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CASE STUDIES ON SUCCESSFUL SOUTHERN AFRICAN NRM INITIATIVES AND THEIR IMPACTS ON POVERTY AND GOVERNANCE

COUNTRY STUDY: MALAWI
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT (COMPASS) IN MALAWI:
ITS IMPACT ON POVERTY AND GOVERNANCE

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ACRONYMS

| | |
|---------|--|
| BERDO | Bwanje Environmental Rural Development Organization |
| BVC | Beach Village Committee |
| CBNRM | Community Based Natural Resources Management |
| CBO | Community Based Organization |
| CIDA | Canadian International Development Agency |
| COMPASS | Community Partnerships for Sustainable Resource Management |
| CURE | Coordination Unit for Rehabilitation of the Environment |
| DANIDA | Danish International Development |
| DfID | Department for International Development |
| EDO | Environmental District Officer |
| EPU | Environmental Publishing Unit |
| EU | European Union |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GoM | Government of Malawi |
| GTZ | German Agency for Technical Cooperation |
| JICA | Japanese International Cooperation Agency |
| JOPAM | Joint Oxfam Program Malawi |
| M& E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| MANA | Malawi News Agency |
| MATIYO | Matindi Youth Organization |
| MEET | Malawi Environmental Endowment Trust |
| NAP | National Action Programme |
| NCE | National Council on Environment |
| NGO | Non Government Organization |
| NGOCE | Non Governmental Organizations Coalition on Environment |
| NORAD | Norwegian Development Agency |
| NRM | Natural Resources Management |
| RAP | Regional Action Program |
| SADC | Southern African Development Agency |

| | |
|-------|---|
| SRAP | Sub Regional Action Programs |
| TSP | Training Support for Partners |
| UNCCD | United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| VNRC | Village Natural Resources Committee |
| VNRMC | Village Natural Resources Management Committee |
| WESM | Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi |

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through The Community Partnerships for Sustainable Resources Management in Malawi (COMPASS) supported the implementation of a five year program of community based natural resources management projects and activities in Malawi between 1999 and 2004. The initiatives were meant to improve natural resources management and the development of successful and sustainable models that could be replicated by other communities. COMPASS also emphasized income generation consistent with the USAID /Malawi Strategic Objective framework of “sustainable increases in rural incomes.”

The initiatives that COMPASS supported covered so many areas including public awareness, reforestation/afforestation, fish farming, horticulture production, alternative energy sources, apiculture (bee keeping), sustainable agriculture, eco-tourism, wildlife domestication, wildlife management, wildlife extension, medicinal herb production, collaborative management, capacity building and other cross cutting issues such as environmental education, HIV/AIDS and gender issues. By the end of the first phase of COMPASS in 2004, a number of tree nurseries, village woodlots and fish ponds had been established, a number of farmers had been involved in beekeeping, chilli pepper and mushroom production, guinea fowl rearing, fruit processing, fire briquette and fuelwood saving stoves production and eco-tourism. Available records indicate that communities were able to generate financial and other non monetary benefits equivalent to US\$511,130 between 2000 and 2004. As a result of capacity building and awareness, local governance of natural resource improved substantially, enabling communities to take full responsibility and control. Immediate economic benefits and good natural resource governance have been the foundation for natural resource management.

BACKGROUND

LOCATION OF MALAWI

Malawi is located in Southern Africa. It is bordered by Tanzania to the north, Zambia to the west and Mozambique engulfs Malawi to the southwest and southeast. A landlocked country, it lies between the following coordinates 13 30' S, 34 00' E. It is landlocked. Malawi has a total area of 118,485 Km² of which 94,085 Km² is land area, inland water covers 24,400 Km². The inland water is dominated by Lake Malawi, the third largest Lake in Africa after Lake Victoria and Lake Tanganyika. Lake Malawi is 540Km long and between 20Km and 90Km wide. The overall length of Malawi is 860Km from the southern tip in Nsanje to the northern tip in Chitipa. The width ranges from 90 to 200Km.



ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

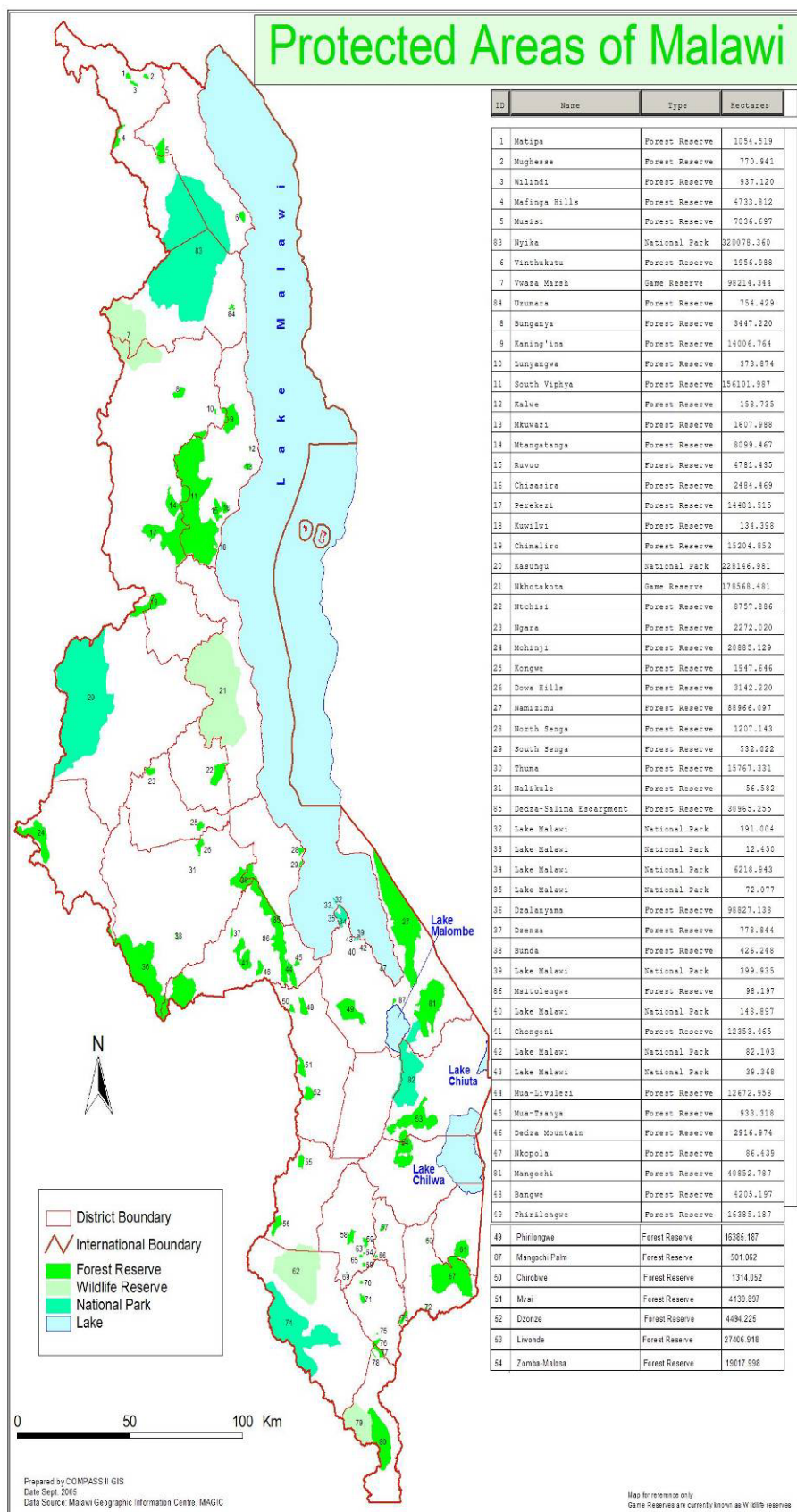
Malawi has some 28% of the country's land area under forest cover. This includes national parks and wildlife reserves, forest reserves, protected hill slopes and natural woodlands on customary land (17 percent of total). And it is exactly these natural woodlands which are increasingly threatened by deforestation due to agricultural expansion, overgrazing, fuelwood-gathering, commercial logging, and large-scale industrial wood fuel utilisation for tobacco curing, lime burning, charcoal production, brick-making, etc. The total forest cover is, however, estimated to be declining at an average rate of 2.8% per year with much higher deforestation rates in certain areas. This deforestation rate is said to be the highest in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. With such a scenario, natural resources and the environment are, in general, under heavy pressures from poor practice of exploitation and overutilization. Other equally important challenges include over-fishing, poaching, land degradation, massive soil erosion and general loss of biological diversity.

In Malawi, with the exception of forest reserves, national parks and wildlife reserves, the only green patches that one sees in the landscape are graveyards "forest islands" and some community and private forests planted and managed under various initiatives. The community and private forests and graveyards have survived because of ownership and user rights associated with them.

It is common to see that where there used to be green and beautiful tree covered hills and mountains a few years ago, one sees brown, gullied and unsightly hills that continue to damage the other resources. More recently, a grouping of NGOs, the NGO Coalition on Environment (NGOCE), has blamed Government for the laxity in the implementation and enforcement of environmental and natural resource policies and laws. The Coalition has warned Government that unless something is done as a matter of urgency, the high rate of environmental degradation could lead to desertification in a matter of a few years.¹

Unlike other countries in Southern Africa, Malawi does not have abundant wildlife or game outside protected areas, nor does Malawi's protected areas have buffer zones where controlled wildlife management and hunting by communities would take place, as is the case in other SADC countries. Therefore, it should be noted that CBNRM in Malawi goes beyond wildlife management, safari hunting and ecotourism. It encompasses other resources that would otherwise be considered useless in other countries.

¹ Petition to the Government of Malawi by NGOCE, December 2005



LIVELIHOODS ISSUES

Malawi, with a population of 12, 341,170 million² in 2005, growing at a rate of 3.4% and having a population density of 215 per square km of arable land, is mainly rural (86%), agro-based and still a very poor country with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of about US\$200 per capita. Sixty-five percent of its people live below the poverty line. Severe poverty affects about 46 percent of the population, and a large part of the population is engaged almost exclusively in subsistence farming. Current drought in Southern Africa has seen increased resource exploitation, especially of charcoal and fish.

RESOURCES USED OR MANAGED

Resource management in Malawi has been categorized into sectors. These are forestry, wildlife, fisheries, livestock and crop production, land and water. The COMPASS Program worked across these sectors because of their inter-linkages and the community dependence on them.

INSTITUTIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING RESOURCES

Natural resource and environmental management in Malawi is a complex issue because it is a cross cutting one. No one single institution is responsible. Several Ministries and Departments share roles and responsibilities in the management of particular sectoral resources. There are at least five core Government Departments in three Ministries which are integrally involved in promoting CBNRM.³ These are assisted by local and international NGOs, Private Sector Organizations, Community Based Organizations and Local Level Institutions such as Natural Resources Management Committees (NRMCs), Natural Resources Committees (NRCs) and Beach Village Committees (BVCs). The environmental and natural resource management framework in Malawi is as follows:-

**Table 1: Environmental and Natural Resource Management
Institutional Framework In Malawi**

| No. | Ministry | Department | Responsibility |
|-----|---|---|--|
| 1 | Mines, Energy and Environmental Affairs | Department of Environmental Affairs (EAD) | Coordination of all environmental and natural resource management issues, policies and legislations; |
| | | Department of Forestry | Management of forest resources |
| | | Department of Fisheries | Management of fishery resources |
| | | Department of Energy | Development and providing alternative forms of energy; |
| | | Department of Mines | Exploration and exploitation of mineral resources |
| 2 | Ministry of Information and Tourism | Department of National Parks and Wildlife | Management of wildlife in National Parks, Wildlife Reserves and on customary lands; |
| | | Department of Information | Dissemination information about Malawi in all forms of media; |
| | | Department of Tourism | Promoting Malawi as tourist destination. |
| 3 | Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development | Land Resources Conservation Department | Land conservation issues |
| | | Livestock and Disease Control | Livestock development and disease, pest control |
| | | Crop Production Department | Enhancing crop production to achieve food self sufficiency |

² Government of Malawi, National Statistical Office, Zomba, Malawi

³ The Environmental Affairs Department, the Departments of Forestry and the Department of Fisheries in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs; the Department of National Parks & Wildlife in the Ministry of Information and Tourism, and the Department of Land Resources Conservation in the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development.

| No. | Ministry | Department | Responsibility |
|-----|--|--|---|
| 4 | Ministry of Water Development and Irrigation | Department of Water | Water development and provision of portable water |
| | | Department of Irrigation | Irrigation development |
| 5 | Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Private Sector, Donors, Organizations, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Local Level Institutions | Several NGOs, CBOs, VBCs, VNRCs and VNRCs DANIDA, DfID, EU, GTZ, JOPAM, JICA, MEET, NORAD, UNDP, USAID, World Bank and others | Complement Government efforts to implement a number of natural resource and environmental issues Provide financial and technical support for CBNRM |

FUNDING- WHO, HOW MUCH, HOW LONG

USAID/Malawi, through a contractual agreement with Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI), supported the COMPASS program for US\$5.2 million for five years from 1999 to 2004. Part of this funding was earmarked for small grants for rural communities, NGOs and government to address various environmental challenges, build capacity of the participating organizations and communities and increase incomes through sales of natural products. Specifically, the project dedicated US\$662,652 for small grants, for a five-year period. The grants program was just one of five Targeted Results. It is, therefore, very important to realize that the total contract value does not reflect the “management cost” for the small grants component. In addition, several other donor organizations are supporting CBNRM initiatives through an array of projects and programs in Malawi.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAMME ACTIVITY

GOAL

Community Partnerships for Sustainable Resource Management (COMPASS) was a USAID funded project implemented by Development Alternatives Inc. in association with Development Management Associates. COMPASS addressed USAID Malawi's Strategic Objective of *increasing sustainable use, conservation and management of renewable natural resources*. The Intermediate results to achieve this Strategic Objective were:

- Comprehensive policy/legislative framework established.
- Capacity of NRM institutions strengthened
- Service programs improved
- Capacity of communities to manage natural resources improved.

COMPASS's objective was to *strengthen the institutional framework in which CBNRM programs were designed, implemented, monitored and evaluated*. To achieve this objective, COMPASS worked on five Targeted Results and several Sub-Results as follows:

- Establish effective CBNRM administrative and technical services capacity
 - CBNRM Steering Committee and Secretariat created
 - Relationships among CBNRM programs established
 - National CBNRM strategic planning process developed (included M & E plan)
- Establish functioning liaison, communication and information exchange mechanism (s) between and among CBNRM programs
 - CBNRM Computer Information systems designed
 - Public awareness campaigns launched
 - CBNRM conferences and workshops scheduled
- Improve community mobilization skills within government, NGOs, and community groups.
 - CBNRM training program designed
 - Training delivered
 - CBNRM best practices identified
 - National and regional CBNRM exchange program developed
- Support the process of policy and legislative reform in favor of CBNRM.
 - Mechanisms for participation in CBNRM policy development and review created

- Capacity to evaluate and revise existing policies strengthened.
- Establish limited CBNRM grant management services to finance special CBNRM opportunities.
 - Manual of grant application procedures elaborated
 - Clear selection criteria for awards established
 - Technical assistance provided to help recipients apply for and manage grants

In summary, the COMPASS program's primary goal was to identify and support community-based activities that would generate immediate and tangible economic benefits for CBNRM practitioners while encouraging conservation of natural resources. Therefore, this analysis has focused on the impacts and results that the Small Grants Programme had on CBNRM practitioners. The COMPASS Small Grants Programme aimed to achieve three main objectives, these were:

- To promote the sustainable use of natural resources
- To develop replicable models for promoting sustainable CBNRM initiatives; and
- To provide assistance to viable natural resource management proposals which were likely to be funded by other programs.

PROBLEM TO BE RESOLVED

The rate of deforestation, predominantly indigenous forest woodlands, and general degradation of natural resources has reached alarming proportions in Malawi, where it has become both a burning and political issue. It is also apparent that the demographic development and the rise of absolute poverty is the main contributing factor for this state of affairs. A high population growth is putting stress on resources to such an extent that environmental degradation results including such practices as improper land use practices and, particularly, poor upstream agricultural practices that threaten the health of the water bodies through siltation, sedimentation and soil erosion; poaching of wildlife, and the depletion of fishery resources due to inappropriate and destructive fishing methods. The development of participatory methods that allow communities to directly influence in the decision-making process of the management of their environment, and the immediate alleviation of severe poverty through income-generating activities, was seen by COMPASS as one way of maintaining the integrity of Malawi's natural resources.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Through the various Targeted Results, COMPASS implemented a number of activities. These included the following:

- TR1:** Building Malawian capacity among NGOs and government to administer CBNRM initiatives and provide the necessary technical support to practitioners;
- TR2:** Establishing efficient liaison and information exchange among CBNRM programs in Malawi and neighboring countries;
- TR3:** Improving community mobilization skills within the public and NGO sectors;
- TR4:** Supporting policy and legislative reform that assists improved resource management at the village level; and
- TR5:** Providing small grants to CBNRM practitioners and promote the sustainable use of natural resources.

In summary, the COMPASS Program carried out the following activities:

- Providing small grants to local communities; Promoting sustainable use of natural resources
- Conducting training needs assessment for communities and CBNRM practitioners and conducting the actual training programs to build capacity; several training modules were organized for CBNRM practitioners.
- Monitoring, evaluating and providing backstopping services
- Documenting and disseminating projects results

COMPASS supported the following projects:

| | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Alternative Energy (3) | Multiple or cross-cutting (6) | Aquaculture (6) | Reforestation/Afforestation (11) |
| Bee-keeping (3) | Sustainable Agriculture (2) | Capacity Building (3) | Fruit Tree Nurseries (3) |
| Wildlife Management (4) | Ecotourism (2) | Herbal Production (2) | Co-Management (fisheries) (2) |
| Public Awareness (7) | Forestry (1) | | |

The majority of the grants were awarded to:

| | | | |
|---|--|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Community-based organizations (CBOs) (34) | Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (14) | Government Departments (5) | Private enterprises (2) |
|---|--|----------------------------|-------------------------|

The COMPASS program focused on six districts⁴ as impact areas, but the small grants were implemented at the national level with a focus on 17 districts.

⁴ Rumphi and Nkhata Bay in the Northern Region, Dedza and Ntcheu in Central Region and Mangochi and Chikwawa in the Southern Region

RESULTS

The COMPASS Program activity operated for five years from 1999 to December 2003. At the time of closure, the overall performance, impact and progress against targets were reported to be a success⁵. Some highlights of results against targets are as follows:

Table 2: Targeted and achieved Results, COMPASS Programme (1999-2003)

| | Targeted Result Area | Targeted | Achieved |
|---|--|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | Communities have adopted CBNRM practices as a result of COMPASS activities | 400 | 600 |
| 2 | Percent of customary land under improved natural resource management in COMPASS target Districts | 40% | 5 – 10% |
| 3 | Percent of beneficiaries of COMPASS small grants who are female | 60% | 46% |
| 4 | Percent of grant projects that have been sustained one year after the end of the COMPASS grant funding | 80% | 87% |
| 5 | Supplemental benefits has been generated by grants | US\$250,000 | US\$279,782 |
| 6 | Percent of grants that have demonstrated positive environmental and social impact | 60% | 60% |
| 7 | Communities and services provided with training | | 2,000 |
| 8 | People supported with exchange visits to best practice sites | | 667 |
| 9 | Grants awarded to grantees to address environmental concerns | | 55 |

Source: Data generated from Andrew Watson, COMPASS Summary Report: 1999-2003;
COMPASS Document 68: COMPASS Performance and Impact: 2002/2003; September 2003

The small grants program yielded a number of livelihood, environmental and governance results worth reporting. These include the following:

LIVELIHOOD RESULTS

As pointed out in section 2.3 above, Malawi is a very poor country, and therefore, any activity that is likely to lead to improved livelihoods at the household level is taken seriously by communities. The COMPASS Small Grants program made some notable contributions to livelihood improvement through various income generating activities. However, it should be pointed out that few small grants activities have generated significant income because several types of activities do not generate revenue in the short-term. Activities such as tree planting are long-term investments by rural communities that will eventually realize tangible economic benefits. Available data indicates that the COMPASS grantees generated cash income equivalent to US\$15,774 and US\$260,008 in non-monetized benefits and projected benefits of US\$231,348 generated by 2004⁶. The non-monetized benefits include consumptive and non-consumptive functions and services of natural resources and the environment.

⁵ COMPASS Document 68: COMPASS Performance and Impact: 2002/2003; September 2003

⁶ Andrew Watson, COMPASS Summary Report: 1999-2003; Final Report.

Table 3: ⁷Benefit Estimates in Malawi Kwacha for selected COMPASS Activities (2002-2004)

| COMPASS Grant Activities | No of Partic. | Total Prod. (2002-04) | Units | Total Revenues (MK) | Income Distrib. (MK) | Household Consump (MK) | Other Benefits (MK) | Total Benefits (2002-04) | Avg Benefits per Partic. |
|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Village Woodlots | 3,000 | 3397586 | Trees | 39340 | 0 | 0 | 7,958,221 | 7,997,561 | 2,666 |
| Nurseries | 552 | 160,700 | Seedlings | 997,000 | 33,000 | 31,500 | 7,674,813 | 8,703,313 | 15,767 |
| Fishponds | 109 | 1,640 | Kg | 170,240 | 20,000 | 0 | 102,600 | 272,840 | 2,503 |
| Beekeeping | 609 | 13,961 | Liters | 316,690 | 9,080 | 213,239 | 132,030 | 661,959 | 1,087 |
| Chili Peppers | 48 | 1,920 | Kg | 268,800 | 268,800 | 0 | 0 | 268,800 | 5,600 |
| Guinea Fowl | 693 | 8,235 | Birds | 2100 | 0 | 0 | 4,931,552 | 4,933,652 | 7,119 |
| Mushroom | 6 | Unknown | Kg | 106,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 106,000 | 17,667 |
| Fruit Processing | 10 | - | Varies | 123,360 | 40,000 | 0 | 0 | 123,360 | 12,336 |
| Briquettes | 25 | 282,000 | Briquettes | 196,000 | 0 | 156,000 | 0 | 352,000 | 14,080 |
| Stoves | 22,170 | 22,719 | Stoves | 7500 | 0 | 0 | 38,578,097 | 38,585,597 | 1,740 |
| Eco-tourism | 1 | 292 | Visitors | 2916 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 29,167 | 2,916 |
| Totals | 27,223 | | | 2,256,196 | 440,880 | 59,377,313 | 59,377,313 | 62,034,248 | |

Between 2000 and 2004, a cumulative total of US\$511,130 was expected to be generated by communities through the various activities (See Table 2 below).

Table 4: ⁸Total COMPASS I Benefits by Year (2000 to 2004)

| Economic Factors | Year | | | | | |
|------------------------|------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | |
| Real Effective Rate | 112.6 | 116.5 | 115 | 115 | 115 | |
| Benefits (US\$) | | | | | | |
| Revenues | 264 | 2,292 | 3,274 | 9,944 | 3,939 | 1,914 |
| Income distributed | 0 | 283 | 228 | 1,648 | 1,671 | 3,830 |
| Household Consumption | 122 | 118 | 364 | 86 | 2,134 | 3,605 |
| Other benefits | 0 | 26,104 | 90,312 | 146,119 | 225,276 | 487,810 |
| Total Benefits | 387 | 28,514 | 93,951 | 156,930 | 231,348 | 511,130 |

Aside from these benefits, communities reported that they have been consuming some of their products such as fruits, fish, honey and guinea fowls, consequently, improving their health and living standards.

CBNRM has improved livelihoods of communities engaged in various activities. Some communities have been able to generate income from the sale of various conservation-based enterprises such as mushrooms, honey, guinea fowls, fish, fruit juices and similar products. Such income has been invested in children's education, housing improvement and development, provision of water facilities (boreholes); while some

⁷ COMPASS (2003) Assessing the Economic and Financial Benefits of COMPASS-Supported Community Enterprises, Document 66.

⁸ COMPASS (2003) Assessing the Economic and Financial Benefits of COMPASS-Supported Community Enterprises, Document 66.

communities have started their own businesses. In most cases, communities have improved their health and averted hunger at the household level through direct consumption of various products. In such cases, CBNRM initiatives have diversified food sources and offered safety nets during critical hunger periods.

NATURAL RESOURCES RESULTS

A number of natural resource management activities were carried out. While the results are long-term, immediate results can already be documented in the following areas:

AFFORESTATION / REFORESTATION PROGRAMS

The majority of the COMPASS small grants were reforestation/afforestation, fruit tree nurseries and wildlife management. A total of 4,110,290 tree seedlings were raised and 3,646,377 planted with an average survival rate of 87% (3,162,175).⁹ In most of the afforestation projects, people established village and individual woodlots aimed at replacing trees that were cut down. In some areas, people have planted trees along rivers, around households and in some places along main roads. This has helped to check soil erosion. Tree planting and management has been achieved at three levels:

- *Individual household level:* Households have established their own woodlots near the home for easy access, or established their own Individual Forest Areas (IFA).
- *Community level:* Villages have established their own Village Forest Area (VFA) for communal use.
- *Institutional level:* Some institutions such as schools and churches have established their own forest areas for the sole use of those institutions.



Faidherbia albida trees under agroforestry system



Bumper maize yield from agroforestry system

One successful intervention is the Bwanje Environmental Rural Development Organization (BERDO). Located in the Bwanje Valley in Ntcheu District, with 300 villages comprising about 34,000 households, BERDO was provided with funding from COMPASS for tree planting and management. By the end of the COMPASS support in 2002, over two millions trees had been planted with a survival rate of over 75%. Emphasis was put on nitrogen fixing tree species such as *Gliricidia sepium* and *Faidherbia albida* (previously *Acacia albida*). The later is the most abundant tree in this area. People have retained and conserved the tree in their gardens and fields because of nitrogen fixing and soil improvement properties. The pods of the tree are used as fodder by cattle during dry season. One main advantage of *F. Albida* is that it shades off the leaves during the rainy season when crops are growing, giving enough light to the crops grown under the trees.¹⁰ Local communities reported to have seen significant differences in crop yields between crops grown under this tree and crops grown under ordinary conditions.¹¹ One lady boasted to have doubled her maize harvest

⁹ Andrew Watson (Dec. 2003), COMPASS Summary Report: 1999-2003, Final Report

¹⁰ Information gathered during random interviews in the Bwanje Valley, January 2006

¹¹ Information gathered during random interviews in the Bwanje Valley, January 2006

without the application of any chemical fertilizer in the year 2004. Agro-forestry and perm-culture practices have improved soil fertility and reduced the use of chemical fertilizers. This in turn has meant that farmers are able to increase food production and reduce crop production expenditures.

BERDO also planted other equally important tree species such as *Eucalyptus*, *Senna siamea*, *Senna spectabilis*, *Acacia polycantha*, *Albizia lebbek*, and *Azadirachta indica* mainly for timber and firewood. Village and individual woodlots are a common site in this area. The Director of BERDO, reported during a visit to Bwanje Valley that the project started with 1,500 households in 10 villages. By January 2006, the project had registered 3,000 households. About 2,000 individual households have their own woodlots. There are currently 300 villages involved with each village having a minimum of one woodlot. There are more than 350 Community Woodlots in this area. However, the major challenge is to protect the woodlots from livestock (mainly cattle and goats during the dry season when they feed on the free range system). People interviewed randomly during a visit to Bwanje Valley were quick to tell the difference in vegetative cover between 2000 and today. Individual and Village Woodlots have been established, fruit trees around homesteads and agro-forestry tree species in their fields are a common site. Communities are also practicing soil and water conservation measures to reduce soil loss from excessive runoff as a result of deforestation that has occurred in the upper areas above the valley.

HORTICULTURE PRODUCTION

A number of communities were supported to establish fruit tree nurseries where a number of fruit tree species were raised and planted. At Matindi Youth Organization (MATIYO) just outside Blantyre, a Fruit Tree Project supported by COMPASS saw the propagation of over 1,700 improved fruit trees. An orchard was established by MATIYO and within two years, the group had started harvesting some mangoes, oranges and papayas. One member of MATIYO indicated that most people who bought and planted the fruit trees were now benefiting from their trees directly.



3 Year Papaya Trees at MATIYO



Manes Mwalwanda showing part of an orchard at MATIYO¹²



Remaining plants at a tree nursery

However, after the funding, MATIYO did not invest the income realized from seedling sales. When MATIYO was visited in January 2006, very little was happening at the tree nursery, and most of the equipment which they had bought with COMPASS funding was no longer functional.

In the Bwanje Valley, the communities also planted fruit trees such as mangoes, guavas, papaya, custard apple, oranges and *Zizyphus mauritiana*. More than 3,000 households who participated in the project have at least a fruit tree around the household. The papayas, guavas and mangoes have already started fruiting. Fruits are mainly consumed at the household level or sold at markets and along the main road.

¹² MATIYO established this orchard where three hundred plants of Mangoes and Oranges were planted as mother plants to supply scions and buds in future.

OFF-FARM ACTIVITIES

These were encouraged for generating household income and supplementary food sources. Some of these included beekeeping, fire briquette making as alternatives to charcoal and firewood, fish farming, wildlife domestication, guinea fowl rearing, medicinal herbal production and ecotourism.



Free range guinea fowl rearing



Bee keeping



Honey processing

BERDO got further support from COMPASS for engaging communities in natural resource based enterprises which included beekeeping, guinea fowl rearing and fuel saving stoves made out of clay soils.

AWARENESS AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Around Liwonde National Park, park management reported that as a result of increased awareness, there was initially a reduction of tree cutting and incidence of poaching and illegal fishing in the park in 2001 as a result of the COMPASS grant. With the funding, the Park Management was able to promote a good working relationship between Park Staff and the surrounding local communities. However, after this funding ceased, very little awareness was conducted around the park; and incidence of illegality continued in the years that followed. Data obtained from Liwonde National Park shows that number of arrests increased especially after 2002 indicating continued illegality. Park staff attributed this worsening trend to lack of financial resources for broad public awareness around the park.



Broad public awareness programs using songs and dances, dramas and other forms of information dissemination.

GOVERNANCE RESULTS

The COMPASS I Program recognized the need for improved Governance of Natural Resources. Clarifications were made on some issues including the responsibility of managing natural resources and deriving benefits from such resources.

NATIONAL LEVEL GOVERNANCE ISSUES

At the national level, COMPASS focused its policy reform objectives on improving opportunities for grassroots advocacy. COMPASS establishment and supported the National Council for the Environment's CBNRM Working Group, the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the Civil Society Task Force on Land and Natural Resources. The COMPASS Programme facilitated and supported a

CBNRM Working Group¹³ which was mandated to develop CBNRM goals, principles and values by the National Council for the Environment (NCE). In 2001, the National Council for the Environment's CBNRM Working Group outlined a detailed Strategy and Action Plan to facilitate implementation of CBNRM in Malawi over the next few years. The Group also recognized the imperative of establishing clear and succinct goals and objectives for CBNRM in Malawi. The goal was to achieve responsible management and utilization of natural resources that maintain ecosystem functions and contribute to improved livelihoods; and the objective was to strengthen institutional capacity for sustainable management of natural resources founded on legitimacy and the participation of all resource users. Six strategic actions were developed as follows:

1. Develop a commonly understood CBNRM concept and vision that we hope to accomplish through increased public awareness of the opportunities for engaging in CBNRM;
2. Maintain a dynamic policy reform process that engages civil society in discussions on possible improvements to existing policies and legislation;
3. Develop coordinated CBNRM sectoral strategies and action plans that will facilitate rural communities entering into a dialogue with the State of Local Authorities and assist the parties to establish co-management agreements;
4. Develop planning and implementation tools that will help rural communities become involved in CBNRM activities right from the planning stage and that will fast-track implementation;
5. Provide strategic support to coordinated CBNRM implementation that will strive to establish synergy across the natural resource sectors enabling rural communities to become efficient and effective managers of their natural resources;
6. Invest in monitoring and evaluation that will enable all stakeholders from civil society to central government to assess the performance and impact of CBNRM policies and implementation activities, thereby allowing them to build on successes and address any shortcomings in a timely fashion.

COMPASS supported two CBNRM national conferences where these issues were discussed and agreed by various CBNRM practitioners in Malawi.

The CBNRM Working Group also developed principles which were approved by NCE and became pillars for effective natural resource management in Malawi. These included the following principles:

- Communities are prime beneficiaries.
- Communities lead in identifying, planning and implementing CBNRM activities
- Programs are managed by democratically elected institutions or committees linked to Local Authority structures.
- Communities must develop clearly defined constitutions for their institutions or committees and establish by-laws for natural resource management.
- The competent authority must clearly define user groups and boundaries of the natural resources being managed.

¹³ The CBNRM Working Group comprised the following members: Department of Forestry; Department of National Parks and Wildlife; Department of Fisheries; Department of Land Resources and Conservation; Ministry of Water Development; Department of Energy; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Local Government; Ministry of Community Services (Gender); One Traditional Leader; Coordination Unit for the Rehabilitation of the Environment (CURE); Centre for Social Research (Chair); Malawi Environmental Endowment Trust (MEET); the Malawi Confederation of Chambers of Commerce (MCCC); Department of Environmental Affairs (as Secretariat); Training Support for Partners (TSP) and Wildlife & Environmental Society of Malawi (WESM). COMPASS was a non-voting Technical Advisor to the Working Group.

- To ensure sustainability, natural resources should be treated as economic goods hence short and long-term benefits directly related to the use of the resources should be tangible and obvious to the communities
- Arrangements for lease and ownership of resources and the right to use them should be clear
- CBNRM activities must be gender sensitive or gender neutral
- CBNRM programs must promote equitable sharing of benefits and distribution of costs
- CBNRM service providers should be supportive of other community priorities and needs

COMPASS was instrumental in creating a formal Malawian institution that was ultimately responsible for ensuring sound coordination of CBNRM in the country and for gauging the performance and impact of CBNRM initiatives. The Working Group accomplished the majority of its short-term goals and met its own performance target for the most part. However, at the end of COMPASS, the CBNRM Working Group did not sustain its activities because it did not have financial resource to do so, despite being institutionalized within NCE.

Malawi has developed a new Land Policy and Land Law that will allow for land legislation of individuals, ensuring clear ownership and delivery of land services (Government of Malawi- Malawi National Land Policy 2002). Land ownership and clear rights are important in CBNRM because communities will be able to invest in natural resources and environmental management initiatives. The policy also enhances conservation and community management of local resources to ensure environmentally sustainable land use practices and good land stewardship. COMPASS also provided training to hone the advocacy skills of civil society organizations and build their confidence to take campaigns to the highest levels of government. At least 12 Malawian NGOs are now actively engaged in advocacy concerning natural resources and land. The Task Force on Land and Natural Resources has been lobbying and working with Government to come up with a land law that promotes ownership and access of land for every citizen of Malawi. The Task Force has also been working on the linkages of land, natural resource management and food security. It is currently being registered as an independent lobbying organization called LandNet Malawi.

Through its work with partner organizations, COMPASS has been very successful at increasing awareness of the opportunities that CBNRM offers for improving the quality of life and livelihoods of rural communities. Today, most key players understand that CBNRM is not a donor-funded initiative—rather it is a widely accepted approach to sound resource management that is embodied in policies and legislation.

LOCAL LEVEL GOVERNANCE ISSUES

At local level, the COMPASS Programme facilitated and strengthened the development of decentralized environmental and natural resource management Village Level structures and local level institutions.

COMPASS developed a CBNRM training program that built the capacity of community-based organizations to gain confidence and knowledge for implementing sound resource utilization and management. The goal was to enhance the active participation of local people and community-based organizations (CBOs) in the management of available natural resources for deriving sustainable benefits from these resources. The other goal was to enhance their institutional skills, increase self-reliance of the grantees or CBOs allowing them to tackle both current and future challenges and bring about organizational effectiveness by the people themselves. Community organizational development was an integral part of capacity building toward ownership of change within the community organizations. Between 2001 and 2003, COMPASS worked with

four CBOs¹⁴, providing them with organizational development training which included strategic planning, organizational systems and procedures, roles and responsibilities in organizations and volunteerism.

For example, a number of Village Natural Resource Management Committees (VNRMCs) for the management of forestry resources, Beach Village Committees (BVCs) for the management of fish, and Village Natural Resources Committees (VNRCs) for the management of wildlife around national parks and wildlife reserves and CBOs were established and trained with support from COMPASS. COMPASS worked and supported a total of 144 VNRMCs and VNRCs; and a total of 52 BVCs. The Matindi Youth Organization (MATIYO) and the Bwanje Environmental Rural Development Organization (BERDO) are examples of the many CBOs which were once supported by COMPASS and are still functional and carrying out several activities to this day. MATIYO is currently implementing a Food Security Project funded by Joint OXFAM Malawi Programme Malawi worth over US\$50,000¹⁵.

Similarly, BERDO has won the hearts of many donors who are supporting local communities in Bwanje Valley because of the way the COMPASS Program was managed three years ago. BERDO has also scaled up their program areas. They are also involved in agriculture and food security; natural resource management; Health Improvement and HIV & AIDS funded by (CIDA) and the European Union. The Joint OXFAM Program in Malawi has been the main donor so far, providing about US\$615,000 (MK75,000,000).

BERDO also indicated that communities are now able to plan on their own, and make their own decisions and judgments. They only seek assistance from the project management team when and if it is necessary.

Another group, the Magomero Fruit Processing Enterprise Group, located in Chiradzulu District which benefited from a training for transformation (TFT) from COMPASS testified during interviews recently that they are able to work as a team because of the training they went through in 2003.



Part of the Magomero Fruit Processing Group, once trained by COMPASS and Still Working as a Team

Some VNRCMs established community by-laws and regulations that govern the management and protection of forest resources in their areas. There has also been an increase in women's participation in project activities such as beekeeping which were previously dominated by men because of existing benefits and opportunities.

The COMPASS small grants program mobilized and increased participation of community members in CBNRM to over 200,000 direct participants in various projects; about 45 percent of these were women. The participants were drawn from over 30,000 households in nearly 2,000 communities around the country.

¹⁴ Matindi Youth Organization in Blantyre, Chisoti Youth Organization in Nkhosakota, BERDO in Ntcheu and RUFA in the Northern Region.; The Ndirande Women's Briquette Group (in Blantyre), the Magomero Fruit Processing Group in Chiradzulu, the South Vipha Crafts Organization (SOVCRAFT) in Mzimba and Tsogolo la Ana in Chikwawa.

¹⁵ Personal communication with Francis Kalonga, Director of Matindi Youth Organization; January 2006

TRAINING OF NRCS AND STAFF AROUND VWAZA AND NYIKA NATIONAL PARK, NORTHERN REGION OF MALAWI

"In 2002 and 2003, COMPASS supported a series of courses in collaborative management for all Natural Resource Committees (NRCs) and Department of National Parks & Wildlife staff around Vwaza Wildlife Reserve and Nyika National Park. In all, 531 people benefited from the training and another 336 participated in exchange visits; in all, these beneficiaries were drawn from 64 natural resource committees from around Nyika and Vwaza. In addition, 33 staff of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife were also trained in wildlife co-management. It was envisaged that training in collaborative management would help to strengthen local management structures that improve the financial viability of resource management around Nyika and Vwaza. COMPASS has viewed collaborative management training as crucial for NRCs because it helps reduce conflict between Park staff and neighbouring communities. This in turn promotes conservation of biodiversity while providing sustainable benefits from the resources. The courses involved traditional chiefs and ward councillors, because they are important stakeholders wielding great influence on the mobilization of communities and often commanding considerable respect. These courses were facilitated jointly by Park staff and personnel from GTZ's Border Zone Development Project. In 2003, COMPASS also provided training support to the newly formed Nyika-Vwaza Association, a trust that represents the community groups from around the two protected areas."

Andrew Watson (December 2003) COMPASS Summary Report; 1999-2003.

UNEXPECTED RESULTS (INCLUDING LOCAL INNOVATIONS, UNINTENDED OR UNPLANNED RESULTS AND IMPACTS)

ENVIRONMENTAL AND NATURAL RESOURCE INFORMATION PUBLISHING AND DISSEMINATION

COMPASS was instrumental in developing communication tools and building capacity to allow geographically dispersed partners to locate one another and exchange information. During 2001 and 2002, the Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi (WESM) got funding for environmental awareness programs using radio, television and publications dealing with a broad range of environmental issues. In 2003, COMPASS forged a partnership with the Malawi News Agency (MANA) and Malawi TV to develop a series of short videos that described activities undertaken by several COMPASS grantees at a number of best practice sites. In 2003, WESM also got funding for establishing and strengthening an Environmental Publishing Unit (EPU). By the end of 2003, the EPU was up and running. Various publications on environment and natural resources have been printed by the EPU at a slightly lower production cost than commercial printers. Apart from doing internal jobs for WESM, the EPU offers services to other CBNRM Practitioners such as Government, NGOs and CBOs, making it easier for local communities to access various forms of publications in various languages as reference materials.

COMPASS also worked with the Wildlife & Environmental Society of Malawi and its branches in COMPASS target districts to use the Wildlife Clubs in primary and secondary schools to intensify public awareness in conservation and sustainable utilization of natural resources.

IDENTIFICATION, DOCUMENTATION AND DISSEMINATION OF CBNRM BEST PRACTICES

COMPASS identified, documented, and publicized 33 best practices in CBNRM. A best practice is defined as one that is environmentally friendly and ecologically sustainable, that can be maintained for the foreseeable future, and that uses skills and technology that are appropriate and can readily be adopted in rural Malawi. The identified best practices were publicized to enable other practitioners to adapt them to their own situations.

COMPASS aimed to identify unique CBNRM sites that had relevant success stories, that could act as educational models for knowledge-transfer, and that could be adapted by other interested practitioners.

COMPASS mapped the geographical sites of the best practices, and described what went well, what problems were experienced, how the problems were rectified and possible adaptations of the practice¹⁶. Some of these sites included the famous Kam'mwamba Sustainable Management of Indigenous Forest Project which has integrated indigenous forest management with various income generating components with the aim of halting deforestation as a result of charcoal production. The project is producing and marketing baobab and tamarind fruit juices, and honey and is marketing guinea fowls for farmers, in addition to its core conservation activities of natural resources management. As a best site, the Kam'mwamba Field Office was visited by several community groups and organizations supported by COMPASS.



Baobab tree produces baobab fruits which are processed into fruit juice and sold in super markets in Malawi; products by Village Hands Limited, Kam'mwamba, Malawi.

¹⁶ COMPASS Document 32: Examples of CBNRM Best Practices in Malawi.

INTEGRATING HIV/AIDS ISSUES IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The COMPASS Program realized the various challenges Malawian families and institutions are facing due to HIV & AIDS. As a result, COMPASS commissioned a study on the linkages of HIV and AIDS and natural resource management¹⁷. Through this study, it is apparent that:

- HIV /AIDS has adverse effect on conservation and natural resource management, and therefore there is need to promote HIV/AIDS prevention in staff and communities;
- Conservation can be used to mitigate impacts of HIV/AIDS on rural households
- Best practices/solutions should be promoted to mitigate impacts of HIV/AIDS on conservation

The COMPASS Program had to:

- Quantify or qualify the magnitude of the HIV/AIDS problem;
- Identify local capable and motivated CBOs seeking to address the issues;
- Train the CBO staff in the adaptation/mitigation response framework;
- Identify preferred options and alternatives for each CBO (tailored strategy and plan); and
- Support the CBO's implementation, follow-up, and monitoring.

¹⁷ COMPASS Document 55: Impact of HIV/AIDS on Natural Resource Management in Malawi.

CONCLUSIONS

LESSONS LEARNED

There is every indication that noteworthy achievements were made during the implementation of COMPASS. Some lessons in this case study include:

- Communities are linking natural resource management with improvement of livelihoods through the various natural resources-based enterprises that are now fully operated by the local communities themselves. In turn, this thinking will advance conservation objectives and sound stewardship of natural resources.
- Issues of community needs and priorities, rights of use and ownership of resources are prerequisites for the success of any CBNRM initiative and improved governance of natural resources.
- In a country where poverty is rampant, natural resources management activities which incorporate aspects of income generating activities that are simple and cheap are likely to have high adoption. Simplicity and low cost are critical factors for sustainability and extension to other local communities where similar resources and opportunities occur. The other reason is that pure conservation activities such as reforestation or soil conservation are long-term activities and less appealing to local communities. While these could be the major focus of any project, some components of income-generating must be included to facilitate local participation in-order to deal with multiple family needs.
- Natural resource management programs must be designed with full knowledge of the three pillars of sustainable development model which incorporates social economic issues; biophysical issues and political issues.

However, there are other issues which need further attention during the implementation of any NRM program including COMPASS II. Some of the issues which have emerged during this analysis include the following:

- Implementation arrangements, including monitoring. It was found that COMPASS was implementing and supervising project activities from Blantyre. Perhaps an alternative would have been to empower specific institutions who could regularly undertake this role.¹⁸
- COMPASS had built the capacity of various government staff including Environmental District Officers (EDO). However, this was not clearly defined during the implementation of COMPASS. In other instances although they were provided with a number of skills training such as GIS, there seems to be little use of such skills.
- Identification of target groups seemed to have been done with little involvement of district level stakeholders. This had implications on monitoring and sustainability of the various initiatives which COMPASS I supported.
- CBNRM Implementation Structures: Most of the NRM implementation structures such as VNRCs, VNRCMs, Wildlife Clubs and BVCs that COMPASS used have been operating on a voluntary basis resulting in “fatigue” over a long period of time. The incentive to participate in the various natural resource management activities would be linking their input initiatives to economic benefits. For instance, the promotion of natural resource-based enterprises would make a contribution to this shortfall. It must be

¹⁸ Mauambeta, D.D.C and Chadza, W (September 2004), A situational analysis at District and Community level: Part I: results, Analysis, Discussion and Recommendations; Conducted and compiled for COMPASS II.

understood that forest projects are less appealing to communities because of their very long-term benefits and the associated labour inputs. As such, where communities see and get immediate benefits from natural resource management they are encouraged to fully participate.

- **Scaling up Natural Resource Based Enterprises:** In general, marketing of nrm products is not well organized in Malawi because communities are not organized into associations. Scaling up sales of such products would require substantial investments in business development, processing, packaging of products and marketing. It is pleasing to note that COMPASS II is addressing this challenge through the analysis and development of various potential sectors including honey, mushroom, guinea fowls and fruits. In some areas, there are limited income generating activities which would act as alternatives to environmental destruction activities. In most cases, communities are lacking markets for some natural products such as honey because the individuals are scattered from each other, and the quantities of the products are still small.
- **Failure or laxity to implement policy** and enforce legislation by Government continues to undermine and frustrate various CBNRM initiatives being done by local communities and other practitioners. Therefore, there is need to enforce NRM policies and legislation.
- There is a **paralysed extension service** in Malawi which has led to poor technical service delivery, in turn, making it impossible for local communities to access basic inputs for CBNRM such as indigenous seeds, mushroom spores, guinea for eggs, and fish fingerlings, etc.
- **Implementation Approaches:** The COMPASS Program faced the challenge of competing implementation approaches by various donors and implementing agencies. There is no common approach in the implementation of NRM activities in Malawi. There are the MASAF Program and Government of Malawi / European Union Public Works Programme (GoM/EU PWP). These two programs are being implemented in some of the districts COMPASS worked in and earmarked for COMPASS II. However, their implementation strategies might have a bearing on how COMPASS II may mobilize communities and implement its activities on the ground. One of the good stories from MASAF is that they have made it as a condition that all infrastructural project applications must have an environmental component. Our attention must however, be drawn to the financial incentives which MASAF and GoM/EU Public Works Programme provide to participating community groups and individuals. While these incentives attract a lot of people they may eventually discourage communities from helping themselves.

The other approach is that most environmental management projects are not done on a catchment area basis. This is an issue that COMPASS did not fully address. There is need to implement environmental programs on a catchment basis rather than isolated villages where every household is involved. BERDO is a good example of how natural resource management programmes should be implemented.

These issues seem to have been considered within COMPASS II which started in 2004 and will finish in 2008. In fact, the current USAID/Malawi's Strategic Objective 6 focuses on Sustainable increases in rural incomes through three Results Modules:

- Increase the decentralization of natural resource management in Malawi
- Enhance rural community capacity for managing natural resources in a sustainable manner; and
- Increase sales of natural resources-based products by rural households.

LINKAGES WITH UNCCD

The general UNCCD Objective is to combat desertification and mitigate effects of drought in countries experiencing serious drought and / or desertification, particularly in Africa through effective action at all levels. UNCCD also recognises the need to involve local communities and other stakeholders including NGOs in combating desertification and land degradation. Malawi ratified the Convention on 13th June 1996.

As a Party to the Convention, Malawi, through consultative approach formulated the National Action Programme (NAP) in 1999 and finalised it in 2000. It was submitted to the UNCCD Secretariat in 2001. The Core of the UNCCD is the development of NAP, Sub regional Action Programmes (SRAPs) and Regional Action Programmes (RAPs) by national Governments in cooperation with donors, local communities and NGOs. Poverty reduction is central to the Programme because people living in the affected areas are most vulnerable to poverty.

In line with NAP activities, the COMPASS Programme targeted issues of food security, deforestation, general environmental management, renewable energy, promotion of indigenous knowledge systems and technologies and water resource management and development through water harvesting for fish farming, soil and water conservation. Specifically, the COMPASS Programme contributed to UNCCD initiatives in the following manner:

- Trained local staff and communities on participatory forest management
- Promoted natural resource-based enterprises as alternative sources of income generating activities
- Promoted the growing of multi-purpose trees on private and communal plots
- Promoted establishment of individual, community, and private plantations
- Trained local people in tree seed collection, nursery establishment and planting and encouraged natural regeneration.

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