

Community Capacity Building in Road Run Off Harvesting in Malawi



Organized by

Rainwater Harvesting Association of Malawi

In

Mitundu Extension Planning Area,

Lilongwe District,

Central Malawi.

November 2016

Background

The rainy season is almost at hand in Malawi. Most farmers are currently involved in various land preparation activities including clearing of bushes and the annual construction of planting ridges. However most farmers experienced crop failures last year due to the El Nino weather pattern which resulted in erratic rainfall punctuated by incessant dry spells. Yield losses were estimated at between 60% - 80% in most parts of the country. This has increased the need for farmers to adopt water harvesting practices that will collection and storage of rainwater into the soil profile. Besides Soil is the largest water reservoir

The Rainwater Harvesting Association is promoting a number of insitu water harvesting practices. This year, the association would like to pilot various practices aimed at harvesting road run off. This will involve collecting and diversion run off from Mitre drain diversions and also from culverts into farmers' fields for increased direct use by the crop or into farm ponds and percolation ponds.

The training was facilitated by Macpherson Nthara, Chairman, Rainwater Harvesting Association of Malawi supported by the Young Professional, Blessings Jeranji.



Lady Farmer explaining how she will excavate a pond to capture road run off

Members of the association organized a hand on training session of farmers and extension workers on various methods of road run off harvesting. The aim was to raise awareness on the various techniques available and also to impart the skills on how to implement the practice in their fields.



Cross section of participants

A total of 23 farmers and 16 extension workers from Mitundu Extension Planning Area in Lilongwe District, central Malawi were trained.



Discussions on how run off flows

Technologies Promoted

During the training, farmers and extension staff were oriented on the following methods of harvesting road run off;

- Infiltration pits
- Water retention Ditches
- Farm ponds with plastic lining

- Percolation Ponds (without lining)
- Check-dams
- Planting Pits



Marking out a Percolation Pond



Farmer marking out the position of Infiltration Pits



Macpherson explaining principles of water harvesting from roads using Flip Charts pasted on a Vehicle



Participants listening attentively



Young Professional, Blessings Jeranji stressing a point during the session

Way Forward

Following the training, extension staff and farmers agreed on the following;

1. Farmers to implement practices learnt in their respective fields (23 farmers)
2. Young Professional to collect baseline data on all participating farmers
3. Need to continuously monitor and supervise progress in the excavation and mounting of the demonstrations
4. Field days and exchange visits to be conducted