

WHAT MAKES HEIFER INTERNATIONAL FARMERS CLIMATE-SMART?

The nation faces a food and nutrition emergency, with nearly a third of Malawi's farmland affected by the worst drought in Southern Africa in 35 years. Malawi remains challenged in building resilient smallholder farmers who can feed the nation, with most agriculture projects concentrating on monocrop farming with little or no livestock. Heifer International is encouraged by the Government of Malawi's inclusion of climate-resilience and livelihood development in its Food Insecurity Response Plan. Addressing both the immediate

and long-term needs during this crisis will strengthen farmers' abilities to adapt to climate change, which will help them manage through future droughts or other climate-related crises, thereby strengthening the food security of the country.

Heifer International has worked with smallholder farmers in Malawi since 1998 and opened an office in Lilongwe in 2008. Heifer Malawi is funded by DFID, CARE, DFN, IFAD and the Government of Malawi. Together with our local implementing partners, we currently have five projects underway working with more than 14,000 families in Malawi. Heifer employs an integrated farm systems approach, in which crop and livestock farming mutually reinforce each other. Our interventions help farmers achieve self-reliance, rather than sustaining dependency and feeding the vicious cycle of poverty. Building social capital is at the heart of our work and is key to our success: strengthening communities so they can work together to improve the conditions of all families.



Malawi is considered among the countries most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, so our programs are designed to help increase their resilience, including conservation agriculture, forest management, appropriate irrigation and the use of sustainable, efficient energy sources. Building healthy soil is the foundation for healthy food production, which is pivotal to withstanding drought conditions. Manure and compost improve the ability of the soil to hold moisture and improve fertility.

Although Heifer International is not a relief organization, our participants in drought-stricken regions, like Kelvin Haji in Thyolo district and Chrissy Charles in Dowa district, are doing more than just surviving—they are thriving. Kelvin and Chrissy are participants in two separate Heifer Malawi projects. Both farmers previously relied on crop farming, which did not provide the expected yields due to poor rainfall, leaving their families more vulnerable to hunger and malnutrition.

In many of our projects, Heifer and our partners provide a variety



By keeping her cow in a shed, Chrissy Charles can control what her animal eats, as well as easily collect manure for fertilizer.

"To be honest with you, the farming calendar of 2015-2016 was the worst of all. Rains were really bad and there were not enough farm inputs for the majority of poor smallholder farmers. As a result, most families in this area do not have food to last them until the next growing season. But my family has because we used manure from our animal which has even increased our annual maize yield from 1,000 kg in the last farming season to 2,250 kg this year."

—CHRISSE CHARLES

of seeds, including cabbage, maize, rape and tomato, because crop diversity helps farmers better survive climate shocks. Heifer also provides cement for cow sheds. And because Heifer's experience shows that farmers' success depends largely upon training, participants attend trainings in business development, dairy management, dairy feed formulation and feeding, fodder and pasture establishment,

feed conservation, and maize and horticulture production.

By irrigating and applying cow manure as fertilizer to their diverse crops, Kelvin and Chrissy have greater fruit and vegetable yields for home consumption and to sell. Their cows now provide up to 12 liters of milk daily, a great source of nutrition and income. Their families eat three meals a day, every day. They can afford to send their children to school.

Malawi must invest in helping more farmers adopt climate-smart agricultural practices. Doing so will greatly help Malawi become food-secure and resilient against the effects of climate change. The communities with which we work demonstrate that farmers who employ our techniques yield excellent harvests and have enough food all year round. All farmers in Malawi deserve such a solid future.

"My family has a cow that gives us money, manure and milk every day. What a blessing from Heifer International!"

—KELVIN HAJI



Kelvin Haji stands in his cabbage field, which produces a great yield thanks to the manure from his cow.

Contact Heifer International Malawi to get involved in our work and help more Malawian farmers become resilient to climate-change: 265-01-762-946 | heifer.malawi@heifer.org | www.heifer.org/malawi