

AGRA Impact Series



Public Private Partnership bearing fruits for Farmers in Malawi under the AGRA-IFAD partnership

Farmers in Malawi are starting to reap the rewards of a new Public Private Partnership (PPP) involving private seed companies, Agro-dealers and the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development (MoAIWD) established under the AGRA and IFAD partnership.

Access to quality seed has been a huge challenge for majority of farmers in Malawi, greatly affecting productivity currently at 60% of the potential yield. To help alleviate the challenge, the Sustainable Agricultural Production Program (SAPP) an IFAD funded public initiative by the government of Malawi through ministry of Agriculture has been promoting community based seed production which has proven to be unsustainable and compromised quality of seed.

Farmer Seed Multiplication lacking capacity to properly handle seed ended up getting stuck with their produced seed eventually selling it as grain exasperating the challenge of limited access to quality seed. As a result of the insufficient availability of breeder seed, farmers continue to practice unproductive farming systems using

farmer-saved seeds which are of low quality and always give lower yield hence food insecurity.

However, the farmers can now afford a smile with AGRA-IFAD partnership which is fostering public private partnership in delivering quality seeds to farmers which will effectively minimize the farmers' seed access challenge. AGRA in partnership with IFAD is implementing a program to strengthen the capacity of community seed producers and linking them to emerging local private seed companies thus ultimately creating a sustainable legume seed system.

Through the partnership, AGRA is working with a National Research Institute, Chitedze Research, private seed company, MUSECO and IFAD supported SAPP project. Under the project SAPP target beneficiaries both weaned and current seed multiplication groups have been linked to MUSECO who provide basic seed, build their capacity and in return process the seed for distribution through agro-dealer network established by another partner, RUMARK.

The seed company is providing farmers with basic seed on loan, registering their farms with SSU and paying for inspection services on behalf of our farmers. Farmers who were weaned SAPP have a new lease of life in seed business. This far, farmers have received over 126MT of basic and pre-basic seeds of newly released varieties as well as varieties which were not adequately cultivated due to inadequate availability of early generation seeds valued at \$177,143.

Mr Rex Baluwa the National Programme Coordinator for SAPP, was upbeat about the new market opportunity for seed producers. 'This arrangement more sustainable since a private sector will be available to serve the farmers beyond the life of the SAPP project' explained Mr Baluwa. "When our cooperative was weaned

by SAPP project, we thought that would mark the end of our seed production business. However, with coming in of MUSECO things have changed for better. As a result of the partnership, we have increased the acreage of our seed fields by 25% from 120 Acres last year to 150 Acres this year" explained Yesani Manjawira, the president of Kasipa seed producers' cooperative in Mtosa EPA of Nkhoswe district.

With climate change impacts, farmers need better seeds. In the project a collaboration of Chitedze Research, MUSECO, RUMARK and SAPP is delivering just that. Chitedze Research multiplies breeder seed ensuring private companies have enough pre-basic to commercialize through agro-dealers who sell to farmers besides providing some extension.



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