

Case 12: M A L A W I

Sendwe Village Forest Area Management Programme

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Empowerment of communities of Sendwe to make constructive decisions and take responsibilities for, and promote collective action for the protection, management and sustainable utilization of forest resources from Sendwe Village Forest Area.

The National Forest Policy, 2016, "aims at empowering rural communities to conserve and develop Malawi's forest resources for the economic and environmental benefit of the present and future generations." This is also in agreement with the National Forestry Programme (NFP), 2001, which aspires "to improve the livelihoods of forest dependent communities through the participatory management of forests both in forest reserves and on customary land".

Implementing Organization Department of Forestry

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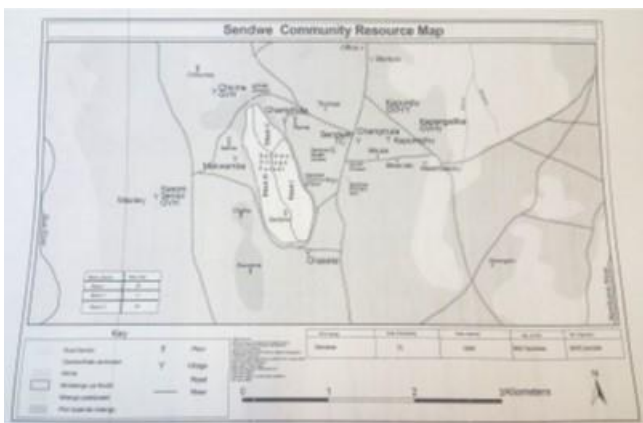
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Funding Source USAID, Wildlife and Environment Society of Malawi (WESM), WFP

Implementing Period 2006 – to date

Project site Sendwe Village, Senior Chief Khongoni, Lilongwe District

Key Words: Participatory Forest Management of 69Ha Sendwe Village Forest Area by 20 Villages



Community map



Sendwe community members in their village forest area

Background of the Project

In the years between 1980 and 1997 Sendwe Forest Area was completely deforested due to wanton cutting of trees by

communities surrounding the Village Forest Area (VFA). Communities cut down trees for firewood for tobacco curing and construction of tobacco shades for burley tobacco. Sendwe is within a tobacco growing community.

Following the destruction of Sendwe Forest the communities experienced some negative social effects such as:

- ✓ Lack of inadequate firewood for domestic use;
- ✓ Soil erosion that formed deep gullies in their farms;
- ✓ Loss of medicinal plants and herbs;
- ✓ Low agricultural yields which led to a looming hunger in the villages.

Overall Goal and Objectives of the Project

Goal: Improve the lives of rural people and allow them to govern their forest resources through conservation of their Village Forest Area.

Objective 1: To reverse land degradation

Objective 2: To preserve other natural resources such as wild life

Objective 3: To preserve the natural environmental benefits which are shared by the communities

Objective 4: Loss of medicinal plants and herbs;

Objective 5: Low agricultural yields which led to a looming hunger in the villages.

Major Activities

✓ **Supporting Forest Policy**

- local communities are provided with appropriate incentives to manage forest resources based on clear mechanisms of ownership and control;
- that sound technical advice based on indigenous knowledge and scientific research is provided to all stakeholders using different Information, Education and Communication (IEC) methods; and
- local communities are empowered to effectively lead and participate in forest conservation and management

✓ **Participatory Forest Management Plan**

The Participatory Forest Management Plan for Sendwe was developed and adopted in 2006. The objective is described above and the socio-economic description is as follows:

- Sendwe has 700 households with an average of 5 people per household
- People are subsistence farmers and maize is the main food crop.
- Most people grow burley tobacco as the main cash crop. Other cash crops include groundnuts, soya beans, sweet potatoes, vegetables and sugarcane
- Alternative sources of income are brewing and selling beer; and fishing in Bua and Nambuma Rivers
- Livestock reared include chickens, goats, sheep and cattle
- The area has a good road network. Currently the main road to Lilongwe City is tar mark road
- There is no health facility close by. People go to Kapiri Hospital in Mchinji District some 30Km. as a result most people use traditional medicines from the VFA

Description of Management Blocks

Sendwe Forest Area is divided into different management blocks based on the nature of terrain and condition of forest.

The blocks are:

✓ **BLOCK 1:**

Lies to the south of the VFA, 20Ha. The block has straight poles. This is where bee-hives are hung and communities collect mushrooms. Dominant tree species are Mseza and Mvubwe

✓ **BLOCK 2:**

Lies to the north-east of the VFA, 12Ha. The area is stony. Dominant species are Mtondo and Thombozi. Regenerants are protected from animal browsing, particularly cattle. Most wild fruits are found in this area.

✓ **BLOCK 3:**

Lies to the north-west of the VFA, 37Ha. It has scattered trees and grass. Hyenas always like the area because it is flat. It has fertile soils. Most dominant species are Muwanga, Mtawa and Kachere. There is a small dambo which provides wildlife with water.

Benefit Sharing Mechanism

The Management Plan adopted in 2006 stipulates the following Benefit Sharing Mechanism;

- ✓ The 20 villages will share harvested firewood and poles equally.
- ✓ Women from all the 20 villages will be allowed to collect firewood during harvesting time
- ✓ During funerals and community development meeting, firewood will be collected
- ✓ Poles will be provided for development activities
- ✓ 45% of honey collected will be sold and money deposited into the Village Forest Management Account
- ✓ 55% from honey sales will be shared equally amongst active members

Resource Persons

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Sendwe Village.



Honey production in Sendwe village

