

FANRPAN

Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network



Women Assessing Realigned Markets (WARM) Project

Strengthening the Capacity of Women Farmers' Influence on Agriculture Policy Development in Southern Africa

TRAINING REPORT

Advocacy Training Workshop, Lilongwe Malawi

20 - 23 September 2010

This report was prepared by the National Smallholder Farmers Association of Malawi an implementing partner in the Women Accessing Realigned Markets (WARM) Project.



**National Smallholder
Farmers Association of
Malawi**

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1. INTRODUCTION

Smallholder farmers' in Malawi are the biggest constituents in agricultural production totaling 80% of the farming community and farming 88% of arable land. Smallholder farmer production is mainly subsistence and accounts for more than 85% of agricultural production (USAID AMAP Microfinance Sector Assessment of Malawi).

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) notes that women in Sub- Sahara African countries constitute 70% of the agricultural workers, and they constitute 60 - 80% of the labor force that produces food for household consumption and sale. They are also responsible for 100% of the processing of basic foodstuffs; 80% of food storage and transport from field to village; 90% of the hoeing and weeding work; and 60% of the harvesting and marketing activities (FAO Women and Population Division, 2007). Sadly, the women who bear exceeding half the hard work of farming have limited participation in the market largely due to low productivity.

The agricultural production environment in Malawi is characterized by numerous challenges ranging from climatic to capacity constraints. Specifically, smallholder farmers face constraints of deforestation, soil erosion and subsequent reduction in soil fertility, which impacts on the potential production of food and cash crops. Due to the poor quality of soil in many areas, farmers are dependent on inputs to increase productivity, inputs such as high yielding seed varieties and fertilizer. However there is a lack of availability of such inputs, and certainly lack of affordability for the smallholder farmer. These challenges seem to be doubled for women farmers as they are at a disadvantaged position when it comes to accessing input and output markets.

Since the colonial era, development strategies and policies in Malawi have been heavily biased towards agricultural development, but the impact of these policies has been disappointing and more so on women farmers.

The Women Accessing Realigned Markets (WARM) project launched in September 2009 by the Food Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) seeks to strengthen women farmers' ability to advocate for appropriate agricultural policies and programmes. The goal is for women farmers to have access to the tools that help them farm more successfully, such as access to credit and better seeds, by ensuring that local and national policies and services address their needs.

FANRPAN in partnership with the National Smallholder Farmers Association of Malawi (NASFAM) and CropLife Africa Middle East conducted a three day policy advocacy training workshop from the 20th -23rd of September 2010 in Nathenje, Lilongwe South about 25kms from Lilongwe city.

2. TRAINING WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

The training was conducted to equip women farmers with participation skills in policy formulation and general agricultural decision making processes. The training workshop is a major activity under WARM Project Objective 2: To empower women farmers to play a more active role in driving the development agenda. It is expected that following the training, some of the expected outcomes of the training are (i) to have a cadre of women advocates mobilized; (ii) more women take leadership roles and are heard in relevant community decision-making organizations and fora, and (iii) policy makers aware of issues affecting women. The trained women farmers will also be expected to actively engage in Theatre for Policy Advocacy (TPA) initiative at community level. Specifically, the training workshop aimed at;

- To bring understanding of policy and its facets- advocacy, and policy formulation processes based on farmer perspectives
- To solicit policy issues in the depth of identification and description of the problem and extent of effect.
- To outline effective and possible community advocacy initiatives

The policy advocacy sessions of the training workshop were facilitated by Beatrice Makwenda, NASFAM Policy Coordinator and the WARM Project Coordinator for Malawi. Evelyn Lusenako from Crop Life, Middle East and Africa's Kenya office facilitated the sessions on responsible use of pesticides. Ms. Sithembile Ndema, WARM Programme Manager at FANRPAN also participated at the training workshop, she engaged with women farmers in an effort to better understand their challenges.

3. SELECTION OF TRAINEES

A total of 14 farmers (nine women farmers and five men farmers) from Kasungu and Lilongwe districts of Malawi including the Chair Lady and the Vice Chairman of the NASFAM board participated in the training workshop. Participants were selected because they were already leaders in their own right and had the potential to mobilize their fellow farmers and be champions of the WARM project (see annex 1). Participating farmers at the workshop were all members of NASFAM. The group was also joined by NASFAM field officer from the Lilongwe South office and Faith Phiri from Story Workshop.



Advocacy Training Workshop Participants

4. WORKSHOP METHODOLOGY

In order to ensure that participants acquired both theoretical and practical experiences in policy advocacy and especially in articulating policy issues the following methods were used:

- Lecturettes (Peer training)
- Discussions
- Case studies

A concise and simplified training guide was developed for the training workshop. From the onset of the training it was agreed that the training would be in English and Chichewa (the local language). This was done in order to put the participants at ease and to allow them to actively engage in the training in a language they were most comfortable with.

5. TRAINING WORKSHOP CONTENT

At the start of the workshop, the training centered on strengthening the participants' understanding of policy and differentiating policy issues from operational issues. This was then followed by policy advocacy tools and creation of advocacy messages and identifying the right audiences.

5.1. DAY ONE: INTRODUCTION TO POLICY

5.1.1. Policy and Advocacy

Prior to this session, an introduction of the WARM project was made. This was aimed at putting the entire training workshop in context. It was generally understood that, this was not just another training session but it was meant to develop a group of women farmers who will stand out and lead other farmers in their communities in advocating for better policies that accommodate women farmer needs.

In defining policy, the workshop zeroed in on the definition that describes policy as being a statement of intent or rather policy as a combination of all factors that communicates the intentions of government/ institutions, these may include statements, measures, laws, regulations and programs. The participants were asked to cite examples of policies they knew. Some of the cited policies included the Malawi Input Subsidy Programme (MISP), the Government Minimum Prices and the Green Belt Initiative. To try and simplify and give the participants a clear picture of what policy is, the following illustration was given;

“Policy is like an elephant...you can’t define it but you can tell it when you see it (Cunningham, 1968)”

Following a brief discussion on what the illustration meant and a number of examples of what policy is, the group understood the concept and cited more examples of policies that they knew. In addition to describing what policy is, the workshop discussed advocacy and the policy formulation process. Whilst theoretical definitions of these policy facets were made, the workshop centered more on practical scenarios.

5.1.2. Policy Issues identification and contextualization

Whilst it is a well known fact that women farmers face a myriad of challenges including access to input and output markets; extension services, it was still necessary to have the participants identify critical policy issues currently impeding their agricultural growth and progress. The process of issue identification was rigorous and mainly in focus group discussions.



Participants in group discussions to identify policy issues

This process went beyond a mere listing of challenges/issues, a rigorous analysis of the problems was done, the table below shows this analysis;

Issue 1: Lack of access to land			
Sub Issues	Consequences	Causes	Solutions
1. Lack of land ownership	- women farmers have mostly been reduced to labourers - investment plans on the land are limited - limited access to land ownership based assistances is limited – e.g. access to input vouchers	- Inherently cultural norms in marriage arrangement systems - Lack of protection under the current Estate act	Redressing the Land Bill and Estates Act
Issue 2: Limited access to farm inputs- certified seed/fertilizers			
1. High input prices	low input production results in low yields	low yields almost 60% below the potential yields	- policies that promote agro dealer operations - Revamping of the Malawi Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (ADMARC).
2. Sparse distribution of production input outlets	limited choices and highly priced inputs leading to low input usage		
Issue 3: Lack of access to markets			
Sub Issues	Consequences	Causes	Solutions

1. limited or no organized markets	- Farmers not making enough profits from sales- in kind payments valued less than cash - Farmers failing to graduate from loans	Middlemen buying produce from farmers in kind, using either farm inputs or food Intermediate buyers taking advantage of farmers cash and food shortage situation and buying their produce at very low prices with cash	- Develop an agricultural marketing policy
Issue 4: Lack of access to credit			
Sub Issues	Consequences	Causes	Solutions
1. limited capacity to venture into livestock production	• Little diversification between crops and animals	Lack collateral- no land title deeds	• Ensure land ownership • Waive collateral requirements on farmers
Issue 5: Lack of access to new technology			
1. limited or dwindling extension services	• Mixed and confusing agricultural production messages	• Lack of enough support for extension services • Limited human	• Increase funding for extension services • Train and recruit more field extension staff • Enhance the participation of lead farmers

		capacity • High farmer-field officer ratio	
2. Limited capacity for value addition	• Farmers perpetually at the bottom of the pyramid	• Lack of supporting infrastructure and technology • Lack of financing	• Supporting policy development • Private sector involvement and linkages to farmers
3. Impact of HIV/AIDS	• Reduced agricultural labor • Low production	•	• New ways of farming that is less labour intensive • Smallholder mechanized agriculture
Issue 6: Lack of supporting infrastructure			
Sub Issues	Consequences	Causes	Solutions
1. Poor road and bridge network in most 2. Lack of good water, electricity/power and storage facilities	• make transport costs high and most rural areas inaccessible to • make value-added processing difficult	• mis-prioritization of community development	• support holistic approach to agricultural development with linkages to other sectors.

All in all, day one of the training was a basic introduction to policy advocacy, with the main discussion centering on problem/challenge identification. The group was very engaged in the discussion and they gave practical examples and shared some of their experiences when supporting issues that they identified as problems/challenges. Having noted the challenges affecting productivity of women farmers and eventually challenges in market access, the thrust of the training workshop was delivered.



A listing of policy issues that were raised during the training

5.2. DAY TWO: POLICY ADVOCACY

Day two focused more on how to create advocacy messages; the discussion around policy advocacy was based on the challenges identified in day one's session. The day was kick started with the famous saying that "He who wears a shoe knows where it pinches". This is to say that the challenges that farmers face are best described by farmers and possible solutions to those challenges are best designed and implemented by farmers. The discussion therefore centered on how farmers can advocate for a change in their situation. To illustrate what advocacy is and is not, two participants were asked to recall a problem in their community and how they went about addressing it and this is what they had to say;

Farmer 1: “There was a problem of water shortage in the area and the community discussed this problem and identified a solution of reaching a Non Governmental Organization (NGO) involved in rural water supply. A delegation from the community approached the organization, presented the case and the NGO consulted the community with regards to areas where they would sink boreholes and this was done”

Farmer 2: “there was a land wrangle between two families, the other family just abandoned the land and ventured into vending”

The case of Farmer 2 above depicts the realities in farming communities where farmers just accept the status quo or accept the fact that they cannot influence any change. But this should not be the case, it was strongly discussed that where 80% of Malawi’s population derive their livelihood, a sector contributing almost 39% to national GDP cannot just be abandoned. Farmers especially women farmers should seek policy change in the challenges affecting them just like Farmer 1 narrated.

Day two also had a session on differentiating policy issues from operational issues. It was noted from the examples that were being shared in the discussions that there is a very thin line if at all between operational challenges and policy challenges. For instance, government has put in place a policy to boost productivity and increase farmer access to inputs but farmers still complain of limited access to vouchers, and limited distribution centers and these complaints are basically operational issues that are hindering the ultimate benefits from the policy.

5.2.1. The transformation of women farmers to advocates

Having recognized and prioritized the challenges that women farmers and farmers in general are facing, it was time to initiate the farmers to advocacy. For starters, the workshop reinforced the fact that change is possible and that farmers can bring the necessary change through sets of targeted actions in support of a cause or an issue, because one wants to build support for that cause or issue, influences others to support it; or try to influence or change legislation that affects it. Advocacy as understood in this workshop is undertaken for the following reasons;

- Sensitizing the public or decision-makers on a specific issue.
- Pushing for change in policy or work processes that negatively affect the farmers or beneficiaries.
- Provide a solution to a problem that affects the farmers / beneficiaries.

- Expose a problem that needs to be addressed by others.

Practically, the workshop focused on the identified issues and drew key advocacy messages from them as outlined in the table below;

ISSUE	KEY ADVOCACY MESSAGE
Lack of access to land	- women land rights/ownership - land use patterns regulations - traditional leadership and land access for women/girls
Limited access to farm inputs	- rethink the design of subsidized inputs - promote local varieties - localize agro dealer outlets – mainly situated at quite a distance from farmer communities - revamping of ADMARC
Lack of access to credit	- reduced interest rates - waiver collateral requirements for smallholder farmers especially for women farmers - bank cash deposit requirements should be waived for smallholder farmers
Lack of access to markets	- Efficient markets- early onset of market (ADMARC); minimize sale delays - Contract marketing - Access to market information – prior to onset of production - Facilitate access to regional/international markets - markets within the vicinity- domestic markets- efficient domestic markets - minimum prices - state governed markets should service the smallholder farmers - limited price swings/ have stable prices - organized markets for other crops not only tobacco
Lack of access to new technology	- revive extension services- refresher course with proper support systems - farmer driven technology development - development of appropriate technologies for women farmers - promote home economics workers to teach on food utilization
Lack of supporting infrastructure	- development of storage facilities to keep produce in before it is taken to the markets - road maintenance should include bridges as well

Lack of voice	- government should take into account farmer views before designing of policies/programmes - consultation of farmers when government is coming up with new policies
Climate Change-deforestation	- Reinforcement of measures to curb deforestation/ effective policies - - Reafforestation - Community civic education on climate change/ trainings in climate change at community level

In the process of analyzing the challenges and drawing key messages it was evident that some critical issues hinge on culture and traditional norms. For this reason, it was emphasized that the intention in advocacy is not to turn women farmers into rebels but rather to find ways in which culture can work to their advantage and how traditional norms can still provide platforms for dialogue/engagement.

5.2.2. Communicating the advocacy messages

The women farmers and their male counterparts also deliberated on how a well crafted advocacy message can be channeled. Critical in advocacy is getting the right message to the right people. In this regard the training emphasized on generating evidence for meaningful advocacy. The secret to getting one's advocacy message across, lies in factual presentation of issues. Another important factor of advocacy is getting the message backed by numbers.

It is therefore essential to have buy-in from others within the community so that the message is well understood and is being articulated by a cross-section of people. Buy-in is even critical for women farmers as they are challenged with cultural norms which may prevent them from utilizing certain male dominated foras and the women need to be creative in getting male allies to champion their advocacy agendas.



Advocates discussing where to take their advocacy agenda

6. CONCLUSION

After a three day long meeting, the satisfaction of the facilitators and the participants was at equilibrium and it was no doubt that this was a mission that was accomplished successfully. The challenge remains to ensure continuous engagement and participation of the local farmers and this was agreed to be tackled by continuous engagement within the farmer organization system and mainstreaming the messages in their instituted communication mechanisms and dialogue fora.

7. ANNEXES

7.1. Profiles of Trained Women Advocates



Name: Miss Alice Kachere

District: Lilongwe North

Land Size: 2.4 Hectares

Farming Activities: Grows Maize; Tobacco; Soya and Groundnut

Level of Education: She holds a Junior Secondary Certificate

Leadership Positions in Community: NASFAM Board chairperson.

Other: Miss Kachere heads a household of 8 people comprising of her children and her mom.



Name: Mrs Martha Nyirenda

District: Kasungu

Land Size: 1 Hectare

Farming Activities: Grows Maize, Tobacco and Groundnuts

Level of Education: She holds a Junior Certificate of Education

Leadership Positions in Community: She is a farmer to farmer trainer

Other: She is a member of the Chulu Farmer Association in Kasungu



Name: Mrs. Nevelesi Maliseni

District: Lilongwe North

Land Size: 5Acres

Farming Activities: Grows Tobacco; Maize and Soya beans

Level of Education: She holds a Junior Secondary certificate

Leadership Positions in Community: Chiwamba Association Secretary

Other: Mrs Nevelesi comes from a household size of six people



Name: Mrs. Mary Mittawa

District: Lilongwe North

Land Size: 6 Acres

Farming Activities: Grows Tobacco; Maize; Groundnuts; Soya Beans and horticultural crops

Leadership Positions in Community: Secretary of the Chigonthi Farmers Association

Other: Mrs. Mittawa comes from a male headed household of five people



Name: Mrs Martha Chimutu

District: Lilongwe

Land Size: 10 acres

Farming Activities: Grows Tobacco; Maize; Groundnuts and Soya Beans

Level of Education: Junior Secondary Education Certificate

Leadership Positions in Community: lead farmer in Ukwé Association

Other: Has been a member of NASFAM since 2002, she comes from a male headed household of seven people



Name: Mrs Gladys Kafantenganji

District: Kasungu

Land Size: 2acres

Farming Activities: Grows Maize; Tobacco; Groundnuts and Sweet Potato

Level of Education: She is highly educated by most smallholder farmers' standards in Malawi, holding a Senior Secondary School Certificate

Leadership Positions in Community: She holds a leadership position in Chamama association



Name: Mrs Eunice Chipengule

District: Kasungu

Land Size: 3.5acres

Farming Activities: Grows Maize; Soya; Groundnuts & Irish Potatoes) and also rears Cattle and Chickens

Level of Education: Primary school

Leadership Positions in Community: an active member of the community, a member of Chamama association and a chairlady of Chisomo club in Kasungu



Name: Ms Esther Chirwa

District: Kasungu

Land Size: 2acres

Farming Activities: grows Maize; Groundnuts and Tobacco. In addition, she does livestock production especially goats and chicken.

Level of Education: to junior secondary level

Leadership Positions in Community: a lead farmer of Chipala association

Other: is a single mom with two children

7.2. List of Participants

No.	NAME	GENDER	DISTRICT	ASSOCIATION	POSITION
1.	Eunice Chipengule	Female	Kasungu	Lisasadzi	Lead Farmer
2.	Rachel Banda	Female	Lilongwe	Mlodzenzi	Lead farmer
3.	Gladys Kafantenganji	Female	Kasungu	Chamama	Member
4.	Martha Nyirenda	Female	Kasungu	Chulu	Member
5.	Esther Chirwa	Female	Kasungu	Chipala	Member
6.	Mary Mittawa	Female	Lilongwe	Chigonthi	Association Secretary
7.	Martha Chimutu	Female	Lilongwe	Ukwe	Association internal checker
8.	Nevelesi Maliseni	Female	Lilongwe	Chiwamba	Association secretary
9.	Alice Kachere	Female	Lilongwe	Nyanja	National Chairperson
10.	Dan Mtayamanja	Male	Lilongwe	Mpenu	Member
11.	Kudzakaangelo Molande	Male	Lilongwe	Mlodzenzi	Member
12.	Goodwell Chiteya	Male	Kasungu	Chulu	National Vice Chairperson
13.	Fidelis Ephraim	Male	Lilongwe	Nyanja	Association Treasurer
14.	Blessings Masamba	Male	Lilongwe	Nyanja	Association Chairman
15.	Beatrice Makwenda (Facilitator)	Female	Lilongwe	NASFAM Policy Officer/ WARM Project Coordinator	
16.	Sithembile Ndema	Female	Pretoria, South Africa	WARM Programme Manager	
17.	Faith Phiri	Female	Blantyre	Story Workshop WARM Project Team Leader	
18.	Evelyn Luseneko	Female	Nairobi, Kenya	CropLife International Trainer on Effective Use of Pesticides	