Trainings are Key Conduits of Change to People's Response to Climate Change Impacts

Case Study of GVH Chilala

While the call to Climate Action, is yet to be accepted as a responsibility of everyone, CISONECC remains committed to not only act for climate but to ensuring the "Think Global and Act Local" perception becomes a reality in Malawi.

GVH Chilala is one of the beneficiaries of the Climate Challenge Programme Malawi (CCPM), a project that is being implemented in GVH Chilala, Machinga by CISONECC in partnership with CADECOM Mangochi with financial support from the Scottish Government through Trōcaire, and SCIAF. The project aims at ensuring that the Malawi Government puts in place an enabling environment to support implementation of community led climate change adaptation actions.

A group of men discussing about climate change impacts, needs and recommendations to curbing the impacts during a climate change sensitization and awareness meeting organized by CISONECC in February, 2020

"Lives of people in GVH Chilala have changed positively all thanks to the Climate Challenge Programme Malawi (CCPM) that is being implemented here. The CCPM initiated meetings aimed at training people in various climate change adaptation measures which has helped to improve our livelihoods socially, environmentally and more importantly, financially" said Gabriel Phiri, Secretary of the Village Civil Protection Committee (VCPC) in GVH Chilala, Machinga District.

Mr. Phiri expressed how the coming in of the CCPM helped to increase his knowledge of climate change issues. Being a farmer, he has since become weather alert. This has helped him in planning well on what time to plant his crops which has curbed the challenge of loss of seeds due to poor or late rainfall. This has improved yields which some is used for food while the surplus is sold to generate income for him to support his family.

Gabriel is one of the many beneficiaries of the Climate Challenge Programme Malawi whose livelihoods has improved. The project has also boosted people's care of the environment. The setting up of the VCPC as well as the Village Natural Resources Management Committee (VNRMC) has increased people's appreciation of nature, sense of responsibility and ownership of their natural resources.

In line with building the capacity of the community members, CADECOM Mangochi trained the VCPC for GVH Chilala in climate change adaptation measures, participatory monitoring and evaluation, climate change advocacy skills as well as climate justice issues. This was done to ensure that the committee is able for follow up with, lead in the implementation of as well as demand for proper favorable policies at all levels of institutional arrangements. The VCPC members also trained their fellow villagers to instill the similar skills as attained during the trainings

"At first people were reluctant to take part in the implementation of the climate change adaptation measures but now people patronize the initiatives" said Gabriel Phiri.

The CCPM has brought forth several climate change adaptation initiatives in the area of GVH Chilala. The CCPM participants have been trained in climate smart agriculture, making organic manure as well as energy saving cook stoves.

For the past 3 years (2018 – 2020), the people of GVH Chilala have been implementing climate change adaptation (such as irrigation farming application of organic manure) which has helped to improve people's livelihood due to their harvesting bumper yields which they equally sell at a profit. People have also become more aware of climate change impacts and have taken up the responsibility to make the necessary changes to survive in the midst of this global climate challenge.

Although there has been progress made with regards to implementation of climate change adaptation measures, there is still a lot that needs to be done to improve Government's working relationship with the VCPCs and involvement in climate change issues. Gabriel lamented how though the VCPCs were established by Government and also tasked with addressing issues of climate change in their community, Government has not taken the initiative to train the VCPCs in T/A Liwonde hence a strain in their work and relationship with Government.

As Malawi continues to face the impacts of climate change, CISONECC in partnership with CARD continues to strive to address these impacts in line with Sustainable Development Goal 13. The renewal of the Climate Challenge Programme Malawi has provided the opportunity to further people's actions towards curbing the impacts of climate change.