

COMMUNITY IRRIGATION PROJECT



These irrigation projects are providing significant and exciting benefits for whole communities. These projects are exciting for three important reasons: first, they address two of the main problems faced in villages throughout much of Africa. Second, they empower local communities to lift themselves out of poverty without requiring any further funding. Third, they enable communities to become donors who are able to give funding for further development projects in their local area.

Two of the main problems faced by rural communities throughout much of Africa are as follows: first, a lack of food which has been caused by unreliable rainfall and the fact that many families are dependent on growing their own food.

Second, there are many orphaned children in southern Malawi. For example, in Jimu Village there were 220 families and 500 orphans and in Chambuluka Village there were 250 families and 600 orphans. Many orphans only have grandparents to care for them.

Consequently, a very heavy financial and physical burden is put on elderly people. The Late Area Pastor Arone Mpomba and his wife were both in their seventies before Pastor Mpomba died in 2008. They had had ten children, seven of whom had died, and 23 grandchildren for whom they had been responsible.

Each community irrigation project is provided as an interest-free loan. This loan provides funding for constructing an irrigation system within the village together with accountancy training, seeds, fertilizer, sacks, stationery, and transport.

Communities are selected to benefit from funding and are asked to choose a committee who will co-ordinate the project. This committee completes a 25-page application form and business plan on behalf of the community. The aim of this application form is to encourage communities to understand the significant potential benefits of this project and to commit themselves to taking responsibility for the project and for paying back the loan.





The loan for this community project is given with an agreement from the 200 farmers - who benefit from the irrigation - to sell half of their crops and to give the proceeds for community projects within their local area. (50% of two crops is the same as, or possibly more than, 100% of one which has often failed because of unreliable rains. They may also benefit from the community projects.) The loan will be repaid in six payments after each harvest is sold. These loan repayments will be used to set up further irrigation projects.

During a visit to Malawi during 2017, we learned that wind speeds had increased in recent years which had been causing damage to our wind-pump systems and it was costing them an increased amount to maintain their structures. In September 2018, we therefore provided our first solar irrigation project.

Our previous wind-pump irrigation systems irrigated 50 acres of land, but the solar-powered systems will irrigate 200 acres. Consequently, 100 acres will be used to grow crops for the farmers' personal use and the crops from the remaining 100 acres will be sold to raise funds for local projects. Two crops of soya beans, Masika maize, and ground nuts grown on 100 acres of land should produce an annual income of about £130,000 for local community projects. The income for all 200 acres would be about £260,000.

We encourage communities to use the net income from their first harvest to build a community centre which will house an orphan day-care centre. When this building has been completed, the income from the following harvests can be used to set up and run the orphan day-care centre. After the loan has been repaid, there should be sufficient income to set up other projects in the local area as well. One village, for example, wants to provide for some adult literacy training, a second village plans to send orphaned children to secondary school, a third village plans to fund some business loan schemes and a fourth village wants to build a grinding mill.

The orphan day-care centre will care for orphaned children who only have grandparents to care for them. The children will be cared for and fed by widows and unmarried women during the day and will return to their grandparents at night. In this way the family relationships, which are important in African culture, is maintained while the physical and financial burden is taken off elderly people and widows and unmarried ladies can earn as income.

With solar irrigation we provide each project in two payments, the second following about 2-3 months after the first. The first payment is for the solar system, and the second for the training, seeds, fertilizer, sacks, stationery, and transport for the first harvest. The latest costs are as follows:



First Payment:

The cost for one solar irrigation system, including drainage channels, and plastic piping, together with construction and a year's oversight and maintenance was MK16,875,000 (£15,189.00) in October 2022.

Second Payment:

Training MK500,000 £393

Seeds:

80 x 10kg Masika Maize MK2,280,000 £1,795

80 x 10kg Soya Beans MK1,960,000 £1,543

40 x 35kg Ground nuts MK1,600,000 £1,260

200 x 50kg Fertilizer MK10,000,000 £7,874

Sacks MK450,000 £354

Stationery MK75,000 £59

Transport MK1,000,000 £787

TOTAL MK12,400,000 £12,465

Price and Exchange Rate are dated 5th January 2023

Exchange Rate: £1 = MK1,270

(Sterling prices have been calculated to the nearest pound.)

