive, they have contacted most of the 74 Village Agents, and reached over 3000 Savings Group members, and have generally collected accurate and timely data.

Three visits conducted to the field by the VFP Officer John Wisiki and the VFP Consultant Paul Rippey during the period from 16-24 June confirmed the above, and also unveiled some risk points, specifically: One of the Field Officers does not have a background in Savings Groups, and while her performance in the field is enthusiastic and confident, it is unlikely that she has mastered all the key procedures of Savings Groups, in particular the calculation of share out amounts.

As part of their job, the FOs are intended to present FtF to VFP members. In general they do this well, and we did not notice them giving any misinformation. However, they have some tendency to deliver too much information, some of it irrelevant. They need to focus their messages.

There is significant divergence in the way two of the questions in the “Diagnosis and Recommendation” form are completed.

In general, they did not always demonstrate an understanding that their job is to empower the Village Agents, and in some cases seemed to leave the impression of criticizing the VAs through the way they gave information to the Groups, and thus unintentionally disempowering them.

Their facilitation skills are not as strong as we would like and they need to learn to elicit more participation from the SGs.

The Field Officer level in the training cascade is extremely important, since they have a very large multiplier with four FOs supervising 80 VAs. An investment in striving for excellence at their level will be rewarded by greater quality and fewer problems at the VA and VFP levels.

Therefore, we propose the VFP officer conduct a two-day training of the four FOs in Mchinji.

### BUDGET:

The cost of training is approximately \_\_\_\_. Although this activity is not in the current budget, we have other budgeted resources that are now no longer committed in the amount of approximately 2,500USD.

### SCOPE OF WORK FOR VFP REFRESHER COURSE:

The training would take place 30th June and 1st July

The contents of the training would be:

- Review of FtF and role-plays in presenting the project succinctly in Chichewa to groups
- Review of the VFP manual
- Normalisation of the use of the DR form
- Review of the calculation of share-out and practical exercise
- Importance of empowering VAs and role plays in working with VAs to build their skills and confidence
- Facilitations skills and role plays
- Review of Hotline and assess use to date
- Review and administration

**OUTCOMES:**

All FOs present the project to groups succinctly, stressing the same key elements

FOs resolve any questions they may have concerning the place of the VFP within FtF

FOs all fill out the DR form the same way, giving similar assessments.

FOs all know how to calculate share-out

FOs gain expertise and strengthen their commitment to empower their VAs to take over the FO's responsibilities

FOs improve their facilitation skills and trainings become more participative

## Annex: TOR for Village Agent training

The following are the TOR for the Village Agent training, which are a revised version of TOR that had been prepared.

### JUSTIFICATION FOR VILLAGE FINANCIAL PLATFORM VILLAGE AGENT REFERESHER COURSE

The Village Financial Platform pilot in Mchinji started in March 2015 and has successfully worked with more than 3,000 village savings members. There are currently four field officers who work in in Mkanda, Mikunki and Chisohya. Cadecom has contact information for 74 village agents. The Field Officers have contacted 64 of these, and are now working with 62 of them. These village agents are volunteers who have agreed to work with Feed the Future, Malawi in order to implement the VFP activity. Initially, the Village Agents are opening the door for Field Officers to meet savings group members. During their visits, the Field Officers carry out two processes: orienting the groups to FtF, collecting basic information on each group for the MIS; diagnosing the strengths and weaknesses of each group; making recommendations for improvement based on that recommendation; introducing the concept of video training and showing all members a video; and debriefing with the members on what they saw. Progressively, it is intended that the Village Agents assume these responsibilities themselves, and as of end of June 2015, there are twelve who have begun to assess new groups themselves without their Field Officers.

The Village Agents are the principal point of contact between FtF and the beneficiaries so the quality of their work and consistency of their message are essential for the VFP element's success. We propose a training that will assure that all VAs are imbued with the project principles and procedures, allowing the FOs to accelerate the empowerment of the VAs, and concentrate on assuring the highest quality of field delivery.

Note that this training is proposed to take place after an intensive workshop with the FOs, to assure high competency and consistency.

### BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

The cost of training is approximately 2,300USD. Although this activity is not in the current budget, we have other budgeted resources that are now no longer committed in the amount of approximately 2,500USD.

### SCOPE OF WORK FOR VFP REFRESHER COURSE

This will be a two-day training in three iterations, each with about a third of the Village Agents. It will take place from 7<sup>th</sup>- 14<sup>th</sup> July. The FtF VFP Officer will co lead the first iteration along with the Field Officers and the FOs will lead the second and third iterations with the VFP Officer's oversight and feedback. The training will take place in 3 EPAs (Mkanda, Mikundi, and Chiosya) about 70-75 Village Agents as participants.

### OUTCOMES:

- All VAs present the project to groups succinctly, stressing the same key elements
- VAs all fill out the DR form the same way, giving similar assessments.
- VAs strengthen their ability to calculate share-out

- VAs improve their facilitation skills
- VAs learn how to present the 1TOP training
- There will be an opportunity to address any questions concerning SG methodology

## Annex1-a: TOR for Video Committee

### Terms of Reference

## Village Financial Platform Video Committee (version 1.0)

### Background

INVC/FtF has launched a pilot project to support Village Financial Platforms (VFP) in Mchinji District. VFPs are Savings Groups that are sufficiently strong and durable to be used as platforms for receiving messages about agriculture and nutrition. VFPs in most cases are existing graduated Savings Groups, that is, groups which have had one year of training, have completed their first annual distribution of funds, and generally follow good practices.

VFPs are invited to participate with us, and after they have accepted, they are inventoried by Village Agents (VAs), that is, local volunteers who are already familiar with the groups, or by Field Officers (FOs), that is, paid staff of partner agencies. After the Inventory, the VA or FO conducts a diagnosis consisting of 13 observations or questions, and on the basis of the diagnosis, makes recommendations to the group to improve their functioning as appropriate. The diagnosis is recorded in a project data base, and we will track changes in the groups' performance over time.

This process is described in detail in the Manual for Village Financial Platforms, Version 1.1 – 18 June 2015, which is attached for reference.

After the diagnosis and recommendations, the group begins to view monthly FtF videos, short (3-4 minute) videos in Chichewa that deliver messages about the project's work in value chain development, agriculture, nutrition and gender. As a stopgap measure, groups have been viewing videos that were prepared for Savings Groups in Zambia, in the Nyanja language, which is essentially Chichewa. These videos concern Savings Group functioning, and while they are useful to the groups, they do not fulfil the intended purpose of using the VFPs as platforms for communicating INVC messages in an integrated fashion, supporting the Care groups and farmers clubs, and giving cross-cutting messages in gender. Purpose-designed INVC videos will be developed to do that, and facilitating the production of those videos is the purpose of the Video Committee.

### Role of Videos in the VFP component

The videos respond to three principles of adult education.

- Messages received through multiple channels have more impact. The videos will reinforce messages received through farmers clubs and Care groups.

- Messages received in a group have more impact than messages received individually. For instance, radio message effectiveness is increased by creating “listening clubs” in which members all listen to radio emissions at the same time. Having the members of a Village Financial Platform all get the same message opens up the door to discussion, reinforcement of desirable behaviours, and cross-learning.
- Visual information about new behaviours has a privileged place in learning; videos can model behaviours in a way that is better retained than simply hearing or reading about them.

To help understand how the videos are used, note these instructions in their use from the Village Financial Platform manual:

*When a new video is delivered to the Village Agent, she or he should systematically show it to all of their groups. The best time to show the video is at the end of a regular meeting.*

*You are not expected to provide the group with any additional information beyond what is contained in the video. However, it is appropriate to ask the group very general questions to encourage them to talk about the video. For instance, you could ask:*

- *“What did you see in the video?”*
- *“What was the video about?”*
- *“Were any parts of the video useful to you?”*
- *“Were there any surprises in the video?”*

*Asking questions like that will have two benefits: By thinking about the video, the members will remember it better; and, by talking about what they have seen, the members will learn from each other.*

Field experience has shown a high level of interest in watching videos, and comprehension of the messages; as expected, the members share pertinent observations about the videos with each other. (Tests were conducted with Nyanja language Savings Group videos developed in Zambia, which are easily comprehensible to Chichewa speakers in Malawi).

#### Developing FtF Videos

INVC/FtF has contracted with IMAGEWORKS, a Blantyre-based media production firm, to develop three Chichewa language videos, each of three to four minutes duration, carrying messages supporting the project’s work in value chain development, agriculture, nutrition and gender. The contract with IMAGEWORKS is attached for reference.

For the contractor to do their job well, FtF/INVC must provide the contractor with themes and talking points for future videos. This is the role of the Video Committee.

#### Need for and role of a Video Committee

While the Malawian video production firm will produce videos, they will need the project's guidance to identify the messages to be contained in the videos, and FtF will have to give final approval concerning the quality and appropriateness of the videos for the intended beneficiaries.

Therefore it is proposed that INVC/FtF create a Video Committee composed of representatives of the Value Chain, Agriculture, Nutrition and Gender components, or any combination of staff that FtF management judges appropriate. The VFP consultant has experience in this area and proposes himself as a virtual member of the committee.

The tasks of the committee will be:

- Have an initial meeting to choose the themes of the first three videos, and communicate them to IMAGEWORKS.
- Receive, review and comment on English language draft scripts and shooting instructions from IMAGEWORKS.
- Once English draft is approved, receive Chichewa script. Review, comment and sign off.
- Approve final version and authorize final payment.

Guidance to the Video Committee

1. Videos can supplement and support trainers, but cannot replace them. The videos will contain messages only, and not training. "Messages" are distinguished from "training" on the basis of their specificity, as the following table shows:

Message	Training
Plant spacing is important.	Specific recommended spacing for different crops.
Lactating women need to eat well so baby will be strong.	Lactating women need animal foods, legumes, fruits and vegetables especially those rich in Vitamin A and iron while breastfeeding.
Sell some save some.	Specific advice on which crops are suitable both for marketing and for consumption, how to access markets, how to preserve crops.

Messages are easily grasped, and do not need to be delivered by someone with technical training. They stimulate interest among recipients, and increase the subsequent receptivity to training.

Explicit and Implicit Messages: "Explicit" messages are those that are presented clearly, directly and unambiguously. "Implicit" messages are delivered indirectly, sometimes through incidental images, and not directly expressed.

Videos should contain both explicit and implicit messages. We should assume that every image and every word choice is an implicit messages.

Please see the following table for an example of each.

Explicit Message	Implicit Message
<p>A narrator says, “Men should appreciate and value the work that their wives do in the field.”</p>	

2. Also, it is important not to overload the videos with too much information. As a general rule, a video should have one explicit message only. It can, however, contain multiple implicit messages (that is, messages which are not stated explicitly, but which are shown or hinted at). For instance, an “implicit” message might show desirable gender roles of men, without talking about them. Field tests done in March 2015 showed that Savings Group members were quick to pick up implicit messages, and showing without saying may be a more effective way of communicating, than saying without showing.
3. Realize that the videos will be viewed by tens of thousands of people, so pay attention to all aspects of the production, and be particularly attentive to the inadvertent inclusion of the wrong messages. For instance, a background shot of a bad nutrition or bad agricultural practice is likely to be noticed and viewers might mistake it for a recommendation.
4. Messages should not be labelled, or even conceptualized, as “agriculture” or “nutrition” or “gender”. In fact, these message videos are an excellent opportunity to integrate different parts of the program.

**Appendix 2: List of Persons and Organizations Participating in INVC organized Buyer's Tours 2015**

	Organization	Name	Title	Address	Email	Telephone
1	Estrell Trading	Cecilia Rice	Manger/owner	P.O. Box E190, Blantyre	estrelltrading@gmail.com	0884136262 0111983867
2	Afrinut Ltd	Lisbon Qoma	Factory Manager		Lisbon@afrinut.com	0881246540
3	ACE	William Kawenda	Program Manager	.		
4	Valid Nutrition	Juvesio Chitsonga	Quality Manager	P.O. Box 202, Lilongwe	juvesiochitsonga@validnutrition.org	0111205355 0111926174
5	M'mgomera Seed Co	Bridget Jalasi	Manager	P.O. Box 31676, Lilongwe 3	bridgetjalasi@gmail.com	01794627 0999745407
6	Poultry Industry Association	Eric Chuma	Technical Advisor	P.O. Box 1947 Lilongwe	<u>Piam.malawi@gmail.com</u>	01759157 01751349
7	Nkhaza Trading	Dorothy Fungulni	Manager			0993113079
8	Sunseed Oil Ltdi	Yamikani Jassi	Projects Manager	P.O. Box 748, Lilongwe	Yamie.sunseedgmail.com	0999116720 01727594
9	Rumark	McPhery Masangano			mmasangano@rumark.org	0882738077
10	K I Transporter	Edwin Khumbanyiwa	Manager		khumanyiwa@yahoo.com	01761212 0882090678 0993925964
11	Kasalu Traders	Devison Nyambe	Manager		kansalut@gmail.com	0999301339
12	Charles Stewart	Tuzija Kalua		P.O. Box 30040, Lilongwe 3	Lilongwe@stewart.mw	0999008037
13	Evelyn Seed Grower	Evelyn Itimu	Manager	P.O. Box 3394, Lilongwe	evelynitimu@yahoo.co.uk	0999031819 0882814240
14	Exagris Ltd	Lex Tchongwe	Outgrower Manager	P.O. Box 3291, Lilongwe	lchikopa@exagrisafrica.com	0995278888
15	Farmers' Union	Rudolf Binga	Manager		rbinga@farmersunion.mw	
16	NASCOMEX	Moir Nyirenda				
17	WASSA					
18	SAIOMA	B. Boko				
	PIAM Members Represented					
19	Central Poultry					0999821059
20	Proto feeds					0999950605
21	Transglobe					0888842934
22	Lenzie Mills					0999962111
23	Hua Feng					0888809500
24	Ndatani Feeds					0999304534
25	Granite Feeds					0999729352
26	Graintech					0888203932
27	Press Corporation					0881096649
28	Agri Feeds					0999954607
29	Glenea Poultry					0999666788
30	Dhall Chicken					0993222333
30	Crown Agro					0888842497
31	Solvex Africa					08882164870 992338265
32	Kamponji					
33	Speedys					0888183763

**Appendix 3: NASFMA quantity of soybean bought by IPCs Disaggregated by Association**

IPC	Association	Volume (MT)	IPC	Association	Volume (MT)
Ntcheu	Njolomole	30.4	Mchinji	Chiosya 58.3	
	Nsipe	31.5		Mikundi	85.4
	Bilila	6.7		Msitu	32.5
	Manjawira	12.9		Mlonyeni	26
	Kandeu	18.7		Kalulu	15.1
	Kasinje	13.9		Mkanda	53
	Tsangano	6		Masfa	9.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>280</b>
-----					
LL North	Chiwamba	52.3	LL South	Mlodzenzi	20
	Chigonthi	33.9		Mpenu	81
	Ukwe	27.8		Nyanja	15
	Kasiya/ Mpingu 13	42.9		Malingunde	20
	<b>Total</b>	<b>172</b>		Mlomba	31
				<b>Total</b>	<b>166</b>
-----					
Balaka	Bazale	4	Namwera	Katuli	57
	Ulongwe	1.8		Ntiya	74
	Utale	0.5		Lungwena	1
	Mpilisi	0.9		Masuku	32
	Riviri	3.3		Nyambi	40
	Phalula	0.2		Maiwa	24
	Machinga	26.9		Chikwewo	23.3
	Chilipa	10.3		<b>Total</b>	<b>224.5</b>
	Nankumba	28.3			
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>				

Source: NASFAM FY 2015 Quarter 3 Report

#### Appendix 4:



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**Job Title: Mass media elements to promote growing of soy beans and groundnuts among farmers.**

**Problem being addressed:**

- Harvesting management

#### PSA 1

##### Objective

- To raise awareness as well as promote crop harvesting at the right time
- To promote proper harvest of ground nuts and soy

**Summary: A farming couple debates whether their crop is ready for harvesting. One of them think the crop is ready just because the crop is shedding off leaves. They wife says shedding off leaves does not mean it is ready for harvesting. They must calculate and ensure that the crop has reached the numbers of days for its maturity.**

**Format: Public Service Announcement**

FX:

Voice over: Kodi mwayamba kukonzekera zokola mbeu zanu za mtendza ndi soya?

**FX: Village outdoor ambience up, hold low under below.**

Male: Kodi Naphi, kunjatu kwacha uku tikakolore mtedza ndi soya wathu uja....

Female: Bambo a Joni mbeu zakhwima kale zimene zija? Kupupuluma bwanji kodi?

Male: Ndinakaonatu zayamba kugwetsa masamba kusonyeze kuti za cha!

Female: Kodi kugwetsa masamba ndiyekuti mbeu za khwima, n'chifukwa chaketu timaluza timakolola mbeu zisanakhwimitsitse

Voice two: Musathamangire kukolola mbeu zanu za mtedza ndi soya chifukwa chakuti zikutaya masamba. Kololani mbeu malingana ndi masiku omwe apita kuchokera pomwe munadzala mbeu zanuazo. Dziwani tsiku lomwe munadzala mbeu zanu kuti mudzakolole nthawi yoyenera pamene mbeu zanu zakhwimitsitsa.

**Uthengau akukupatsirani ndi a Feed the Future Malawi: Integrating Nutrition in Value Chains project ndi chithandizo chochokera ku USAID.**

## PSA 2: Collective marketing

### Objective

- To encourage farmers to plan when and where to sale their crop in order to fetch higher prices
- To caution farmers against selling their crop in small chunks to vendors who buys at very low prices.

**Summary:** A farming couple debates whether they must sale part of their crop to vendors who are roaming around the village. The wife cautions about selling the crop at a low prices and requests that they observe the market and sale to vendors or any market that offers the highest price.

**FX:** Village ambience up, hold low under voices below.

**Voice (shouting):** Tikugula soya mtedza ndi mbeu zina pa mtengo wabwino!.....taika sikelo yathu pansi pa ntengo wa kachere ku nseuko! Bwerani nonse tidzakugulani pa mtengo wabwino!

**Man (yawning):** Naphi! Wamva, m'mera mpoyamba bwanji titengeko mbeu pang'ono tikagulitse tipeze ya mchere

**Woman:** Phiri, awatu ndi mavenda aja amatilemerera aja chifukwa amagula mbeu zathu motchipa komanso masikelo awo amakhala okaikitsa...

**Man:** Watero Naphi?

**Woman:** Mwina tiafunse kaye, ngati akugula pa mtengo okwera kuposa onse komanso sikelo yawo siyachinyengo titha kuwagulitsa apo biii!

**Man:** Ngati akufuna kugula motsika komanso sikelo yawo ndi yachinyengo osayerekeza kuwagulitsa!

**Voice Over:** Alimi, musatengeke ndi kugulitsa mbeu zanu motsanula kwa ma vendor! Gulitsani mbeu zanu pa gulu kuti mupeze phindu lokwanira. Kulimatu ndi ntchito yolemetsa mukagulitsa mbeu zanu mwachisawawa simudzapeza phindu loyenerera! A ACE ndi NASFAM ali ndi ma warehouse komwe mungagulitseko mbeu zanu ndikupeza phindu lankhaninkhnai!

**Uthengau akukupatsirani ndi a Feed the Future Malawi: Integrating Nutrition in Value Chains project ndi chithandizo chochokera ku USAID.**

## Appendix 5: Jingle 1: Marketing

Objective:

- To promote the concept of collective marketing among farmers and its benefits
- To encourage farmers to start planning about where and when they must sale their crop in order to earn more
- To raise awareness regarding effects of high supply of crops on the price and the need to sale collectively on agreed prices

**Summary:** Farmers are being reminded that harvest time is near and they must start planning where, when and at what price they will sale their crop. They are also encouraged to work together on pricing and where to sale because there is strength in unity. They must guard against selling in small chunks to vendors who offer very low buying prices while also minding that crop prices drop when the supply is high.

Nthawi yokolola; nthawi yogulitsa mbeu yafika  
 Kodi mwasankha komwe mukagulitse soya wanu?  
 Kodi mwadziwa za mtengo omwe mukagulitsire mtedza wanu?  
 Chimvano cha mavu choning'ga pa mimba  
 Konzekeranitu, gwirizanani chimodzi

*Musapupulume abale; Dekhani khalani tcheru;  
 Fufuzani yemwe akugula pa mtengo wabwino  
 Misika ya soya ndi mtedza ndi yambiri  
 Funsani komwe mungagulitse mbeu zanu kuti mupeze phindu  
 Musalore wina kuti akaphe makwacha; inu nkukhala okhettsa thukuta*

Zikachulukuka mbeu mtengo umatsika  
 Musapupulume abale; dekhani kuti dekhu  
 Nthawi idzafika yomwe mudzagulitse pa mtengo wabwino  
 Mtengo oyenerera wolingana ndi ntchito yomwe munagula  
 Zoono wina adzilemera okhetsa thukuta alai wina?

*Musapupulume abale; imvani izi  
 Gwirizanani mtengo umodzi, muumodzi muli mphamvu  
 Funsani mtengo omwe mbeu zikugulidwira  
 Zikavuta, kuli ware house lisiti funsani alangizi anu akuuzeni  
 Ware house lisiti ikuthandizani kugulitsa mbeu zanu pa mtengo wabwino*

**Uthengau akukupatsirani ndi a Feed the Future Malawi: Integrating Nutrition in Value Chains project ndi chithandizo chochokera ku USAID.**

## Jingle 2: Aflatoxins

### Objectives

- To raise awareness about effects of aflatoxins on marketing of crops
- To raise awareness among farmers on how to dry soy and groundnuts to prevent aflatoxins
- To raise awareness of the available markets for soy and groundnuts.

Summary: The farmer is being reminded of aflatoxins and how they impact on the marketing of their crops. The farmer is also being informed of the best process of drying their crop in order to avoid aflatoxins while also informing that as long as their crop is not affected by aflatoxins, there are so many markets for soy and groundnuts locally and internationally

Samalani mtedza wanu; samalani soya wanu  
 Pewani chuku; chuku chimaononga mbeu zanu  
 Chuku chimaonongetsa misika ya mbeu zanu; ogula amathawa  
 Chuku sichabiwino chimayambitsanso matenda

*Usiyeni mtedza ndi soya ziime bwinobwino kuti mupewe chuku  
 Sungani malo ouma bwino, Sungani m'makoko  
 Musathire madzi kuti zilemere pokagulitsa  
 Madzi mukuthirawo amayambitsa chuku  
 Mukatero mupha nsika wa mawa*

Misika ya soya ndi mtedza ndi yambiri; konkuno komanso kunja kwadziko lino  
 Kuti mbeu zathu zigulidwe, zikhale zopanda chuku  
 Mukathira madzi mbeu zanu mwaononga msika wa mawa  
 Madzi mwathirawo amayambitsa chuku

*Back to chorus*

**Uthengau akukupatsirani ndi a Feed the Future Malawi: Integrating Nutrition in Value Chains project ndi chithandizo chochokera ku USAID.**

**Note for Theatre for Development Performances:**

- Community drama groups and the Pakachere travelling theatre will work together to use the summaries and develop story lines to communicate the same messages
- Each performance must ensure that it must address the current practices and show farmers the recommended practices and its benefits.
- It will also be important to identify role model farmers who during the participatory performances, they must join the performance and explain how they have benefited by following the recommended practices.
- Pakachere travelling theatre will work with the community drama groups to ensure effectiveness of the storyline and messages being communicated.

## Appendix 6: SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOR CHANGE COMMUNICATION (SBCC) MEETING TO DEVELOP RADIO PROGRAM CONCEPTS ON LEGUMES: GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY DRAMA PERFORMANCES

#	Issue/Problem to address	Objective	Key message (s)	Time frame/ Message Seasonality
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is happening now among farmers that can affect production of legumes?</li> <li>What are marketing related issues farmers do/do not do that can affect their income?</li> </ul>	What should be done?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What should they know?</li> <li>What should they stop doing?</li> <li>What should they continue doing?</li> <li>What specific attitudes, practices, perceptions, myths etc should be changed?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When should such messages be passed on to farmers through radio?</li> </ul>
1.	<p><b>Gap filling/supplying, banking and tier ridging</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planting of soy beans &amp; g/nuts is often left to children and women (perceptions of taking soy beans and g/nuts as inferior crops)</li> <li>Less attention paid to proper planting of these crops</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If experienced poor germination of groundnuts or soy beans, please re-plant (supply) while you are weeding now so that have bumper yield and income this season.</li> <li>Ngati mbeu zanu sizinamere bwino onetsetsani kuti mukupakiza pamene mukupalira</li> <li>Soy bean and g/nuts are equally fetching better prices on the market/generate more income</li> <li>Grow soy beans and g/nuts and take care of them for better prices and income</li> <li>This year tobacco has performed poorly, I will concentrate on taking care of my soy beans and ground nuts so that I earn more money</li> <li>Chaka chino fodya ndiye wandivuta/ Ndapala, sindiphulapo kanthu ndigolimbikira kusamala mtedza ndi soya wanga ndalimayu basi kuti ndiphe makwacha</li> <li>I will from now on be growing legumes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Mid Jan to 1<sup>st</sup> Wk. Feb</b></p> <p><b>From Mid Jan year around</b></p>

			<p>for assured market and income</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once you have experienced poor germination of soy beans and groundnuts, do not supply with any other crops.</li> <li>• Doubling up should be done with nandolo and g/nuts or nandolo &amp; soy beans</li> <li>• Supply should be done with the same crop and same variety to avoid/prevent competition and seed mixture</li> <li>• Re-plant/supply when you have noted that some seeds have failed to germinate</li> <li>• Re-plant/supply when you have noted that some seeds have failed to prevent diseases</li> <li>• Supply when there is high moisture content</li> </ul>	
2.	<p><b>Weeding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soy beans &amp; g/nuts taken as women's crops/ less care</li> </ul>			
	<p><b>Fertilizer application</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply fertilizer in soy beans at the time of planting</li> <li>• Palibe mbeu yosafuna fertilizer, apply fertilizers in soy beans, please note that all crops require fertilizer</li> <li>• Soy beans and groundnuts also require fertilizer, it is incorrect to believe that soy beans and groundnuts do not require fertilizer</li> </ul>	<p><b>From October</b></p>
3.	<p><b>Integrated pest management</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not rely on chemicals in soy beans and groundnuts fields</li> </ul>	<p><b>From Mid Jan-June</b></p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application of chemicals in soy bean and g/nuts fields is expensive and a killer</li> <li>• Practice improved agronomic practices e.g. crop rotation, early weeding, land preparation, using resistant varieties, early maturing, spacing</li> <li>• Zulani mbeu zomwe ziri ndi matenda/zadwala</li> <li>• M'munda mwanu</li> <li>• Iphani ndi manja/tolani tizilombo tonse tomwe tili ku mbeu zanu, osthira mankhwala</li> </ul>	
4.	<b>Harvesting management</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure you harvest at a right time, your crops are not damaged by termites,</li> <li>• Onetsetsani kuti mbewa sizikuononga mbeu zanu m'munda, mbeu sizikuthetheka zokha chifukwa chochedwetsa kukolola m'munda</li> <li>• Kololani potengera makisu omwe mudabzalira soy kapena mtedza wanu</li> <li>• Record the date/dates you have planted</li> <li>• Dropping off of leaves is always not a sign for maturity, harvest at a right time always to avoid losses</li> <li>• Kumbani mtedza wanu moyenera kuti musautemeteme komanso wina usatsalire m'nthaka</li> <li>• Yanikani mtedza moyang'anitsa kumwamba; osayanika pamalata, mangani Mandela Cork, thotholani ndi kuyanika mtedza wanu pa chithandala</li> </ul>	<b>March-May 2014</b>

5.	<b>Post-harvest handling</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Drying</b></li> <li>• <b>Shelling/threshing</b></li> <li>• <b>Grading</b></li> </ul>		Keep groundnuts in shell <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thresh soy beans immediately after harvesting/maturity</li> <li>• Avoid applying/adding water to groundnuts when shelling</li> <li>• Remove anything which is rotten to avoid cross-contamination</li> <li>• Remove broken ones/ shriveled groundnuts</li> <li>• Avoid use of heavy shelling/threshing tools to minimize brokages in soy beans</li> <li>• Avoid use of heavy tools/equipment that could have high breaking percentage of soy beans/ ground nuts</li> <li>• Sankhani mbeu yanu bwino kuti mupeze mitengo yabwino ku msika</li> </ul>	<b>March-June</b>  <i>(For groundnuts should be beyond June for longer)</i>
6.	<b>Storage</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep produce in dry storage, raised from the ground, well ventilated</li> <li>• Keep your produce in ACE certified WRS, which have: equipment to ensure quality, trained personnel, and insured</li> </ul>	<b>May-Sept</b>
7.	<b>Collective marketing</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits for collective marketing through warehouse receipt system (WRS) is that:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is done through safe and secure registered WRS and security of commodities is granteed</li> <li>• There is reduced transport cost since transport is collectively done</li> <li>• Commodities are offered/sold at competitive/higher /better prices</li> <li>• There is better bargaining power and depositors/farmers get better prices</li> <li>• There is reduced transport costs; and reduced exploitation by vendors</li> </ul> </li> <li>• After aggregation, quality of the produce is checked together, and it becomes a simple process and ensures checks and balances for better quality and higher prices for farmers</li> </ul>	<b>From Feb-all year round</b>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides the depositors/farmers with finance/money against the produce deposited in the WRS (even before the produce is actually sold)</li> <li>• Currently most farmers are unwilling to collectively market their produce (use WRS) and this leads to low volumes and limited opportunities for high prices on the market, leading to low returns/low income among farmers as they sell individually</li> <li>• No contract farming registration in Malawi, farmers not protected</li> <li>• There is no policy direction/limited policy reinforcement on selling and buying of groundnuts/soy beans in Malawi</li> <li>• Soy beans and groundnuts not sold according to grades as was case previously</li> <li>• There are losses for both a farmer and vendor when groundnuts or soy beans are not sold under WRS</li> <li>• Mentality among farmer to have readily cash by selling their produce to vendors</li> <li>• Mentality among farmer to have readily cash by selling their produce to vendors as they take WRS as a lengthy and slow process of having their cash/returns</li> <li>• Limbikitsani azanu kuti mugulitse mbeu zanu pamodzi</li> </ul>	
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8.	<b>Aflatoxin in Groundnuts</b>		<p>Chuku cha mumtedza ndi choopysa chifukwa:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chimayambitsa matenda a kansa wa chiwindi</li> <li>• Chimachepetsa chitetezo chamthupi</li> </ul> <p>Mtedza wa chuku umasowa msika</p> <p>Mtedza wa chuku siudyedwa chifukwa umawawa</p> <p>Mtedza wa chuku suyenera kupangidwa zakudya za ziweto chifukwa mkaka ndi mazira zipachepa</p>	<b>All the years round</b>
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**Appendix 7:**

To: The Files  
 From: Jim Phillips M&E Manager INVC  
 Date: May 15, 2015  
 Subject: Lessons Learned from GIS and digital data pilot in Malingunde and Mlomba EPAs

The purpose of this memo is to document lessons learned in order to better refine the framework for data capture and reporting for INVC moving forward now that we have wrapped up the pilot in Malingunde and Mlomba EPAs.

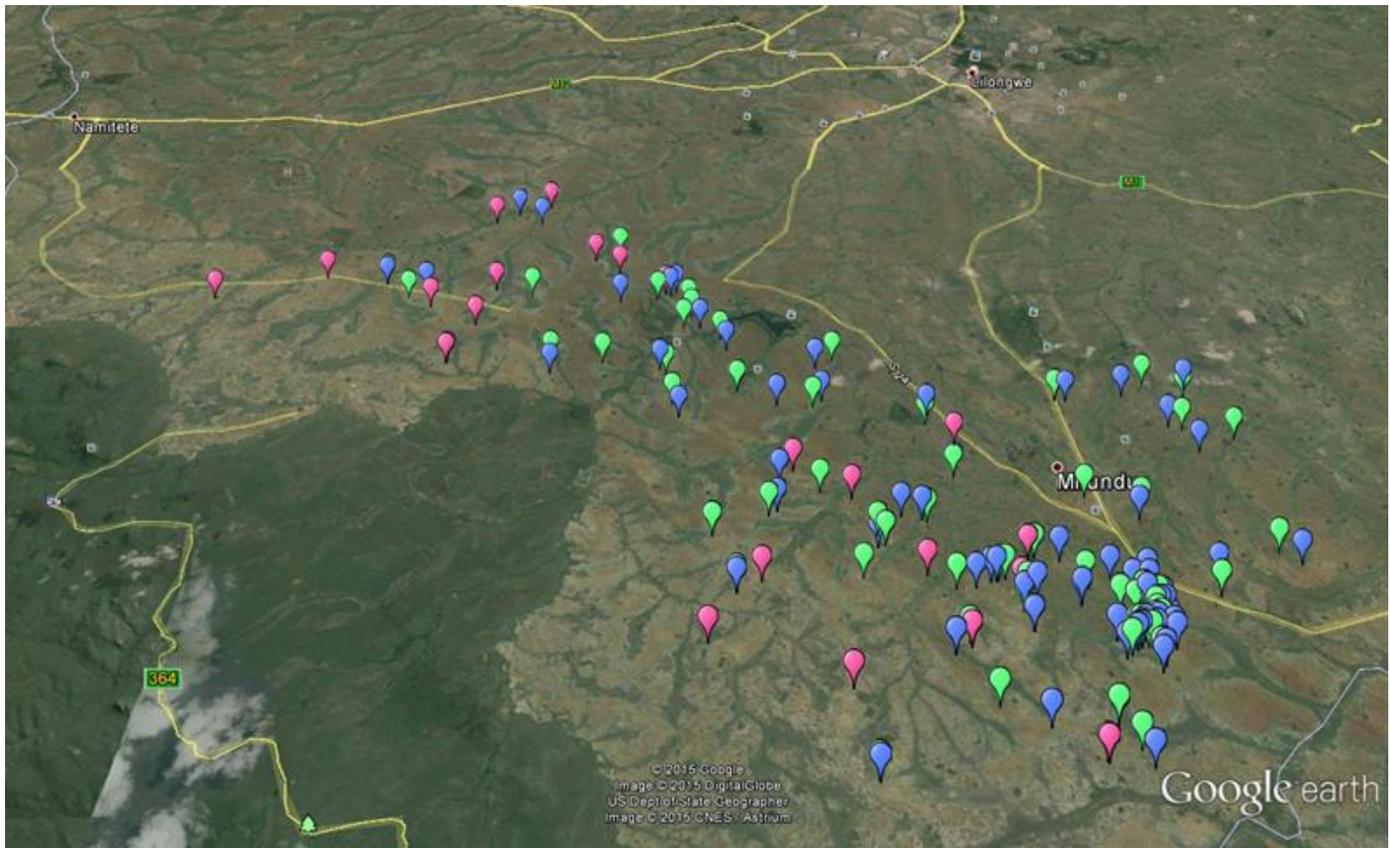
With the assistance of Agronomy Technology Limited (ATL) INVC conducted this pilot with five AFOs from NASFAM in these two EPAs. A list of 130 lead farmers was pulled from the current INVC spreadsheet databased and each of these lead farmers were assigned to an AFO. They were also given a unique ID and Q/R code which could be scanned utilizing the Samsung devices.

A total of 8 devices were purchased and a questionnaire was developed to gather the following information on each lead farmer:

- Name of AFO or field staff, district and the partner (FUM, NASFAM, CADECOM, Nkhoma or INVC)
- Name and GPS coordinates for Nutrition promoter
  - GPS coordinates for Crop aggregation centers also capacity of storage space plus name and distance to nearest Trading Center (TC)
- GPS of Lead farmer house (also the GAC meeting place)
  - Number and list of training's attended, number and list of training's given, establishment of a demo plot (yes/no), GPS and size of demo plot
  - number of farmers and clusters served, lead farmer unique id
  - number of clubs served and the number of assistant lead farmers

A database was developed to capture this information and a questionnaire was refined utilizing a modified version of ODK and put on the handheld devices. After an introductory meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> of March the IPC Coordinator along with five AFOs and selected INVC M&E staff were trained on the use of the handheld devices on March 31<sup>st</sup>. The AFOs were given their list of farmers and told to go and start to gather their data.

Below is a map showing the waypoints of the primary data gathered during this pilot. Waypoints were located for 28 aggregation centers, 73 lead farmers located and 69 demo plots. Each lead farmer attended an average of 3 trainings and gave an average of 2.7 trainings. Lead farmers were providing services for an average of 12.2 clubs.



Blue pins = lead farmers, green pins = demo plots, red pins = aggregation centers

During this pilot exercise there were many lessons learned which are listed as follows:

1. The current NASFAM database is still out of date and needs further validation. Many of the lead farmers were no longer with the program so data was gathered on 73 farmers out of the original list of 130.
2. Because of the poor data quality the use of QR codes is not recommended as it will be costly to issue cards with QR codes to every lead farmer and the AFOs are not equipped with devices to scan them. It was thought that this approach would cut down the paper

requirements but if AFOs do not have devices to scan them during discreet training events then it will become a management problem.

3. It is important to include the location of certified warehouses and not just aggregation centers. These will be added to the list of items to gather waypoints on.
4. Aggregation centers will change from year to year. It was estimated that there is about a 30% turnover of these locations. However they usually are relocated in the same general vicinity.
5. Farmer demo plots were very small and having GPS coordinates for them is not useful unless yields were to be calculated from them. Instead enumerators will confirm whether or not farmers have them via visual confirmation.
6. Putting trainings on drop down lists is important and will speed up the survey process. It will also allow us to know on what subjects farmers have been trained.
7. Lead farmers do turnover so we will consider locating the meeting place of the GAC which will help us to better keep our data current.
8. Lead farmers are not cascading all of the training that they are given but the 2.7 trainings given for every 3 trainings attended is fairly close. We will have to work to improve this.
9. Farmers serve an average of 12.2 clubs. During the roll out of the GIS system we will determine if every club is served by an assistant lead farmer as this type of cascading is very important. As is 12.2 clubs is higher than the recommended number of 5 clubs per lead farmer.

## Appendix 8: Grants Management

### INTRODUCTION

This quarter, funds amounting to US\$ 393,624 were distributed to eight grantees. Grantee expenses amounting to US\$ 312,996 were cleared during the same period. Cumulative grantee advances cleared by FtF-INVC are now 79% of total funds disbursed to grantees.

Nine grant modifications were formalized during this quarter. The bulk of these modifications were to budget for grant activities covering the period 1 May to 30 September, 2015. The MMPA grant was closed during this quarter. Work has begun to close out the IITA and CISANET grants. These grants should be closed in August 2015.

Grantees have improved, in the main, in expense document presentation. However preparation of time sheets continues to trouble some of them, including NASFAM and FUM. Nkhoma Hospital is a welcome exception, in this regard.

USAID has provided guidance to FUM and NASFAM regarding the scope of work for audit of financial years where they received more than US\$ 300,000 in funding, in a particular financial year. Their guidance encompasses other USAID projects undertaken by those grantees, as well.

FtF-INVC engaged in 15 grants-related meetings with 33 grantee staff, during this quarter. Out of the 33 grantee staff, 8 were females. Some of the issues under discussion during such meetings were: budgets, salaries, cost share reports, liquidations, scope of work for audit and grant closure.

### USAID CONCURRENCE

The table below shows the cumulative progress to date in FTF-INVC grant review, USAID concurrence and signature.

**Table: Cumulative progress in USAID concurrence and signature**

Components	Concept Notes	Proposals	Total Received	Grants concurred by USAID to date	Grants signed to date including current quarter
Advancing value chain competitiveness	13	6	19	2	2
Improving productivity	6	7	13	4	4
Improving community capacity to prevent under –nutrition	2	2	4	2	2
Investing in innovation	0	2	2	1	1
Developing local capacity	4	1	5	1	1
<b>Grant Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>

### Summary of Grants signed

Grantee	Grant modifications signed this quarter (US\$)	Total Signed Grants Value (US\$)
ACE		867,882
NASFAM		3,072,693
MMPA		336,088
IITA		591,610
FUM		850,798
CADECOM		633,003
PAKACHERE		331,149
NKHOMA		643,279
MIM		77,480
CISANET		166,786
<b>TOTAL</b>	-	<b>7,570,768</b>

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### MANAGEMENT OF POST-GRANT AWARD ACTIVITIES

#### Grant Modifications

During this quarter, 9 grant modifications were prepared for 7 grantees; 6 of these modifications were prepared for 6 grantees for the period 1 May to 30 September, 2015. Grant modifications were also prepared for 2 of the above 6 grantees extending the 60 day period no cost extension to May 2015. Furthermore, CISANET's grant was extended upto 15 May which was the closing date of their grant.

#### Grant Closeouts

The MMPA grant was closed on 13 April 2015. Reconciliations are in process to close the IITA and CISANET grants. The Grants Manager held a meeting with the Finance Manager of CISANET and a deadline of 31 July 2015 has been set to finalise the grant expenditure reconciliation process.

Grant expenditure reconciliations are also on-going between IITA and INVC. Much progress has been made since receipt of IITA's October-December, 2014 expense report in April 2015. It is hope that both parties can reconcile their expenditure by 31 July 2015, at the latest.

We have also received a letter from MIM, formally advising us to seek a different method of accessing their services. The grant will therefore be formally closed.

### Analysis of the submission of expense reports

Grantee	Expense reports submitted and reconciled this quarter (US\$)	Expense reports submitted and reconciled (US\$) – Cumulative to date
ACE	91,083	775,829
NASFAM	122,438	1,593,402
MMPA	-	307,441
IITA	30,297	141,055
FUM	25,015	614,538
CADECOM	29,316	446,763
PAKACHERE	-	210,506
NKHOMA	1,329	408,119
MIM	-	54,926
CISANET	13,518	94,005
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>312,996</b>	<b>4,646,584</b>

Grantees submitted their expense reports between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> day of the next month. They now have a better understanding of what attributes they need to possess, to qualify for direct receipt of USAID grants. US\$ 312,996 in expenses were ‘cleared’ by DAI, after we were satisfied that documents submitted were compliant with DAI and USAID requirements.

The Grants Manager was requested by the Chief of Party on 13 April 2015 to be responsible for expenditure documentation compliance. Hitherto, this task was done, principally, by the Finance and Administration Director.

DAI Washington has requested the project to reconstruct the grantees’ accounts as their expenditure has not been set off properly against the advances that financed such expenditure. What was done prior to DAI Washington’s request, was done according to guidance given to the Finance and Administration Director and Grants Manager, by the previous Chief of Party. The reconstruction process began in May 2015 but has not gone forward with any reasonable momentum due to the need to maintain monthly expenditure report checking. The reality that Grants Accountant Paul Phiri will not be with the project also contributed in that James Gondwe has had to assist the new Grants Accountant, Austin Chikoti, to settle down while assisting him on grantee queries. This has not helped James Gondwe settle down to a routine in the reconstruction exercise. However it is expected that this process will make progress during July 2015.

The INVC Grants Accountants now meet once a week with the Grants Manager. During this meeting, grants issues are discussed, while also discussing what was achieved the previous week and plans for the coming week. During the quarter Mr Paul Phiri, one of the Grants Accountants, left the project. Speedy action by the Human Resources department saw to it that a replacement Grants Accountant was ready to begin the day after Paul left. The new Grants Accountant is Mr. Austin Chikoti. The project decided not to recruit a Senior Grants Accountant.

Some grantees still struggle to complete their timesheets properly. This is because the majority of them are not used to filling up their timesheets to be able to receive their monthly pay. The grantee that has minimal queries with their time sheets is Nkhoma CCAP Hospital!

The expense report format has been reviewed. A new form has been introduced where the advance amount is stated. From now on all expense reports will be controlled by the advance amount and its liquidation. This new format was included in all grant modifications covering the period 1 May to 30 September, 2015.

### Grant Audits

INVC has requested 4 grantees, namely NASFAM (2013,2014), FUM (2014), ACE (2014) and CADECOM (2014) to have their grants audited as they have received more than US\$ 300,000 in funding in their respective financial year. A draft Scope of Work (SOW) was submitted by the Chief of Party to USAID. However USAID has engaged the grantees directly themselves and drafted suitable SOWs for them. At the time of writing it is not certain if CADECOM has received such guidance from USAID.

### Workplans and budgets

Grantees were informed in March 2015 of the need to prepare and submit workplans and budgets for the period 1 May to 30 September, 2015. They were also reminded by email mid-April 2015 of the same. However none of the grantees submitted their workplans till mid May 2015. NASFAM submitted theirs in early June 2015. Thereafter, negotiations took place between INVC and ACE, NASFAM and FUM regarding their respective workplans and budgets. One of the meetings with NASFAM was particularly intensive as NASFAM did not appreciate INVC's opinions on poor data submission by their field staff and INVC's suggestion that the project was approximately 10% of NASFAM's portfolio. NASFAM's initial request was for a budget of US\$ 1.2 m for 5 months; after negotiations with NASFAM this was reduced to US\$ 524,000.

This resulted in grant modifications being signed in June and July 2015.

### Per Diem payments

At a Financial Management training seminar held by USAID recently, the per diem policy followed by INVC seemed contrary to what USAID recommended. Clarification has been sought from USAID regarding this.

### Non-expendable property returns

Grantees were sent the requisite form in March 2015 to fill and return on 10 April 2015. So far only 2 grantees, ACE and Pakachere have complied.

### Submission of Financial Reports

Most grantees submit accurate Financial Reports every quarter end.

Grantees also submit Financial Reports when they submit a funding request.

## Grantee Funds Requests

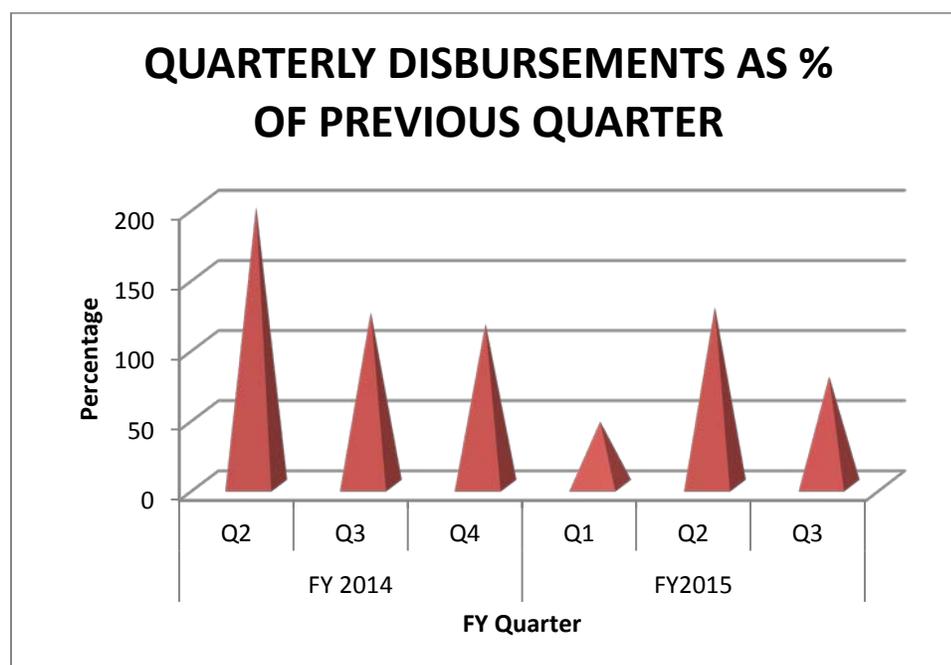
The following grantees submitted funds requests and were paid during the quarter. A summary of such payments is shown in the table below:

Summary of funds disbursed and advances cleared

Grantee	Funds disbursed by DAI this quarter (US\$)	Funds disbursed by DAI (US\$) – Cumulative to date	Cleared Advances (US\$)	Cleared Advances as a% of Funds Disbursed
ACE	162,162	809,866	711,116	88
NASFAM	48,784	1,725,581	1,360,506	79
MMPA	8,794	307,441	307,441	100
IITA	13,665	135,376	121,711	90
FUM	12,665	703,113	574,960	82
CADECOM	5,009	510,485	416,188	82
PAKACHERE	-	339,281	207,140	61
NKHOMA	112,846	472,560	276,843	59
MIM	-	54,926	54,926	100
CISANET	29,699	128,397	88,503	69
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>393,624</b>	<b>5,187,026</b>	<b>4,119,334</b>	<b>79</b>

Funds disbursed to grantees this quarter represented 78% of the amount distributed last quarter. The main reason for this is that grantees were slow to liquidate their previous advances, particularly those advanced during the 60 day period of 1 March to 30 April, 2015.

Shown below is a graph denoting the trend of grants disbursed during the quarter as a percentage of the previous quarter.



## Grantee Training on Grants/Finance/Reporting Issues

### Interaction with Grantees

During the quarter, 15 meetings were held with a total of 33 staff (25 male and 8 female) from grantee entities. The topics covered in such meetings and coaching sessions included issues pertaining to, among others, budgets, salaries, cost share reports, liquidations, scope of work for audit and grant closure.

The Grants Manager held the third Technical Working Group (TWG) meeting of Grants Accountants on 22 April 2015 at FtF-INVC offices. The mandate of this committee is to discuss and agree on better ways to document and account for grants related expenditure. The main talking point was the slow 'clearing' of grantee expenditure by the INVC secretariat. The Grants Manager explained that the main reason for this was the Grants Accountants' involvement in the initial phase of the reconstruction of the NASFAM grant account. That had reduced the time they applied to clearing grantees' expense reports.

The Grants Manager participated in a one day seminar for procurement training convened by Noble Moyo, INVC's Capacity Development expert, on 20 May 2015. The Grants Manager presented the topic of **Restricted Goods** and focused particularly on seed procurement.

### Grantee Engagement

While there were no grantee review meetings this quarter, the Grants Manager and Grants Accountants continue to proactively engage with grantee staff to clear their expense claims.

## CHALLENGES

- Grantees have, overall, made improvements in presenting their expense documentation. However some of them continue to exclude valuable information that will validate the expense. It is possible that we will review the date of submission of their monthly financial reports.
- Technical reports are sent far too late for us to present a credible quarterly report to USAID on time. Grantees are constantly reminded of this at meetings and with telephone calls.
- Despite regular training and reminders, some grantees really struggle to fill their time sheets properly. Nkhoma Hospital is a welcome exception.
- There is a suspicion that grantees do not always provide the envisaged time to the INVC project, despite budgeting for them. A close watch is being kept on this, both by technical and grants staff.

## PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR Q4

- Advancing grantees funds to carry out their activities planned for the period 1 May to 30 September, 2015.
- Reconstruction of NASFAM and other grantee accounts.
- Guide grantees in clearing their outstanding advances.
- Close out IITA and CISANET grants.
- Guide grantees in planning for FY 16, culminating in the availability of a workplan and budget for the period 1 October 2015 to 30 June 2016.