## STORIES

# **WPRP Demo Projects 2008**

The following are some anecdotes provided by WPRP Demo Projects explaining how the project personally impacted or transformed the life of a local project's beneficiary.

#### 1) ZAMBIA – MALAWI

### **Story One**

Cecilia Pensulo was left to bring up four children by herself when her husband left her. She started working as a farm labourer for other farmers, but found that she could hardly support herself and the children from such irregular income. She felt that she had to farm herself and was aware that there was plenty of land available in the *dambo* near her village. With help from NLWCCDP she learned that with a particular method this previously unusable land could become productive. In her first year of cultivation in the dambo she managed to develop only a very small area, but the crops were good and the prices high so she managed to meet some of her household costs and could send her children to school again. In her second year, she managed to prepare one lima, 50 x 50 m, and from the pumpkins, squash and tomatoes she sold to traders from the nearby District headquarters she managed to make over US\$200, a small fortune by local standards.

Since then she has not looked back. She invested some of her *dambo* profits in chicken rearing, and is now on her seventh set of broilers, which every three to four months yield her a profit of some K1.5m (US\$ 300). Her wetland farming is still on-going, but less intensively now she has diversified into this other enterprise. However, she says that she will never give up *dambo* cultivation as it provides her family with food during the hungry period and income to meet household needs. As a successful and respected member of her community, Cecilia has been elected the Secretary for the Community School, something she can manage to do now her household is food secure. Hence *dambo* cultivation has also helped her contribute to her community.



Cecilia Pensulo grading her farm produce. She is paying the two farm assistants for helping harvest the produce. Previously she was a farm labourer herself.

# **Story Two**

In Chief Mukungule's area a village was established in the 1950s by a group of Bisa people who are traditionally hunter gatherers. They had chosen the site as a new permanent home, nearer to the services in the district headquarters and planned to follow a more settled way of life. However, many people found farming difficult and continued to migrate for work either locally or further away. Michael Bizile was one of those who worked away, but eventually returned to farm in the early 1980s. However, farming was not very easy or successful and the village, where he is now headman, gained the nickname "famine village"

- "Chipowe", because they were regularly short of food. Poaching of game was one of the ways they survived as well as gaining piece work or daily labouring at the Boma or District Headquarters.

Following contact with NLWCCDP in 2005 Michael, farming in the dambo on a small patch of the short grass, was pointed out to him by the project staff. As the village headman he wanted to set an example to his colleagues and followed the guidance provided with care. The results were spectacular. Within one season he managed to earn more than \$300 and had bought a bike which helps in transporting produce to market. His family now has three meals a day, and he can afford to send his children to school.



Purchase of assets, such as bicycles, by first-time dambo farmers

#### **Story Three**

Joseph Salimu was one of 50 or so young men who saw little future in their village of Chikakala. They could not grow enough food on their farms and so would regularly migrate to the District Headquarters (Boma) in the rainy season when food at home became short. They would make charcoal before they left and carry some bags with them to sell for cash with which to buy food to send home. At the Boma they would look for daily labouring work, or else they would make more charcoal in the nearby woodland or crush stones to sell for building or to make drives. As such they were contributing to environmental degradation. Joseph reports that some of the group ended up in jail for robbery, while others have become ill and some have died having contracted HIV/AIDS. Meanwhile, his wife was left alone on the farm to try to manage this and ensure a good rainfed harvest from the upland fields. In 2001, Joseph learned about dambo farming from the local Extension Agent and decided this might be a better way of making a living. It would also mean he could stay with his family during the rainy season and help ensure the upland fields produced well. While this has been achieved, the main success is in the wetland where the crops are so plentiful that traders from as far away as the Boma (50 kms) and even the Copperbelt come to buy. Joseph is now a respected member of his community, and is acting as a Community Development Worker with the NLWCCDP showing other farmers how to use the dambos in a sustainable way. He is active in the VNRMC protecting the adjoining upland areas with early burning and preventing chitemene fields in that area. He is also the Chairman of the School's PTA, quite a change from a poor migrant labourer spending half his time in Mpika Boma.

### 2) MALI Story

Kakagnan is a village with about 924 inhabitants among which 436 women (Census, 1998). It is divised into two neighbourhoods: Kakagnan Peul and Kakagnan Bozo. Kakagnan is a part of Dialloube rural district. Since 1998, WI is carried out many research activities on wetlands parts of its territory mainly on waterbirds census.

Because of the good partnership established not only between WI and Dialloube rural district, but especially with Kakagnan village, the latter has been choose as partner and beneficiary for implementing the Poverty Reduction project in the IND. The two components, bio-rights and local development are those concerning Kakagnan Bozo. The following story is about a women group from Bozo ethnic lead by Koumba Kounta and made of 75 women. According to the group it is their first time during their lifespan to participate to implementation of a project and the first time to be in contact with a micro credit institution, CAMEC in order to benefit of a credit (bio-rights) for implementing any useful activities.

After many information and awareness sessions about the bio-rights concept held by Care and WI, women group of Kakagnan bozo with other 19 groups have benefited of 51 124€ of micro credit through three institutions of micro credit, CAMEC, KONDO JIGIMA and AMPRODE. Women group of Kakagnan Bozo has received 1 144 € for carried out income generating activities in order to improve their economical status. In compensation and according the bio-rights principle the group has planted 120 and 16 young trees respectively of *Manguifera indica* and *Zizyphus Mauritania*, fencing with young *Acacia kirkii* trees. These tree species have been choose and planted by the group because of their known socio-economic values (fruits could eat or sold) and their ecological values. The 1 144 € have been used for carried out income generating activities: marketing fish and fish oil, pottery and other types of small businesses. According to members of the group, income gains from these activities allow them not only to pay back interest of the micro credit institution, CAMEC (1%/month) but also satisfying some monetary needs of group members. According to the group because of income earned the members are more independent of their husbands.

According to the group their main challenges is to succeed the restoration of the degraded plot of wetlands and Income Generating Activities to more 75 %,) requirement for the biorights micro-credit) in order to earn for ever the 1 144€ and to become shareholder of CAMEC.

Each time, the president of the group comes to Mopti for her business with CAMEC; she pays a visit to WI office and way to say "Thank" to their first lifetime project which has started to change their livelihoods. In return, these are words from WI side "Thank for your useful visit, we think that which is not necessary and obligatory, the group should continue his hard work in order to serve as an example at local, regional, national and international levels.



#### 3) INDONESIA

# Story one

Muhamaddiyah, is living in Telogo Limo Village, Tanjung Jabung Timur District, Jambi. As many of other villagers, his livelihood was very much depend on the extraction of forest product, including illegal logging. He spent at least a week in the forest and leaving his family at the village. To support family life while working in the forest, support was received from log-master in form of foods and other daily needs with very high prices. As a consequences, Muhammadiyah has to sell the extracted logs to log-master with very low price, leaving his family with no benefits but long-term dependencies. He decided to quit from this hard and dangerous job as well as debt circle, partly during the introduction of bio-rights program, but also due to the stricter law enforcement by local government.

The support from WPRP was used to buy seeds for rice field and horticulture business. Things were getting brighter when his family did the first harvest few months ago. The price rising of agriculture commodities during the last Idul Fitri blessed him with considerable benefit, enable him to return the loan and continue with the next farming season. As his commitment to support the program, Muhammadiyah agreed to be recruited as a field officer by project local partner, with a main task to provide awareness and supervision to his village neighbors on the benefit of bio-rights program (using his experience as a noble example), but also the consequences of working on illegal logging.

### Story two

Sewinarno is a father of 3 little kids, living in a small village of Muara Merang, South Sumatra. He is currently working as a labor in a palm-oil company, while his wife is also working as a non-permanent teacher in local Primary School. His was attempting to change his life by receiving a loan from local money-lender with extremely high rate of interest. Unfortunately, his business was collapsed and was chased by money-lender to return the loan. He has then a trauma to do any new business involving loan support. He also has no interest to joint in bio-rights approach introduced by WPRP about a year ago. He then change his mind once realized that the introduced bio-rights approach did not apply any interest, instead to plant compensation-trees for his own benefit. He then experiencing a good business in chicken farming supported by revolving fund provided by WPRP. A total of 3 harvests have been benefited during the last one year, and slightly change his family life. To ensure more focus paid to new business, Sewi decided to quit from his previous job in palm-oil company. This enable him to expand marketing chains. A new motorcycle has just recently been purchased to support marketing mobility.

Sewi's business instinct seems inspired by the success of his chicken farming. A 4 hectares land has been cleared and planted by rubber trees. He is dreaming that in the next 5 years a bigger-scale chicken farming could be establish and well operated, supported by the first harvest of at least 4 hectares rubber latex.