



Malawi Pathways 2014 Semi Annual Report

(Dec 2013 – May 2014)

Pathways Malawi Contact Persons

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Submitted to

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1. Objective 1: To increase the productive engagement of 52,000 poor women in sustainable agriculture, and contribute to their empowerment

A. PROJECT DASHBOARD

In this section, we would like to compile information on key project numbers to keep track of who we are working with and the project reach (cumulative). You can separate these by either different geographies e.g. districts or by different impact groups if you are working with more than one impact group. Adjust the table columns accordingly.

Table 1: Malawi Dashboard May, 2014

<i>Impact and target groups, members and outreach in TAs</i>					VARIANCE	TOTAL
TARGET GROUP	KAOMBA	MWASE	NJOMBWA	DZOOLE		
A. Collectives and Membership						
• VSLA	302	150	211	137	117	800
• Producer groups	81	70	50	24	4	225
• Producer Farmers	2051	1469	1042	475	637	5037
• % women in Producer Groups	90.8	93.3	94.9	93.9	-	92.7
Total number of poor women smallholder farmers in collectives	5981	2547	3378	789	2168	12695
% of women in leadership position	70%	60%	70%	80%		68%
Total number of groups	383	220	261	161	121	1025
B. Outreach/ Members Engaged						
Number of farmers / reached with outreach activities, information e.g	3131	2081	1758	592	202	6411

during field days (total)						
Number of women farmers / reached with outreach activities or information e.g. during field days (women)	2024	1463	1041	469		5067
No. of trainings for staff /partners						31
% of trained female staff /partners						22.6%
C. Other Target Groups (Total)						
• Men /Boys e.g spouses, other	627	242	326	57	168	1252
• Elite including traditional leaders	45	14	22	11	34	92
D. Total Project Partners						
• Research (national international)						3
• Private Sector						17

B. RESULTS BY CHANGE LEVERS

Change Lever 1 - Capacity: Improved knowledge, skills, relationships, self-confidence, and conviction of women smallholder farmers.

1.1 Key activities carried out during this period

The Pathways project continued building capacity of women to engage in value chain activities. Various forms of capacity building techniques were engaged ranging from practical trainings, actively participating in value chain activities, role playing, field days and field visits. During this reporting period, the following activities were conducted to improve knowledge, skills, relationships, self confidence and conviction of women farmers;

- Refresher Trainings for Farmer to Farmer Trainers in Farmer Field Schools and agronomy
- Establishment of Farmer to Fields and Business Schools (FFBS) Learning Centers and development of FFBS Training Guide
- Refresher Training for Farmer to Farmer Trainers in Farmer Field and Business Schools (FFBS)
- Procurement and distribution of inputs for demonstration plots
- Tracking adoption of Sustainable Agriculture Practices through demonstration plots
- Conducting nutrition sessions
- Facilitation of Farmer field days
- Refresher trainings on gross margin and basics of Marketing
- Facilitated Community level review meetings

1.1.1. Refresher Trainings for Farmer to Farmer Trainers in Farmer Field Schools and Agronomy

The Pathways Project with its Research partner, ICRISAT, organized a 3 days training for FFTs from 25th – 28th November 2013. The training main aim was to create an understanding amongst FFTs on field business approach. The training equipped farmers with skills on how to implement demonstration plots protocols for soya and groundnuts; collect relevant data through

observation and develop work plans using the crop's cycles. 50 FFTs (20 F and 30 M) participated in the trainings

Key Results;

As a result of the training above, the following were the outcomes;

- FFTs mobilized 166 producer groups and trained them on FFS approach.
- Demonstration plots were set up by FFTs of which 5 have additional trials
- Farmers are able to know and count diseased plants
- FFTs knowledge of potential yield per acre for different varieties has increased because of the agronomy training conducted in collaboration with ICRISAT
- Farmers are aware of the nutrient content for fertilizers applied to soya and groundnut crops for increased productivity
- FFTs are aware of the number of days to maturity of different varieties of soya and groundnuts and are building farmers capacities on the same

1.1.2. Establishment of FFBS Learning Centers (Bwalo la Alimi) and Development of FFBS Guide Book

In an effort to improve the FFS approach, a decision to replace the FFS approach with Farmer Field Business School (FFBS) approach was made in February, 2014. The decision was made with an aim of ensuring that farmers are receiving full package of the four key pathways interventions through FFTS trainings throughout the year at the same pace in all the implementation areas. The FFBS approach incorporated the FFS agronomic principles too.

To this effect the project continued to encourage establishment of FFBS learning centers as a platform for farmers to meet and share knowledge and skills on the four key areas of pathways interventions. A cluster of producer groups come together twice every month to participate and receive trainings in selected topics relevant to farming calendar by Farmer to Farmer Trainers (FFT's).

To effectively train the farmers, the project team has put together an FFBS guide book, translated in local language, to be used as a training tool for the FFTs. All the 50 FFTs have been oriented on the guidebook and are currently using it during trainings.

Key Results;

- The trained FFTs have established 63 FFBS learning centers locally known as "Bwalo la Alimi" where demonstration plots have been mounted and farmers are learning sustainable agriculture recommended practices there.
- A vernacular guide book has been developed as a training tool and each Farmer Field Trainer has undergone through orientation on its use and they are successfully using it.

1.1.3. Refresher training for Farmer to Farmer Trainers in Farmer Field and Business Schools (FFBS)

Refresher trainings aimed at familiarizing the FFTs with gender, nutrition and marketing tools were conducted. The following sessions were discussed during the trainings;

- Review of last year's activities under each change lever (capacity building, access, productivity, household influence and enabling environment). This process helped FFTs to understand the areas of influence that have to be worked upon for them to achieve women empowerment.
- Listing activities on the four components of pathways – sustainable Agriculture, marketing and value chain, nutrition and gender and male involvement. This process helped FFT to develop a work plan.
- Drawing an annual FFBS calendar
- Practical lessons on germination test and manure making

Key Results;

- A total of 18 FFTs (10 F, 8 M) participated in the first training while the remaining 32 FFTs (10 F, 22 M) participated in the second training held in January and February 2014 respectively in Kasungu district. The FFTs have been carrying out a number of trainings to be discussed in other sections below.
- 30 FFBS calendars have been developed in 30 FFBS sites. The calendars guide producer groups participating on the activities that need to be accomplished, when the activity should be done, and sharing responsibility
- 2 – 6 producer groups and other farmers in the area meet fortnightly and learn issues around agriculture production, nutrition, gender, markets and record keeping. An FFBS is manned by one Farmer to Farmer Trainer.

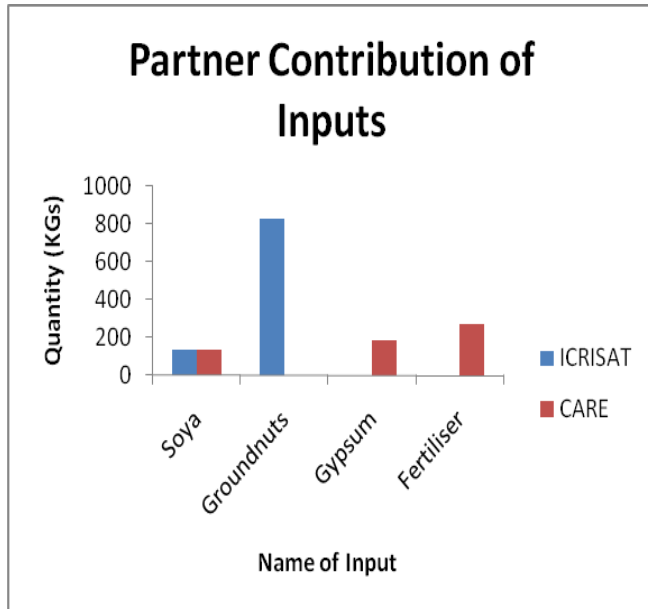
1.1.4. Procurement and distribution of inputs for demonstration plots

The project engaged input supply companies in order to acquire seed and other inputs for demonstration plots. The research partner ICRISAT contributed all the ground nuts seed and Makwacha Soya variety while CARE contributed fertilizer, gypsum and Tikolore seed inputs which were procured from IITA. Gypsum was used to ensure proper maturity of the crop. Table 2 below shows list of inputs and quantities procured and distributed for 63 demonstration plots. On the other side Graph 1 shows contribution of ICRISAT to demonstration plot seeds.

Table 2: Quantity of Inputs Procured for Demonstration Plots

Input Type	Variety	Quantity (Kilogram)
Soya Seed	Makwacha	136
	Tikolore	136
Groundnuts seed	Chalimbana	272
	Nsinjiro	272

	Chitala	272
Lime	Gypsum	136
Fertilizer	Super D	272



Graph 1: Contribution towards Demo Plots Inputs

The inputs in Table 2 above were distributed in all the four Traditional Authorities of Njombwa, Mwase, Kaomba and Dzoole depending on number of demonstration plots.

Key Results;

- 821 kilograms(Kg) of groundnut seed, 272 Kg soya seed, 186Kg gypsum and 272Kg fertilizer was distributed for demonstration plots
- Farmers were exposed to new varieties of Tikolore and Kansinjiro for both soya and groundnuts respectively
- Farmers learnt about new agronomic practices of recommended plant and ridge spacing , use of fertilizer, box ridges for soil and water conservation and pest and disease management practices

1.1.5. Training Producer Groups in Sustainable agriculture practices through demonstration plots

The project has established 63 demo plots in each FFBS in the impact area where **3,714 (3,454F, 260 M)** farmers are consistently learning from every fortnight. Each FFBS has 16 plots of 10mx3m each. Through the demonstration plots pathways is aiming at enhancing adoption of Sustainable agriculture Practices in order to increase quality and quantity of products to meet household food needs and sell to identified markets. Focus is on

- Soil and water management practices
- Pest and disease management practices
- Harvest and post harvest management and use practices

Table 3: Demo protocols/trials

Plot No	Crop	Variety	Protocol	Treatment	Observations made
1.	G/nut	Nsinjira	Rosette management	Early planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germination of seed with vigor • Quick growth • Full canopy cover of crops • No trace of rosette disease seen in plants
2				Late planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seed germinated very well • Growth of plants a bit slow • Canopy cover not adequate • Some traces of rosette disease seen
3				Close spacing of 10cm between plants early planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germination of seed with vigor • Quick growth • Full canopy cover of crops • No trace of rosette disease seen in plants
4				Widely spaced – 30cm between plants early planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seed germination was fine • Rosette disease seen in some plots
5	Groundnut	Chalimban	Rosette management	Early planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germination of seed with vigor • Quick growth • Full canopy cover of crops • No trace of rosette disease seen in plants
6				Late planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seed germinated very well • Growth of plants a bit slow • Canopy cover not adequate

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some traces of rosette disease seen
7				Close spacing of 15cm between plants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Germination of seed with vigor Quick growth Full canopy cover of crops No trace of rosette disease seen in plants
8				Widely spaced – 30cm between plants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Germination of seed was fine Rosette disease not seen
9	Groundnut	Chitala	Aflatoxin management	Early planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good germination Ripe – ready for harvest Crop stand was good
10				Late planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good germination Crop stand was good
11				Box ridging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good germination Crop stand was good
12				Without Box ridges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good germination Crop stand was good
13	Soya	Makwach a	Variety used and yield levels	Single row planting and fertilizer applied (Super D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fast vegetative growth High Biomass Not mature yet
14				Double row planting with fertilizer applied (Super D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fast vegetative growth High Biomass Not mature yet Average of 50 pods observed per plant
15		Tikolore	Variety used and yield levels	Single row planting and fertilizer applied (Super D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More pods observed in excess of 100 per plant. Matured early Less biomass More branches observed Grain size is bigger
16				Double row planting with fertilizer applied (Super D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More pods observed in excess of 100 per plant.

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matured early • More branches observed • Less biomass
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Key Results

- Some farmers have adopted planting soya on double rows
- Basing on demonstration protocols results, farmers have made decisions on which varieties to purchase and grow for the next growing season. Other people taking interest in demos and asking questions on what is being promoted
- Demo plots has raised recognition of Pathways work with other organizations such as Clinton Hunter and NASFAM and Government who are willing to develop relationships with Pathways and CARE

1.1.5. Tracking adoption of Sustainable Agriculture Practices (SAPs) through demonstration plots

At the start of the growing cycle, FFTs and farmers agreed on a set of recommended sustainable practices that producers would be trained on. These include:-

TABLE 4: Recommended SAPS

No	Soil and water management practices	Planting and spacing	Use of inputs	Weeding	Pest and disease	Harvest and post harvest methods
1.	Crop rotation (intercropping)	5cm planting spacing	Use of improved or recommended seed varieties	First weeding	Use of low risk pesticide or no pesticide	Gadamika
2	Organic fertilizer	75cm ridge spacing	Use of inoculants	Second weeding	Scouting rouging and destruction of infected plants	Mandera cock (windrose)
3	Box ridges	Early timely and uniform planting	Use of certified seed	My spouse supports me with household work as I		Using dry and ventilated storage

				weed		
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To track adoption of the practices in table 4 above, each producer farmer was scored on adoption and participation of good agricultural practices as recommended by the programme through Farmer to Farmer Business Schools (FFBS) as summarized in table 4 above in the growing of Soya bean and groundnuts.

Through Individual Farmer Participatory Performance tracking system individual farmers were checked to find out if they were practicing aspects of recommended practices outlined in Table 4 above. The following table 5 summarizes the adoption rate of farmers on various good agricultural practices

Table 5: Percentage of Adoption of Good Agricultural Practices in the Producer Farmers

Name of Practice	Groundnuts			Soya bean		
	All	None	Some	All	None	Some
Input and Land Selection (0 practices available)	100.0	-	-	100.0	-	-
Soil and Water Management (5 practices available)	98.0	-	1.2	100.0	-	-
Use of inputs (4 practices available)	84.8	-	15.2	82.8	5.3	11.9
Planting(2 practices)	-	14.6	85.4	-	16.6	83.4
Pest and Disease Management (5 practices)	95.9	-	4.1	92	2	6
Spraying and Pest Management (0 practices)	100.0	-	-	100.0	-	-
Harvest (1 practices)	93.0	7.0	-	96.7	0.7	2.6
Post harvest Management (5 practices)	94.7	1.2	4.1	96.7	-	3.3

As seen from the table 2 above, more than 90 percent of the producer farmers adopted all the practices on soil and water management (98% G/nuts; 100% soya); pest and disease management (95.9% g/nuts; 92% soya); good harvesting practices e.g. hand pulling in groundnuts and use of sickle in soya been (93% g/nuts; 96.7% soya); Post harvest management e.g. thorough drying, use of pesticides and modern storage facility (94.7% g/nuts; 96.7% soya); Gender participation in leadership positions, access to resources (96.5% g/nuts; 96% soya).

Key Results;

As a result of these training sessions, the following changes have been noted

- A total of **7,869** farmers (**6,985F, 874M**) have been trained so far.
- Producer farmers have implemented mandera cocks and soya stacking as post harvest techniques to dry their crops
- Farmers knowledge on pest and disease management has increased and as such they are able to implement simple management techniques such as identifying diseased crops, up-rooting and burning of diseased plants

1.1.6. Training in nutrition session and cookery demonstrations

Training of producer groups continued in the reporting period with focus on the following sessions

- Choosing what to plant and layout of home gardens
- Six food groups using fruit salad game
- Food processing
- Cookery demonstration focusing on snacks prepared from soya and groundnuts as an additional ingredient
- Male involvement in household nutrition

Key Results

- 3,499 producer group members (3,102F; 397M) have been trained in the sessions highlighted above
- Changes in nutritious eating behaviors noted in participants whereby households are able to eat not less than four food groups out of six. further to this farmers are able to prepare well balanced meals using nutrient preservative cooking methods

1.1.7. Facilitation of Farmer Field days

In collaboration with ICRISAT, Pathways conducted field days in Traditional Authorities Njombwa, Kaomba and Mwase. These field days attracted participants from all villages around

[Field days are effective way of disseminating best agricultural practices to both producer group members and non members in Farmer to Farmer Business School site. During this reporting period field days featured Rosette and aflatoxin Management, performance of different improved varieties, displaying good agricultural practices for optimal productivity and share experience and lessons learnt from Mc Knight Project with fellow Farmers.

A total of 589 (469F, 120M) participated in the field days]

the Farmer Field Business Schools, both members and non-members of the producer groups, as well as Government and other stakeholders. During these field days participants were taken through demonstration plots protocols which highlighted Rosette disease and aflatoxin control; how to maximize yield in both groundnuts and soya beans. The field days also gave non-members and other stakeholders an opportunity to appreciate what is going on in these demonstration plots.

Participants were also taken through groundnuts harvest management. Farmers were trained on the advantages of drying groundnuts using Mandela cork. After a demonstration of processes and

procedures of making Mandela cork participants were divided into two gender segregated groups and were asked to make their own Mandela cork as one way of examining their understanding.

1.1.8. Refresher Session on Gross Margin Analysis and marketing basics

Different collectives such as producer groups, producer marketing committees and APEX representatives were engaged in series of training to equip them with knowledge and skills in the area of market engagement.

Key Results

- 3499 (3102F and 397M) producer group members have been trained in marketing basics
- 29 Producer marketing groups with membership of 148 (127F 21M) have been trained in record keeping, gross margin analysis tool, bulking for collective selling and collective purchases of inputs. Following the gross margin analysis trainings, farmers are able to calculate input costs and breakeven points to come up with selling prices.
- 10F,4M members of APEX committee trained in how to conduct market surveys, negotiation skills and marketing intelligence

Change Lever 2 - Access: Increased access to productive resources, assets, markets, and appropriate and reliable services and inputs for poor women farmers.

2.1 Key activities carried out during this period

The following key activities were carried out under this change lever

- Increasing access to land for women small holder farmers and for demonstration plots.
- Provided equipment and other job related tools
- Organized producer groups to collectively purchase inputs
- Engaged with input suppliers
- Facilitated Contract Farming with ICRISAT
- Facilitated Market Linkages with Potential Buyers and Agro Dealers
- Facilitating Access to Extension Services

2.1.1 Increasing access to land for women small holder farmers and for demo plots.

At the onset of the farming season, the project team engaged local leaders, men and spouses of women beneficiaries in discussions with an aim of lobbying for release of good land for soya

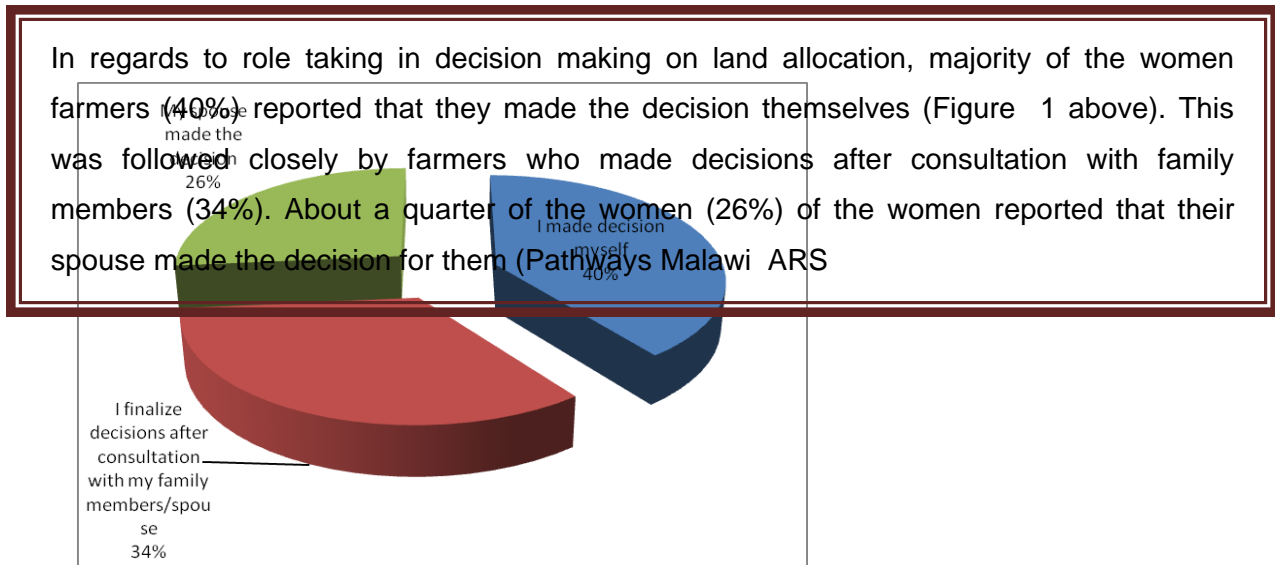
and groundnut cultivation. Meetings were held in 63 FFBS sites where the following issues were discussed

- Families should reserve some land where women can continue to grow crops such as soya and groundnuts from which they would earn some money after sales. In the impact area tobacco is dominant male crop and as such the best lands are utilized for this purpose leaving less fertile lands for food crops such as soy and ground nuts.
- Local leaders should provide communal plots in good locations for demonstration plots where whole village could learn from.
- Where this is not possible, land will be rented to allow women farmers grow soya and groundnuts in addition to other staple crops

As a result of these discussions

- Total land size of 12 hectares has been cultivated for demonstration purposes
- VSLAs were encouraged to provide loans for rent of land where some beneficiaries could not find land for production
- More women are taking part in discussions and decisions around land allocation (ref Figure below which shows results from annual cohort study report)

Figure 1 Decision on land allocation at household level



2.1.2. Provided Work Related Equipment and Tools to Farmer to Farmer Trainers

To enhance effectiveness and efficiency, Farmer to Farmer Trainers were given tools and work suits to complement their work.

Key Results;

The following table shows type and number of items given

Table 6: Work suits and other materials given to FFTs

Name of Item	Usage	Name of Traditional Authority				Total
		Mwase	Kaomba	Njombwa	Dzoole	
Weighing scale	Weighing yield during crop estimate exercise	18	14	6	12	50
Measuring tapes	Demonstration plot lay out	8	6	3	6	23
Twin	Demonstration plot lay out	8	6	3	6	23
Calculators	Gross margin and crop estimate computing	18	14	6	12	50
Demonstration signs	To enhance visibility and demarcation of plots in FFBS sites	40	40	40	40	160
Writing books	For recording data from demonstration plots, meetings and demonstration plots observations	18	14	12	12	50
Carrier bags	For easy carriage of demonstration materials	22	15	12	12	56
Ball point pens	Writing records	25	19	15	15	69
Data sheets	Recording data on demonstrations plots	18	15	12	12	50
Rain suits	Protective clothing during rainy season	25	15	12	12	59
Gumboots	Protective clothing during rainy season	25	15	12	12	59

Source: Pathway WIA, CARE 2014

2.1.3. Organized Producer Groups to Collectively Purchase Inputs

Due to challenges that farmers face in accessing seed and other inputs, the project through the Farmer to Farmer Trainers and farmer leaders sensitized producer group members to organize funds and collectively purchase inputs and seeds. The type of inputs and seed sourced included inoculants for Soya seed to boost productivity, Soya Seed and Groundnuts Seed.

Key Results

- **2,233 (2,077 F, 156M)** farmers accessed and used certified seed as opposed to previous years where 80 percent were using local seed which produced far less volume compared to improved varieties.
- Collective actions at producer group level such as savings, identifying sources of inputs and markets has enhanced trust, confidence and increased knowledge on sources of certified inputs

- Women who form a majority of the producers had by working collectively dealt with mobility challenges which are a barrier for women to access inputs.

2.1.4. Facilitated Linkages with Input Suppliers

During the reporting period, Pathways project linked farmers to five input suppliers namely; ICRISAT, IITA, Chitedze Research Station, Alinafe traders, SAJU agro dealer. Through the linkage, farmers accessed seeds, inoculants, pesticides, fertilizers and other inputs. As a result of these relationships, the following inputs were provided to producer groups:-

Key Results

- ICRISAT supplied the project with groundnuts seed which was used in the demonstration plots.
- Chitedze research station supplied **7,465** inoculants sachets which were used for soya seed.
- IITA supplied Soya seed which was used in the demonstration plots.
- Farmers accessed Soya and Ground nut seed from Alinafe traders and SAJU agro dealers

Challenges

- Some of the inputs such as inoculants had their prices increased by 100% from **K100** last year and as such many farmers could not buy the required amounts.
- Gypsum procured was not enough for all farmers who pressed orders
- Results from last year on benefits of inoculants were not very visible affecting adoption of the practice by farmers

2.1.5. Facilitated Contract Farming With ICRISAT

Pathways farmers had opportunity to multiply seed for partner research institution, ICRISAT. 15 (11 F, 4 M) 15 (Kaomba 5, Njombwa 3, Mwase 6, Dzoole 1) farmers were identified to multiply 1,600 kilogram of Nsinjiro ground nut variety. A total of 20 hectares was cultivated and other farmers will have access to buy the grown seed while a greater percentage shall be sold to ICRISAT.

Key Results

Farmers were motivated by the contract arrangement and managed their fields excellently.

Other producer farmers who did not grow under the contract will benefit through buying part of the seed from the farmers

More Farmers are willing to participate in the contract farming. Yields under contract farming were estimated at **18,410** kilograms

2.1.6. Facilitated Market Linkages with Potential Buyers and Agro Dealers

During the reporting period, Pathways facilitated a market review meeting and survey. 38(farmers of which 14 (10F, 4M) were APEX members , 4 (2F, 2M) FFTS and the rest representatives from 29 producer groups 20 (12 F and 8 M) participated in this activity and among the items discussed were; performance of previous marketing initiatives, calculation of gross margins, conducting market surveys and input supplier scouting; and analyzing market research surveys data for decision making.

2.1.6.1. Market Review Meeting

The aim of the review meeting was as follows;

- Conduct a reflection session for APEX members on last marketing season and develop action points for the current market survey
- Strengthen and sharpen APEX members' negotiation skills
- Strengthen linkages between farmers and potential buyers for soya and groundnuts through discussions

During the meeting farmers cited a number of challenges and successes that characterized the marketing of crops for previous growing season as follows;

Successes

- Farmers made sales worth **MK 1,939,544 (USD 5,104)**of soya. A total of **13,078** kilograms of Soya was sold collectively at an average price of **MK148 (USD 0.38)** per kilogram
- Farmers made and strengthened relationships with traders

Challenges

- 80% of the farmers sold Soya to vendors because of late coming of buyers
- There was lack of trust among farmers to sell collectively
- Lack of proper warehousing in the community
- Farmers' empty bags were not returned by the buyers
- Price fluctuations

Recommendations made;

1. The APEX leaders should identify a warehouse before harvesting
2. APEX leaders should ensure and strengthen farmer/buyers relationship and critically consider Variety, Price, time of sale, Payment procedure, whether to go for contract farming or not, prepare for transportation.
3. The group agreed that buyers should buy the produce including sacks else they should return the empty sacks
4. Farmers should know calculation of gross margins
5. Farmers should avoid selling the crops just after harvesting as prices are very low. They should diversify their income sources e.g. venturing into livestock and other income

generating activities to meet household needs during the period as they wait for better prices.

2.1.6.2. *Market Survey Conduction*

The market survey was conducted in Lilongwe district, the capital city of Malawi. Five Agro processing companies and two Agro dealers were identified and surveyed. The companies were selected basing on price offers, mode of payment, flexibility to use farmers own weighing machine. During the market survey data collection, 38 (28F, 10 M) APEX leaders were divided into three groups and were given different markets to survey. The first group went to Auction holdings, ACE, Market Linkages Initiatives; second group went to sun seed oil, Mngona Market; and the last group went to Mr. Ellick Banyana and Transglobe Produce.

Key Outcomes of the Market Survey;

- 8 formal markets were surveyed and data on pricing, grading, logistics, payment and flexibility of use of farmers scale were collected as shown in table 4 below
- 75% of the suppliers identified are currently based in Lilongwe city and that posed a challenge to women in accessing their stockings
- Stockists of Agro dealers who are present in the vicinity of the beneficiaries had few seeds of legumes.
- Village Savings and Loans have acted as machinery for provisional of financial resources to producer groups to invest in inputs and including farm labor hiring
- Through the linkages developed last growing season, farmers were able to access seed and other farm inputs for this period's growing season

Table 7 below shows names of markets visited, contact person and observations made.

Table 7: Observations made during Market and Input suppliers survey

Name of Market	Contact	Observation made
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Auction holdings Commodity Exchange	Mr. Malichi- 0211979414	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Market buys Soya Bean and farmers are given option of either keeping the soya in Auction Holding warehouses at a fee to wait for better prices or sell immediately. • Warehouse receipts are given to farmers which can be used as a collateral for loan in banks incase farmers has immediate cash needs. • There are 3 types of soya grades depending of moisture content, percentage of broken seed and overall appearance • Buying starts from 30 tons and the consignment attract parking fee of MK4, 000 (USD 10.50), grading fee of MK3, 000(USD 7.9), storage fee of K30 (USD 0.08) per 20 bags per day. • After sales, a deduction of 2% for administration fee. • All the deduction added, Auction Holding deduct an average of MK5 (USD 0.01) per Kilogram. • Payment will be through group bank account • The warehouse receipt can be used to take a loan of up to 50%
Agriculture Commodity Exchange for Africa (ACE)	Chipiliro Kantikana- (Trade officer) 0999419099 0998223223	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a project funded by donors through Government of Malawi • The project aims at linking farmers to exports and internal markets • Warehouse receipt system is also used • Deductions are done as follows, Warehousing charge of MK31 (USD 0.08) per ton; grading, sorting, winnowing, treatment charge of MK 3,000 (USD 7.89) and 1% administration fee after sales • Farmers can use warehouse receipt to obtain a loan up to 50% of the value of produce at the prevailing price to use for other house hold needs while waiting for the sale • The project also provide extension service to farmers in their collectives • Farmers need to find their own transportation
Sun seed oil	0999852087	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willing to buy from farmers • Farmers should use their own transport to bring the produce to the company • The company was buying at MK 140(USD0.37)/kg by then but if larger volumes are brought, price per Kg is increased by MK5(USD0.01) • Payment is by cheque through a bank account

Mngona Market	No contacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers to transport the products to market • By then prices for groundnuts MK320(USD 0.84) , Soya MK 140(USD0.37), and MK300 (USD0.75) per Kilograms • When the farmers have decided to sell to this market need to do a thorough market research first to compare prices.
Exagris – Ngala farm	Mr. M Bauleni (Outgrower manager) 0991561446	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buys unshelled groundnuts in two grades A (Full pod, very clean), and B (pod not full, very clean). • Last growing prices were MK200 (USD 0.53)/kg for Grade A and MK100(USD 0.28)/Kg for grade B. • The company buys at farm gate with its own transportation from a minimum of 3 tons • During buying, each and every bag is checked for aflatoxin and this can reduce price per kilogram. The company therefore advised farmers to adopt Mandela Cork drying method • Weighing is done using Malawi Bereau of Standard scale and for trust establishment, a one kilogram packet of sugar is weighed to verify the accuracy of the scale.
Trans globe	Mr. Tayub 0888821797 01756953 Mr. Mzumara 0999844538	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willing to buy from farmers • Has not yet started buying soya • Advised farmers to mobilize the products and then they should meet again to make an agreement. • Payment will be by cheque • Transport will be arranged by framers themselves in case that framers have failed to transport, he can provide but at a cost.
Mr. Bongani	0996781026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willing to buy from farmers • Prices will be determined by considering the farmers gross margins and the prices on the market
Mr. Iron	0991742416	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willing to buy from farmers • Prices will be determined by considering the farmers gross margins and the prices on the market

Source: Pathways 2014

2.1.7. Facilitating Access to Extension Services

Farmer to Farmer Trainers (FFTs) continue to provide extension services to farmers at village level for the sustainability of the project. However technical backstopping by CARE staff has been on-going in collaboration with government and ICRISAT staff. The staffs provided technical support to FFTs regarding demonstration plots activities and protocols. These included record keeping of every activity carried out in the course of the season i.e. land preparation, ridging, planting, weeding, pests and diseases occurrence scouting, harvesting etc. From time to time reminders were made to FFTs and Producer Group Members in regards to demonstration plots protocols to keep them well informed of what the demonstration plots try to achieve.

Change Lever 3 - Productivity: Improvements in Yield and Income through Adoption of sustainable and Intensified Agriculture and Value Addition.

3.1 Crop Assessment

The crop estimate exercise for 2013/14 crop yield started with household listing of producer groups in all traditional authorities then sampling was done. A total of 50 Farmer to Farmer Trainers (FFTs) were used to collect data and each FFT had 10 households to visit. Total producer members sampled are shown in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Sampled Producer Farmers per Traditional Authority

Name Traditional Authority	Of Total Groups	Producer Members	Farmer To Farmer Trainers Used	Sampled Producer Members
Dzoole	475		6	60
Njombwa	1042		12	120

Makulata Mwale (FTT) training Produce group members at one of the sites where Farmer Field and Business School is being implemented in TA Kaomba

FFBs are centers where technical messages on production, marketing, gender and nutrition are disseminated under Pathways WIA project

One of producer group member in TA Mwase show casing her field with her spouse. This is where she applies whatever she learns from FFBS 'Bwalo la alimi' in her area. She has grown two varieties of groundnuts; .chalimbana and Nsinjiro

And onset CARE staff providing technical backstopping

Mwase	1469	14	140
Kaomba	2051	18	180
Total	5027	50	500

Source: Pathways WIA, May 2014

As shown from table 8 above, 500(465F, 35M) producer farmers were sampled out of 5,027 (4,723F, 314M) producer farmers for the exercise. The area under soya bean and groundnuts for each farmer was measured by the 50 (30F, 20M) FFTs and then estimation of yield was made on the basis of crop stand by the end of the month of April.

Key Results;

- It was observed that area under soya beans significantly decreased by **34.9%** due to low prices offered last marketing season. The low prices were contributed by ban of soya export by government of Malawi which resulted in scarcity of markets. Apart from this, the government subsidy program did not include soya seed hence all the farmers who grew soya bought the seed at normal market price.
- On the other hand, land under groundnuts increased by **29.3%** as some farmers who did not grow soya beans decided to grow groundnuts this growing season. Apart from this prices for groundnuts have been stable for the past two years which gives assurance to farmers of making better margins
- It is expected that **767.1** metric tons and **460.9** metric tons of groundnuts and soya bean respectively will be harvested in 2013/14 cropping season.
- The total land size under cultivation for both crops was **1266.6** hectares (groundnuts **801.1** ha and soya **465.5** ha) representing overall drop of 10% from last year's total land under cultivation. These can be attributed to Soya farmers' drop which was caused by disappointments from low prices and no free seeds.
- Data generated through crop estimate surveys were used in discussion with major buyers most of whom were impressed with the tonnage expected and expressed willingness to engage with farmers for market purposes.
- Farmers were able to know the size of land in acres or hectares for the first time because of this exercise

3.2. Village Savings and Loan Activities

Over 98% of the beneficiaries continued to participate in Village Savings and Loan (VSL) activities in their groups. Capacity building and ongoing support were provided to VSL groups

and as a result of these activities, VSL groups shared out a total of **MK 376,768 546 .64** (Equivalent of **US\$ 991, 496.20**) in the reporting period.

It has been observed that share out has increased by 71.3 % compared to last year's share out. This increase has been contributed by increase in investment from soya and ground nuts sales. Though there is an increase in membership by 1,084, representing 9.3% increase in membership from last year, this increase could not result in increase in share out by 71.3% in the VSLAs. For instance the maximum

Village savings and loan group members were able to get more shares at the end of the VSL cycle and invested about 5 percent of the money in soya and ground nuts production.

There are a total of **709** VSLAs with a total membership of **12,695** (11,443 F, 1252 M) as shown in table 9 below. These groups have managed to share out a total of **MK376, 768, 546.64**.

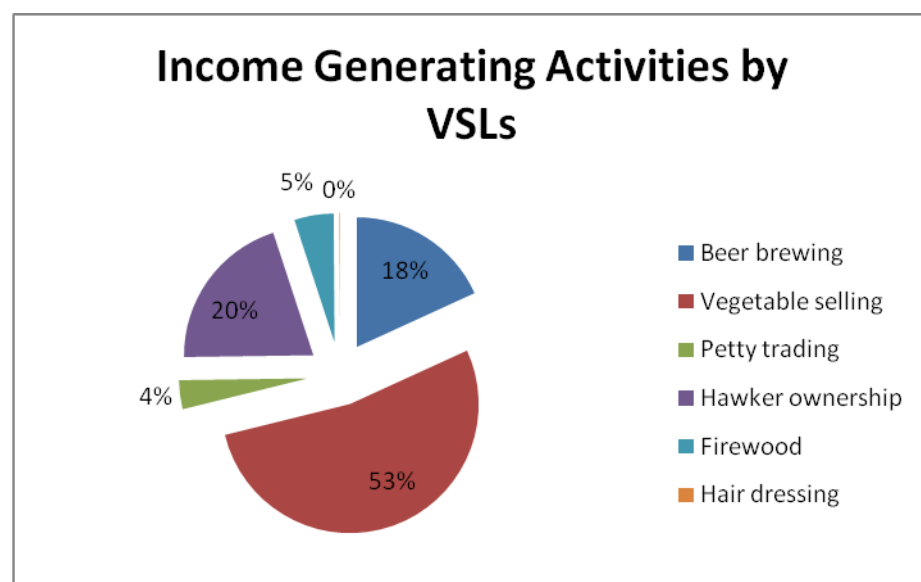
Table 9: Distribution of VSLAs and Share out Contributions to Date

Area	No. of groups	Membership			Amount	Amount in USD
		Female	Male	Total		
Njombwa	199	3,052	326	3,378	83,531,060.00	219, 818.60
Dzoole	58	732	57	789	7,544,522.00	19, 854. 01
Kaomba	302	5,354	627	5,981	179,676,244.64	472,832.20
Mwase	150	2,305	242	2,547	106,016,720.00	278,991.40
Total	709	11,443	1252	12,695	376,768,546.64	991, 496.20

Source: Pathways WIA, May 2014

More than 50 percent of the VSLA members engage in a number of income generating activities as shown in the chart 2 below;

Figure 2: IGAs engaged by VSL members



As seen from figure 2 above 53 % of VSL members who engage in income generating activities sell vegetables seconded by Hawker ownership (20%) where groceries are sold then beer brewing (18%). These businesses are done within their homestead or nearby trading centers.

3.3. Soya Bean and Groundnuts Sales

Apex Committee with support from CARE identified markets to sell Soya bean and Ground nuts. Prior to actual sales, sensitization meetings were held with producer groups to give feedback on the outcome of the marketing survey conducted. After communicating and agreement with potential buyers, all the quantities were collectively mobilized at identified bulking points and buyers were called to buy.

Key Results

- Sales worth **MK 1,939,544 (USD 5,104.06)** have been realized from sale of **13,078** metric tons of Soya bean have been sold collectively at MK148/Kg (USD 0.49/Kg) to Export Trading and the sales are progress. However other farmers sold individually and data of sales is being collected. Sales data for groundnuts will be reported in the next reporting period as the data is being collected

Change Lever 4 - Household Influence: Increased poor women farmer contributions to and influence over household income and decision making.

During the period, apart from capacity building in various forms on productivity, women empowerment women spouses, men, boys and local leaders were engaged in gender dialogues. The following gender tools were used in dialogue sessions which were held in the communities where spouses, men and local leadership were invited to debate around the gender tool and agree on next steps. The dialogue tools used during the reporting period were:-

- Communication skills
- Learning to listen
- Person and things ;
- Introducing partners to pathways –
- Listening between men and women
- Harmony in the home

Dialogue tool on harmony in home being delivered in form of role play at Chiwede FFBS learning centre to community members

Key Results

- Members of producer groups have been sharing knowledge and skills to invited guests such as local chiefs, men and spouses not participating directly in the project on the purpose of setting up demonstration plots. For example 658 spouses participated in the trainings.
- The approach has been appreciated by spouses and men not directly participating in the project
- Chiefs are openly indicating their support by committing to mobilizing their subjects to attend the meetings because of the value of the discussions in changing behaviors on how they relate with each other.
- Producer members that dropped out are rejoining the groups because of these trainings

Pathways WIA used drama, role playing to during dialogues. Unlike old way of disseminating extension messages through FFT who explains a concept and give no room for farmers to digest and think though what they are being taught, this approach has proved effective because it provokes the audience to think and come up with concrete suggestions/ solutions. The approach is not being used in dialogue only but also in other training sessions.

Change Lever 5 - Enabling Environment: More positive and enabling attitudes, behaviors, social norms, policies, and institutions.

To create enabling environment for more positive attitudes, behaviors, and social norms Pathways conducted the following activities

- Facilitating dialogue sessions
- Facilitating Community monthly review meetings
- Coordinating field visits for stakeholders
- Provided support to ANCP (Australian Aid NGO Cooperation Program) initiatives

5.1. Dialogue sessions

The project conducted dialogue sessions which deliberately invited local leaders and spouses to participate. This gesture has kept local leaders and spouses abreast of what is happening in the

project. Discussions in the dialogue sessions revolved around the five levers of the pathway project, namely capacity, productivity, access, empowerment (gender and nutrition)

Lessons covered included, quick overview on Pathways WIA project, Protocols on the demonstration plots, Communication, Nutrition and Gender. The following was the content of the discussions in during the reporting period;

5.1.1. Quick overview: Participants were taken through a quick but comprehensive overview of Pathways WIA in order to remind the producer group members about the aim and objectives of the project and get the spouses know about the same.

5.1.2. Protocols on demonstration plots: Participants were taken through the protocols on the Farmer Field and Business School (FFBS) demonstration plots in order to examine their understanding on what is going on in these demonstration plots and their ability to share with others. This also gave an opportunity to the spouses to appreciate the work that the spouses are doing and the knowledge gained from the interactions.

5.1.3. Communication: Participants were taken through the barriers of communication with an aim of enhancing effective communication amongst the groups, household or husband and wife as well as the community at large. The tool used was “Learning to Listen”

5.1.4. Gender: Participants were taken through ‘person and thing tool’ which discourage the behavior of some men as heads of household or community having too much power in imposing things over women without giving the women chance to express their views or being part of making developmental decisions within the households and the community at large.

At household level the tool addresses the issues of power between man and woman while at community, it addresses the issue of gender discrimination and make the community gender sensitive through inclusion of women in development activities.

Discussions on Communication flows and its Impact at household and community level

Key Results;

- Though the meetings were characterized by low turn up due to business with farm activities, more producer group members who were inactive attended the meetings.
- A total of **3,527** farmers participated in the dialogues of which **659** were spouses, boys and male community leaders.
- Use of the tools outlined above encouraged participation and better understanding amongst the members. Participants were divided into groups to discuss a topic as assigned and make presentations.

5.2. Community Review Monthly meetings

Monthly review meetings were facilitated for FFTS and Village Agents (VAs) jointly with MAZIKO project community extension workers. These meetings are held to share experiences

in terms of successes as well as challenges and jointly propose solutions. The meetings also act as planning platforms for harmonizing operations at the ground with other stakeholders implementing projects in the same target areas.

Key Results;

- A total of 11 meetings were held in all the four traditional authorities with an average attendance of between 15 and 25 Community Based Extension Agents (CBEAs) per traditional authority.
- A part from the review meetings targeting the FFTs, VAs and other stakeholders, **18** Marketing Group reflection meetings were held with producer group members involving **419** (380F, 39M) to review performance of the marketing activities in the last season in TA Kaomba.
- As a result of this meeting some people who had intentions of dropping out made new commitment to participate in the activities. FFTs are also able to share notes on how they can build each other skills in order for them to effectively implement activities.

5.3. Field Visits by Stakeholders

5.3.1. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Representative Visit

Pathways hosted Vicki Wilde ,the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Program Officer for Agricultural Development together with the Pathways Program Chief of Party (Maureen) and the CARE USA`s Senior Director of Development, Foundations Unit (Charu). The visit mainly was for the purpose of appreciating and acknowledging the work under Pathways Malawi. In all the implementation areas visited, the visitors expressed their impression and satisfaction with CARE Malawi Pathways Project. Farmers were also able to articulate issues around all the change levers of the project to the surprise of the visitors.

The meetings were highly attended by women. The visitors visited Dowa and Kasungu districts.

In traditional authority Kaomba, the visitors saw demonstration plots, nutrition displays and contract farming field. Farmers explained in details on marketing and Mandela cork drying approach.

In Mwase, the visitors saw demonstration plots sites and a role play depicting issues affecting household development in Malawi. On the other hand in Dzoole, a demonstration plot was visited and a presentation on calculation of gross margin analysis by a lady presenter which was followed by marketing a discussion. Finally a well coordinated role play on nutrition was showcased.

5.3.2. Learning Visit by Pathways Farmer to Farmer Trainers

Pathways WIA project organized a learning visit for farmer to farmer trainers to learn and share knowledge on how their fellow farmers are producing, selling and improving their livelihood in a project called Mc Knight. The group was comprised of FFTs from Dzoole, Njombwa, Kaomba and Mwase. Mc Knight is a project in ICRISAT which is implemented by NASFAM and Exagris. The main activity is seed multiplication.

The purpose of the project is to empower communities at Traditional Authority level to produce good quality seeds of ground nuts and make it available to their communities. Excess seed is therefore sold to ICRISAT and other organizations through contract arrangement. The Mc Knight group started with 10 farmers who passed on the seed to other farmers in the subsequent seasons. The groups have now over 300 farmers doing seed multiplication through pass on initiative. The FFTs appreciated the very good trial management and record keeping system and learnt tips on making efficient Mandela corks for groundnuts drying.

5.4. Orientation on VSL added initiative for staff (ANCP), District Councils and Area Development Committee

Well made Mandela Corks observed during the learning visit

To add value to VSLAs, the project will implement an additional initiative that aims at building economic empowerment of the members by focusing on business management, financial literacy, use of ICT to access financial and marketing services and formal linkages through Australian Aid NGO Cooperative Program (ANCP). The initiative started in October 2013 and will run through June 2017. Targeting 20,000 farmers from Pathways and WE-RISE program, the initiative's overall goal is to increase household income & agriculture production among rural households in order to overcome chronic food insecurity through livelihood diversification,

access to finances and capacity development. The initiative will enhance business management and financial literacy skills; increase access to formal banking through mobile banking and market information through use of Information Technology. 7 staff members were oriented on the initiative. Further sensitizations have been made with 2 Area Development Committees for Dzoole and Njombwa and 36(23 F, 13 M) people attended. The sensitizations were also done at District Council level where 37 (19M, 18 F) people attended in Kasungu district.

Immediate results:-

- Agreement on action points – to involve agriculture and community development in our work
- There are fears for the security for VSL involved in linkages with banks which may lead to losses for VSL due to bank charges
- Financial literacy was very welcome to build people skills.

Objective 2: To Enhance the Scale of High Quality Women Responsive Agriculture Programming

Knowledge and incentives applied to scale improvements in program quality across other CARE initiatives, partners and development organizations. A table for responses is included below. In this section, include information on how Pathways is influencing other CARE programs, operations and strategies

Focus areas	Description
Is your Pathways team engaging with other CARE project teams to learn and improve implementation? Please describe how.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathways organized joint activities with Maziko Project. For instance Market surveys, dialogue sessions and capacity building for farmer to farmer trainers in farmer field business school approach • Maziko farmers are utilizing the input suppliers and markets identified through pathways WIA and continuously learning from FFBS sites
Have you shared Pathways results, tools or lessons with colleagues and CARE partners beyond the Pathways team? How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathways and WERISE made presentation in the best practices conference held at Kalikuti Hotel in Lilongwe from 7th – 9th April 2014. The workshop was organized by Ministry of Gender and Dan Church Aid. The purpose of the workshop was to bring together like minded stakeholders whose initiatives and work touch in economic

Focus areas	Description
	<p>empowerment of women. Selected stakeholders showcased their initiatives and this generated a need for networking cross learning and joint advocacy on issues that affect women empowerment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a result of this presentation, CARE through (Pathways and WERISE) have been co opted in the economic empowerment theme team and as such it will be using these forums to share and collaborate with like minded organizations • Pathways also prepared a paper titled” Farmer Field and Business School as an extension approach and submitted to the Malawi Forum for Agricultural advisory services (MAAFS) on 14th March 2014. • MAAFS is the Malawi chapter of the African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS) which is the umbrella organisation for Agricultural Extension and Advisory Service (AEAS) in Africa. Its objective is to create efficient, effective and synergistic linkages and partnerships between AEAS of member countries to improve the delivery of these services to farmers. It operates through Country Fora that provide a mechanism for the diverse actors -including the farmers - to exchange information, share lessons, identify opportunities for providing services to each other, and for innovating on how to provide advisory services in their domains of work. • As a result of this submission CARE, through Pathways was added to the MaFAAS membership and was also invited to a thematic meeting by the Malawi Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (MaFAAS) on 10th April 2014 at Malawi Institute of Management. Another invitation has been received to attend invite a workshop, exhibition and General Assembly for the Malawi Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (MaFAAS) that will be held on Wednesday, 13th August 2014 and Thursday, 14th August 2014 at Malawi Institute of Management.The

Focus areas	Description
	<p>theme is <i>“Enhancing Innovation in Agricultural Extension and Advisory Service Delivery in Malawi”</i>.</p> <p>Sub themes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative agricultural extension and advisory services • Market oriented agricultural advisory services. • Impact of agricultural extension services on adoption. <p>Meanwhile CARE has been requested to submit papers to present on the above listed theme and sub themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<p>Have you adopted Pathways tools or lessons and included them in any new proposals in the past 12 months? Please list those including the total value of the proposal, whether we have won the funds and how many people the project targets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CARE Pathways to secure and Resilient livelihoods proposal submitted Margret A. Cargil foundation with a total budget of \$753 320 • Support for subprojects in Soya value chain development – proposal submitted to Ministry of Trade and Industry which is funded by African Development Bank with a total budget of \$878 471
<p>Is Pathways an anchor project for your long-term program? Please describe how Pathways is informing your broader country strategy and progress made in the past 12 months.</p>	<p><i>Has Pathways influenced strategic programming in the country? Describe how and give some examples.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes pathways is an anchor project by design and by implementation since it is line with the programming approach that the CO is engaged in. • Yes, Pathways continues to influence value chain and market engagement in the country office. • Pathways now sit in the Professional Women Network in Agriculture which has a secretariat in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security. • Pathways is influencing the country office long range strategic plan which is being developed to guide programming by providing lessons and innovative approaches. <p>Pathways is one of the two CARE Malawi`s programs that is being used to test the Women Empowerment agenda for</p>

Focus areas	Description
	Care Malawi's biggest Food Security and Livelihoods program (P1) whose Impact Population is the Chronically Food Insecure Rural Women (CFIRW). The Theory of Change under Pathways program has all the Livelihoods program's Outcome areas and over 90% pathways of change that Care Malawi wants to test on how it can deal with the Women Empowerment agenda. Its M&E framework is deliberately set to capture all the data that will provide the learning that the P1 is using in other programs.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FFBS as an extension approach which integrates different components is gaining ground within the country office programs. learning visits to program sites are being requested by other programs within the CO.

Objective 3: To contribute to the global discourse that surrounds women and agriculture by influencing debates and policy dialog on women and agriculture at local, national and global levels

Strengthened relationships, effective dialog, and proactive engagement with external actors in learning partnerships and platforms at multiple levels. A table for responses is included below.

Focus Area	Describe giving as much detail as possible
Have you shared Pathways experiences, tools or lessons in external forums or events? Please describe the events, the participants and the strategic value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District Executive Committee level meetings –Organized by the District Councils of both Kasungu and Dowa where Pathways presented progress made, challenges and future action plans. The participants of the meeting included various ministerial staffs and a total of 88 people attended the meeting. Area Development Committee level meetings – 8 meetings were organized during the reporting period in order to share progress and future plans Clinton Hunter Initiative - implementing Anchor Farm Business Project in Chipala; and Lisasadzi EPAs in Kasungu invited Pathways to attend a field day on 21st March, 2014 in Njombwa Traditional Authority. The theme of the field day was 'Transforming People's Lives through the Anchor Farm Business Model'. 16 (7F, 9M) Farmer to Farmer Trainers (FFT) attended the event.

Focus Area	Describe giving as much detail as possible
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and Nutrition Security Learning Event in Hawassa Ethiopia - Two Pathways staff attended the event from Malawi. <i>The objectives of the learning visit were as follows;</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ To provide an opportunity for participants to explore the GRAD project, gaining knowledge from exposure and yielding questions about how practices from GRAD can inform their own work ❖ To provide GRAD staff members with an opportunity to probe colleagues from around the world about how the GRAD experience compares to their own and how we can improve GRAD ❖ To strengthen relationships among participants and foster more peer-to-peer exchange in the future, building on momentum from events like the recent ACRES meeting in Malawi <p>The learning event provided a learning opportunity from which Pathways Malawi has some takeaways which it intends to incorporate in its programming namely: Strengthening producer groups (PG) in the FFBS after the Village Economic and Savings Associations (VESA) model. PG in Malawi are loose grouping but by incorporating some aspects of VESAs, they will become stronger and more sustainable. The second take away is strengthening the multi stakeholder forums involved input and output market system and lastly building in the micro financing element <i>in FFBS groups</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in ACRES International Conference held in Mangochi at Sun and Sands Hotel in January 2014 where 19 countries from Africa, Europe and Asia were in attendance and a presentation on Pathways Innovations around Climate smart agriculture and gender Strategy was made. The objectives were to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Share lessons and knowledge on agriculture and climate change in Africa ❖ To develop a CARE wide approach to small holder agriculture in changing climate environment ❖ To build CARE capacity to develop and implement climate smart agriculture

Focus Area	Describe giving as much detail as possible
	Selected participants (4) visited pathways field sites after the workshop in Kasungu to appreciate how the FFBS approaches being rolled out and also interact with some project beneficiaries.
Have any external stakeholders – donors, partners, etc – come to see CARE’s Pathways work in the field or come to meet with Pathways staff to learn more? Please describe these visits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Selected participants from ACRES meeting (ref table above obj 3) which include guests from Ghana and France visited two Pathways sites where they have rolled out FFBS.</i> <p><i>The visitors were able to advise farmers on technical aspects of soya and groundnuts agronomy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vicki Wilde ,the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Program Officer for Agricultural Development together with the Pathways Program Chief of Party (Maureen) and the CARE USA’s Senior Director of Development, Foundations Unit (Charu). They visited selected program sites in Kasungu and Dowa where they was able to appreciate the different components of the program and the visit took place from 7th – 8th April 2014.
Does your team have a regular external communications system (newsletter, etc), have you shared any reports externally or hosted an external event featuring Pathways? If so, please describe this/these.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FFBS guide book – The book has been distributed to 61 people (13 staff members and 50FFT). The guide book is FFBS curricula which has been translated into local language as a training tool. • FFBS as an extension approach – paper shared to a forum attended by 30 people from different stakeholders from government , nongovernmental organization academia. (Ref objective 2 for more details)
Other	

LESSONS LEARNT

What lessons have you learned during the past year that will help you to achieve your intended results moving forward? To what extent have these lessons led to modification of the results identified in the results framework?

Note: To complete this section, teams should organize a reflection session at country office level and with partners that reviews the year’s results by change lever and objective. Reports should include the 1-2 most significant lessons you learned by change lever, and

objective. Each lesson should clearly communicate what you had initially expected, what actually happened and what changes you have made, if any, as a result of this lesson.

Lessons Learned	Proposed Modification/ Way Forward
<p><u>Lever 1:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathways is innovatively using drama and role playing during trainings and dialogue sessions which is a more effective form of participatory learning and internalization new ideas knowledge and skills. • Dialogue sessions are provoking discussions on issues regarded as sensitive in nature significantly affecting relationships at household level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen use of drama role plays and dialogue session to reach larger audience to discuss issues with target groups.
<p><u>Lever 2:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some producer group members are not willing to engage in collective action in marketing and input sourcing because of trust, security of products and buyers unreliability • Farmers have been reluctant to use inoculants in soya bean this season because there was no significant differences in yield levels between those that used it and those who did not. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainings in groups dynamic to help farmers in choosing trustworthy leaders to be delivered • Utilize multi stakeholder forums to share farmer's experiences which could lead to strengthening inputs and output systems for the benefit of farmers.
<p><u>Lever 3:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Farmers become inconsistent in growing of a crop when they meet a challenge. An example would be the drop of area under soya cultivation by 34.9%. However due to low production of the crop national wide, the crop is fetching more money at the market than last growing season. This behavior can also affect prices of groundnut as it has been increased by 29.3%</i> 	<p>Build farmers capacity to understand market environment in relation to forces of demand and supply so that they can sell products during those times when it is profitable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue strengthening village savings and loan activities in the next implementation period

Lessons Learned	Proposed Modification/ Way Forward
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Village savings and loan groups have shared more income at the end of saving cycle compared to the same period last year.</i> 	
<p><u>Lever 4:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women farmers are able to take the leading role on marketing which was not the case before pathways initiative The Farmer Field and Business School (FFBS) demonstrations plot established has greatly improved spouses engagement the trainings were more practical and had visible and easy comprehensible results for the pathway beneficiaries community. As they participate, they are being exposed to gender tools which enhances changes in attitudes and norms against women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage male involvement in project activities through continued community dialogue sessions where village leaders will be engaged to mobilize all the community
<p><u>Lever 5:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The involvement of traditional leaders in Pathways project is shaping the norms in communities as leaders are on the fore front mainstreaming gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase involvement of local leaders in dialogue sessions and meetings
<p><u>Partnerships:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite engaging buyers in interface meetings, most of them are unwilling to sign formal contracts with marketing committees. When presentations are made during district council meetings, awareness of the project interventions is enhanced and stakeholders contribute solutions that help deal with challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitizing farmers on the benefit of keeping contractual obligations for long term relationships Sensitizing buyers on the opportunities available in engaging with organized groups Regular participation and presentation in these DEC forums
<p><u>Objective 2:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FFBS approach is being incorporated in 	

Lessons Learned	Proposed Modification/ Way Forward
new proposal development within country office as it is proving to be an effective learning platform for farmers.	
<p>Objective 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an increased visibility of Pathways program among different stakeholders due to increased participation in forums. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to utilize available spaces to promote pathways and its interventions
<p>Monitoring and Evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through use of PPT, the project is aware of what practices were adopted and which ones were not by farmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue data collection through use of PPT to assess trends which will inform programming.
<p>Program Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement of all staff that left the project has increased presence and quality of service delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue in capacity building of newly recruited staff

b. Challenges and Risks:

The project faced some challenges in the course of implementation in this reporting period as follows;

- Hailstorm badly hit part of Njombwa which damaged crops. This has negatively affected yield of soya in the area
- Low availability of inoculants and no significant difference in yield levels resulted in low adoption of use of this input in this growing season.
- Low price offered for soya beans caused a drop in area under the crop by 34.9% in this growing season compared to last season.
- Low turn up of expected participants in some producer groups affecting participation in FFBS learning sessions because it was a busy farming season.

The project is already addressing some of the challenges within its control by sensitizing farmers to access inputs collectively so that they get inputs at wholesale price. In addition to continual capacity building of the various market committees, the project is also continuing to engage other private stakeholders in the input and output market supply chain to support marketing of the soy and ground nuts at prices that are profitable to the farmers. On

participation during activities the project will prioritize organizing meetings outside market days or in days where other social activities or meetings are being conducted in the same community

c. Program Management, Monitoring and Evaluation:

Monitoring and Evaluation	
Monitoring and evaluation activities carried out in the last 6 months giving details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection of data from producer groups and VSL groups • Compilation of progress reports (Quarterly and Semi Annual) • Compilation of Pathways dashboard • Training producer groups in Participatory Performance Tracking based on soya and groundnuts practices. • Data entry for PPT and submission for analysis • Analysis of data for Annual Cohort study and report writing
Monitoring tools developed and being used. Please specify tools for activity/output tracking as well as tools for outcome monitoring.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updating project database to include other parameters • Participatory performance tracker review • Development of FFBS guidebook and translation into local language
Review or reflection meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly review meetings were conducted to review progress of pathways activities. The activity was attended by pathways staff, ICRISAT staff and government representatives • Community level review meeting held every month involving farmer to farmer trainers, village agents and agriculture staff at Extension Planning Area level (EPA)
Program Management	
Describe any changes in staffing in the last 12 months.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project recruited new M&E coordinator and 3 field officers
Planning meetings carried out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathways conducted project staff meeting, review meeting and planning meeting and also international WebEx meetings
Value and assessment of technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathways Malawi received technical support

support by global pathways team	through WebEx calls especially in the area of Monitoring, gender, agriculture and collectives.
Other	

d. Appendices to be included in the report:

- (i) Key activities for the next 6 months
- (ii) Group Training Activity Tracker (see template attached)
- (iii) Milestone tracker with key milestone status
- (iv) Case Studies or other reports to share