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MSIDP **UPDATES**
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PROMISE KEPT!

Groundnut Rosette Disease (GRD) is the major challenge to groundnut production in Malawi. Many old varieties are susceptible to GRD, with a complete yield loss under severe disease. Yet groundnut is a major source of income and food. Government's Department of Agricultural Research Services, in partnership with ICRISAT, have in the recent past released seven new varieties (CG 8, CG 9, CG 10, CG 11, CG 12, CG 13 and CG 14), to improve groundnut productivity.

Irish Aid funded Malawi Seed Industry Development Project (MSIDP), has been bulking seed of these new varieties for grain production. Starting in the 2019-2020 cropping season, seed companies will begin rolling out CG 9 and CG 11 to farmers.

To improve access and adoption, ICRISAT utilizes participatory farmer centred learning methods, working with farmer groups. Gwizima (pictured) holding CG 9, is one of over 20 lead farmers engaged in Mchinji, for scaling-out and extension. A similar system is being used in 17 other districts. There is great appreciation and demand for the new varieties.

Watch video for more: <https://youtu.be/KFIShkcxE>



ADDING VALUE TO SMALLHOLDER FARMING

Smallholder farming communities in Malawi have limited access to structured markets. Many are unable to add value to agriculture produce, thereby losing more income. Such factors lock out smallholder farmers of Malawi from participating in its rewarding, market economy.

The story of Mthiransembe oil producing cooperative in Mchinji district, central Malawi however, proves that smallholder farmers are capable of finding solutions to their development challenge.

The 118-member group (58 women and 60 men), which was established in 2016 is one of the farmer cooperatives that MSIDP through AICC/LDT has reached with technical support, including training and market linkages.

LDT trained the group in oil processing and marketing, and later linked them to One Village One Product (OVOP), a government program that equipped the cooperative with oil processing machines with a capacity of 200 litres per day.

The group produces a monthly average of 6000 litre of cooking oil, translating into MK7,200,000 (\$9,600) in sales.

The association has since become a stable market for groundnut farmers in the area, most of whom used to sell their produce to middlemen, at giveaway prices.

Watch video for more:

<https://youtu.be/P-e0oRV-bHQ>



A 2018 integrated survey by the National Statistical Office listed Dedza district among the districts with the highest Malnutrition rates in Malawi. Ironically, Dedza is one of the major production hubs for legumes such as beans and groundnut in Malawi. The district is also popular for cereals such as maize, as well as root and tuber crops such as Irish potato. It has been noted that many farmers in the district produce most of their crops for sale, banking only on maize and vegetable as their food crops.

It is against this background that the MSIDP consortium is working with smallholder farmer groups in Dedza, to not only help farmers secure their harvests, but also introduce them to new feeding systems that would enhance utilization of such crops.

In partnership with government's Nutrition Coordinating Committees, the project has adopted the government approved approach known as the "care group" model to train communities on different diets that can help them incorporate crops like groundnut and beans in their recipes. In 2019 alone, 16,974 households were reached with nutrition training.





LIFE IS TOUGH, MOTHERS ARE TOUGHER

Jane Harawa struggled to sustain her family's livelihood, after losing her husband to HIV/AIDS in 2014. Jane, an HIV positive single mother of three, failed to produce enough to secure her family's food and income needs. Her HIV status, coupled with lack of access to enabling systems and technologies, made it near impossible for her to provide her family with basic needs like food, income and shelter.

Jane, a member of Njati women association, a group of 36 women that works with MSIDP, now has access to technologies and systems that has enabled her to fully benefit from groundnut production.

Through the association, Jane has received training on different groundnut based food recipes, enabling her to adopt a transformed food system that meets nutrition needs of her household and more importantly her body, owing to her condition. She was also trained on groundnut seed production, enabling her to become a seed producer under ICRISAT's Seed Revolving Fund (SRF), through which she has constructed a decent iron sheet roofed house, among others.

MSIDP has partnered with the association to enhance community resilience, and enable women farmers withstand shocks and integrate into the Malawi economy.

REACHING THE LAST MILE

Over 70% of the Malawi population is rural and agricultural based. Access to innovations will improve productivity, resilience and livelihoods. Delivery of innovations that are mutually reinforcing to farmers' livelihood needs can unlock new opportunities

MSIDP, a five year project, aims at reaching 200,000 households, using mechanisms that integrate innovations, in line with farmers' livelihood challenges.

In 2019, MSIDP reached 38,477 smallholder farming households, against a target of 30,974 households with productivity enhancing innovations. These technologies have led to yield increases of up to 30% and expanded crop area under new varieties of groundnut, common bean, pigeonpea, pearl millet and rice, by 156,963 hectares.

With these technologies, beneficiary households have diversified their food and income sources and addressed nutritional needs of their homes. A number of partners including public extension, farmer organizations and civil society are engaged.

Watch video for more:

<https://youtu.be/Hocs7QyutPY>



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