

**Assessing Rural Transformations (ART) project.**

**QUIP REPORT: MASUMBANKHUNDA, MALAWI**

**AUGUST 2015**

*This report summarises findings from pilot use of the Qualitative Impact Protocol (QUIP) and provides independent evidence on how the selected project is having an impact on the livelihoods and food security of intended beneficiaries at the household level. Sections 2 and 3 set the context around the project interventions, and Sections 4-6 summarise findings in tabular form, citing primary sources using standard codes for interviewed households in two different villages (Pokondodo (PK) and Kumalindi (KM), coded as PK1-10 & KM1-16) and focus groups (FGKM1 & 2, FGPK1 & 2). These codes enable the reader also to refer directly to narrative summaries of what respondents said. These are reproduced in the Annex (coded transcripts), sorted by impact domain and attribution level. The layers of information revealed in sections 4-6 are as follows:*

- *Have things changed for better or worse in different areas of respondents' lives over the past two years?*
- *Are these changes in any way linked to the project being assessed, or incidental?*
- *What exactly are the drivers behind the changes cited by respondents?*
- *Are there any interventions which have not proved to be drivers as expected?*

*The majority of the analysis is found towards the end of the document, referencing all the data in the preceding tables to pull out any major themes and patterns. The analysis that accompanies the tables throughout the document is only intended to draw attention to key findings and attempt to explain any anomalies which may stand out.*

## **1. PROJECT INFORMATION**

The Farm Enterprise Development for Food and Economic Security project (FEDFES) aims to deal with both production and market side constraints faced by smallholder farmers by ensuring continuous availability of quality seed, access to extension services, improved production, and access to markets with good returns on their produce. It scales up the learning from the Community Seed Improvement and Value Adding COMSIVA Pilot project which largely focused on improving seed and commercial production through provision of quality seed inputs on a revolving basis. The target crops are soya and groundnuts, with an additional focus on increasing livestock ownership and production. This project will equip smallholder farmers with the skills to produce both certified seed and commercial produce; increase availability and affordability at community level; and enable excess to be sold through local and national level markets along with other agro-based products. Indirect beneficiaries will have access to certified seed which the 300 farmers will have produced. The project started in May 2012 and is due to finish in December 2015.

This report is part of an action research project aiming to develop a "qualitative impact protocol" (QUIP) for producing timely evidence of how and how far interventions such as FEDFES are achieving their intended impact at the household level. It draws on data collected in Masumbankhunda (Lilongwe) district, where the project is being coordinated by the NGO Self Help Africa (SHA). A first round of QUIP data was collected in November 2013, the sample this time covers different households and is much larger (the pilot sample was 8 households, this sample is 26 households). Appendix 1 provides a general summary of the QUIP methodology, Appendix 2 provides details of the household respondents, and beneficiaries.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

26 household interviews and four focus group discussions were carried out by two independent researchers from the University of Malawi between 24 November and 1 December 2014. A key characteristic of the method was interviews were as far as possible 'blinded', in the sense that they focused on general changes in the lives and livelihoods of selected households, with respondents not aware of the intention to assess impact of a specific project (see Appendix 1 for a fuller account of the methodology). Respondents were asked to comment on changes in their lives and livelihoods over the past two years.

Households were randomly selected from lists of households who had already been surveyed for the Individual Household Method (IHM) – the quantitative monitoring tool being used for this project - (62 in total) in two purposefully selected sample villages. While these cannot be taken as statistically representative of the 180 villages in the district, they are typical of the project area. Half the sample (13) were beneficiaries and half non-beneficiary households in this round of data collection. Details of which households received which interventions are listed in Appendix 2, and beneficiary households are identifiable in the tables using symbols or bold type.

Lead respondents comprised 19 women and seven men aged between 22 and 82. Other members of the household present at interviews were also encouraged to contribute to the discussion. The focus groups included four different groups: younger women, older women, younger men and older men (some of whom were also interviewed for the household interviews).

The FEDFES project started in May 2012, so communities should have been impacted in some way by the project's work at the point that the QUIP was carried out in December 2014. At the point the interviews were carried out SHA had already conducted training in areas including leadership, value addition, marketing and seed multiplication, as well as distributing certified groundnut and soya seed, inspecting crops and collecting repayment for the seeds for the pass-on scheme. More details on the interventions each households were involved in can be found in Appendix 2.

### 3. CLOSED QUESTIONS

At the end of each section of the interview, respondents were asked closed questions intended to summarise the changes they had experienced over the previous two years. These questions were as follows:

1. Overall, how has the ability of your household to produce enough food to meet its needs changed in this time?
2. Overall how has your cash income as a household changed over this time?
3. Overall, how has what you as a household can purchase with money changed over the period?
4. Overall, how much are you eating as a household compared to this time two years ago?
5. Overall, do you feel the combined total value of all your assets has gone up or down?
6. Overall, do you feel your overall well-being, and that of your family, has gone up or down?

Table 3.1. Summary of household responses to closed questions – sorted by beneficiary status

Code *	Gender	Age Range	Beneficiary? **	1. Food Production	2. Cash income	3. Purchasing power	4. Food consumption	5. Assets	6. Overall Wellbeing
PK3	Male	41-60	++	+	+	+	+	+	+
PK6	Female	20-40	++	-	=	-	=	=	=
PK7	Female	41-60	++	-	=	-	-	+	-
KM3	Female	20-40	++	+	+	+	+	+	+
KM10	Male	41-60	++	+	+	+	+	+	+
KM11	Male	41-60	++	+	+	+	+	+	+
KM12	Male	61-80	++	-	+	+	=	+	+
PK8	Female	41-60	+	-	-	-	-	+	-
PK5	Female	41-60	+	-	-	-	-	=	=
PK10	Female	60-80	+	-	-	-	=	-	-
KM1	Female	61-80	+	=	-	-	-	+	-
KM2	Male	41-60	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
KM15	Female	?	+	-	-	-	=	=	=
PK1	Female	20-40	/	-	-	-	-	=	-
PK2	Female	20-40	/	-	+	=	=	+	+
PK4	Female	20-40	/	-	=	-	-	-	+
PK9	Female	20-40	/	-	-	-	=	-	-
KM4	Female	20-40	/	=	-	=	=	-	=
KM5	Female	20-40	/	=	-	=	=	+	=
KM6	Female	80-100	/	=	-	=	-	=	-
KM7	Female	41-60	/	-	+	-	-	+	+
KM8	Male	20-40	/	-	-	-	-	+	-
KM9	Male	20-40	/	-	-	-	-	+	-
KM13	Female	60-80	/	-	-	-	-	+	-
KM14	Female	20-40	/	+	=	-	=	+	=
KM16	Female	80-100	/	-	-	-	-	=	-

**Notes:** - Worse/ lower/ less; + Better/ higher/ more; = The same; ? Not sure

\*Household codes differentiate between two villages (KM & PK)

\*\* ++ Beneficiary from early 2013 to end 2014; + Beneficiary from late 2013/early 2014 to end 2014; / Non-beneficiary (see Appendix 2 for more details on interventions each household received)

Table 3.1 above is deliberately sorted by beneficiary status as there was a clear divide in responses between different SHA beneficiary types. Looking more closely at the Interventions Table in Appendix 2, we can see that the households which have been marked with ++ have received SHA interventions over a longer period of time than those marked with

a +. These households have responded most positively to the closed questions with four of the seven stating an improvement in all of the domain areas from food production to income and health, and one in most areas.

The pattern is less clearly defined for the remaining ‘+’ households, who, apart from household KM2, do not show any marked difference with non-beneficiary households. This may indicate that a certain length of intervention is required before seeing significant results, but may also be due to more specific household or community features which may also explain why two of the seven ++ households do not exhibit such dramatic change (PK6 and PK7), and why there is a clear difference between Kumalindi and Pokondodo village responses. Further to this point, it is interesting to note that of the five beneficiaries who did **not** state that they had a link with SHA, four were from Pokondodo village (PK6 and PK7 were the only two beneficiary households in that village to cite a link). This distinction between the two villages continues in the proceeding tables and is discussed again later.

**Table 3.2 Focus group responses to how overall wellbeing has changed in the last 2 years**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Participants</b>	No. from households already interviewed (of whom beneficiaries)	<b>Overall Wellbeing</b>
FGKM1	Older Women	6 (1)	-
FGKM2	Older Men	4 (4)	+
FGPK1	Younger Men	3 (3)	+
FGPK2	Younger Women	6 (5)	-

\* Codes differentiate between two villages (KM & PK)

The focus groups highlight a different distinction, this time between gender rather than village. Whilst Table 3.2 only shows the answer to one question (posed at the end of the discussion), this is an accurate reflection of the overall tenor of the responses of these focus groups. The female groups were negative about change in most areas of life, whereas the male focus groups felt that positive changes outweighed or at least mitigated the negative drivers. It is difficult to see why there was this distinction – the responses are starkly different. The only potential pattern that can be drawn is that within the older female focus group (FGKM1) there is only one SHA beneficiary, and the younger female focus group (FGPK2) which contains more beneficiaries is located in Pokondodo village where there is already a marked difference in responses overall. The detail of the responses are discussed in more depth later in the report.

## 5. ATTRIBUTED IMPACT

Respondents' answers to open questions that identified specific impacts were sorted into groups using the codes indicated in Table 4.1. All the sorted text is available in Annex 1. Tables 4.2 and 4.3 show the codes for household interviews and focus group discussions that included impact statements falling into each category – first positive and then negative.

Table 4.1. Coding of impacts

	Positive code	Negative code	Explanation
Explicit project	1	2	Positive or negative change explicitly attributed to the project or to explicitly named project activities.
Implicit project	3	4	Change confirming (positive) or refuting (negative) the specific mechanism (or theory of change) by which the project aims to achieve impact, but with no explicit reference to the project or named project activities.
Other attributed	5	6	Change attributed to other forces (not related to activities included in the project's theory of change).
Other not attributed	7	8	Change not attributed to any specific cause.
Neutral	9		Change that is ambiguous, ambivalent or neutral in its effects: i.e. cannot readily be coded positive or negative.

Table 4.2. Positive changes reported by households and focus groups

	1 Project explicit	3 Project implicit	5 Other
Food production	<b>KM2, KM3, KM10, KM11, KM12</b> FGKM2, FGPK1	<b>PK3</b>	PK1, PK2, PK9, KM13
Cash income	<b>KM2, KM3, KM5, KM10, KM11, KM12</b> FGKM2, FGPK1	<b>PK3, KM12</b>	PK1, PK2 <b>PK5</b> , KM7
Purchasing power	<b>KM2, KM3, KM10, KM11</b> FGKM2, FGPK1	<b>PK3</b>	<b>PK3, PK5</b>
Food consumption	<b>KM2, KM3, KM10, KM11</b> FGKM2, FGPK1	<b>PK3</b>	
Intra-hh & village relationships	<b>KM10, KM11</b> FGKM2	FGKM2, FGPK1	PK4 FGPK1, FGPK2
Asset accumulation	<b>KM2, KM10</b> FGKM2	<b>PK3</b> FGPK1	
Links with external orgs	PK4, <b>KM2, KM3</b> , KM5, <b>KM10, KM11, KM12, KM15</b> FGKM2, FGPK1	KM5, KM16 FGKM1	<b>PK3</b> , KM7, KM13, KM14, <b>KM15</b> , FGKM1, FGPK1
Overall wellbeing	<b>KM10, KM11, KM12</b> FGKM2, FGPK1	<b>PK3</b> , PK4	PK2, KM7, <b>PK3</b>

**Notes:** KM & PK refer to household codes (see Appendix 2). FGKM & FGPK refer to focus groups as follows: FGKM1 older women; FGKM2 older men; FGPK1 younger men; FGPK2 younger women.

**Bold type indicates the household are current beneficiaries of the SHA project**

Five individual households explicitly stated that the positive changes they experienced in their food production was due to the SHA project. Common amongst four of these households was their change in practice of using livestock manure on their crops, a practice learned in SHA training. Household KM2 noted the training from SHA on how to make manure has increased their harvest yields. Similarly, household KM3 commented that they are:

*“harvesting more than during the 2 years before because of the groundnut seed credit by Self Help Africa. The money realized is used to buy fertiliser for the maize.”* [KM3 C1]

KM10 and KM11 also attributed positive changes in food production to the use of manure, as encouraged by SHA, and the hybrid seeds recommended by SHA which have proven to be high yielding.

Comments by the two focus groups that explicitly attributed positive changes in their food production to the SHA project echo those of the individual households discussed above. One focus group (FGKM2), made up of six older men noted that the ability of people like them to produce their own food had gone up due to a number of factors, including training by SHA on how to stagger crop planting and make manure fertiliser. The farmers in the focus group also adopted ‘winter farming’ and diversifying the types of crops they produce after encouragement by SHA - and as a result of this they are able to produce food all year round. The focus group made up of six younger men spoke of similar positive changes in food production, and also commented that:

*“the manure making training from Self Help Africa was the most important change because they are not in the worst situation in terms of food security due to that.”*[FGPK1 C1]

Those households interviewed who experienced positive developments in their food production are also more likely to have seen resulting improvements in their household income, purchasing power and food consumption.

Tables 4.2 and 4.3 show some households not listed as current beneficiaries attributing positive change to SHA. This can be explained by referring back to the interview transcripts which shows that these households were in fact previous project beneficiaries. Looking at Table 4.2 on positive changes reported by the households over the period, there are three such households who have experienced positive changes and explicitly or implicitly attribute it to a previous link with SHA; PK4, KM5 and KM16.

PK4 is a previous beneficiary of SHA seed credit and the respondent has linked this to an improvement in overall wellbeing:

*“She said that despite that the husband left for South Africa, the household's wellbeing improved because through selling of groundnuts, the butchery business was sustained. She also said that the household members enjoyed good health because they were eating healthy food in adequate amounts.”*

She also cites SHA as an organisation with whom she has had a significant relationship:

*“For the past two growing seasons, the respondent's household has been getting 30 kilograms (shelled) of groundnuts seed from some organization... She hailed this organization saying that the remaining groundnuts were always sold at Malingunde Trading Centre at a profit and that some of the money earned was used to sustain the butchery business that the husband was running.”*

KM5 was also a previous beneficiary and cited SHA as an organisation from whom they had benefited, and were disappointed not to have continued the relationship:

*“The respondent reported that they got groundnuts and a goat on credit from the organisation. This has improved their earnings but the organisation has stopped working with them last year citing that they have phased out their project”*

Similarly, KM16 was a previous beneficiary and spoke positively of the project:

*“She no longer benefits from this organization but spoke highly of it. She said when she was physically strong she used to receive soy beans and groundnuts seeds on loan but had not received any of these seeds in the last two growing seasons because she has grown very old.”*

Table 4.3. Negative changes reported by households and focus groups

	2 Project explicit	4 Project implicit	6 Other
Food production	<b>PK7, KM15</b>		PK1, PK2, PK4, <b>PK5, PK6, PK7, PK8</b> , PK9, <b>PK10</b> , KM6, KM7, KM8, KM9, <b>KM12</b> , KM13, KM14, <b>KM15</b> FGKM1, FGPK1, FGPK2
Cash income			PK1, PK2, PK4, <b>PK8</b> , PK9, <b>PK10, KM1</b> , KM7, KM8, KM9, <b>KM12, KM15</b> FGKM1, FGPK2
Purchasing power			PK1, PK2, PK4, <b>PK8</b> , PK9, <b>PK10</b> , KM5, KM7, KM8, KM9, <b>KM12, KM13</b> , FGKM1, FGPK1, FGPK2
Food consumption			PK1, PK4, <b>PK5, PK10</b> , KM6, KM8, KM9, KM13 FGKM1, FGPK2
Intra-hh & village relationships	FGPK2	<b>KM15</b>	<b>PK5, PK7</b> , KM5 FGKM1, FGKM2, FGPK2
Asset accumulation			<b>PK10</b> , KM7, KM8 FGKM1, FGKM2, FGPK1, FGPK2
Links with external orgs	<b>PK6, PK7</b> , KM7, FGKM1, FGPK2		FGKM1, FGKM2
Overall wellbeing	<b>PK7</b>	<b>KM15</b>	PK1, <b>PK5, PK8</b> , PK9, <b>PK10, KM1</b> , KM5, KM6, KM8, KM9, KM13, KM16 FGKM1, FGKM2

Notes: KM & PK refer to household codes (see Appendix 2). FGKM & FGPK refer to focus groups as follows: FGKM1 older women; FGKM2 older men; FGPK1 younger men; FGPK2 younger women.

**Bold type indicates the household are current beneficiaries of the SHA project**

Clearly the majority of negative comments are linked to causes unrelated to the project (Table 5.2, in the next section on Drivers of Change outlines what these causes are). Among the 26 individual interviews conducted, just three project beneficiaries, and one previous beneficiary (which are coded as non-beneficiaries) made statements that question the SHA project's theory of change or the effectiveness of its approach/implementation. All relate to receipt of bad seed, which failed to germinate.

An excerpt from KM15's interview elaborates:

*"She also reported that the household has stopped growing groundnuts because they do not have money to pay a deposit fee of MK1500 to Self Help Africa so as to access groundnuts seed on loan. She also reported that she paid the fee last growing season which unfortunately did not germinate but she was forced to buy seed so that she repays the seed loan because she was being urged to pay back by the chairman of the group who stays in the village. She said the household had not taken up any new activities and that they are not doing anything differently than others except that they will not grow groundnuts this year when the majority will grow groundnuts."* [KM15 C1]

PK6 and PK7 also reported receiving poor quality groundnut seed which failed to germinate and therefore impacted on their income. KM7 was a previous beneficiary of the project and commented:

*"The groundnut seed we got failed to germinate. We are no longer working with this organisation because we failed to pay back the groundnut seed credit due to germination failure."* [KM7 G1]

This was also the reason for negative comments made by two of the focus groups (both female):

FGPK2: *"They are giving us groundnut seed but this seed has failed to germinate and the organisation has so far done nothing on solving this problem so we can say we have not benefited from it."*

FGKM1: “Self Help Africa has introduced the groundnut seed and goat credit program with a 15% interest rate. It has not helped the people since it confiscates the groundnuts as well as the goats from the people even when they did not do well leaving people stranded.”

## 5. DRIVERS OF CHANGE

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 drill deeper into factors behind observed changes by listing the main cause-and-effect statements reported from the open-ended discussions. The data was analysed by impact domain (food production, cash income etc.), looking for reasons *why* positive or negative statements had been made in relation to that domain. A ‘driver’ was only selected if more than one household or focus group had referred to it, thereby eliminating one-off statements.

Table 5.1. Drivers of positive change

	Health	Food production	Income	Purchasing power	Food consumption	Relationships (intra hh and village)	Assets	Overall wellbeing
SHA Training	<b>KM10, PK3</b>	<b>KM2, KM10, KM11, PK3</b> FGKM2, FGPK1	<b>KM2, KM10</b> FGKM2, FGPK1	<b>KM10, KM11</b> FGKM2, FGPK1	<b>KM2, KM10, KM11</b> FGKM2, FGPK1	<b>KM10</b>	<b>PK3, KM10</b> FGKM2	<b>KM10</b> FGKM2, FGPK1
SHA Seed Credit		<b>KM3, KM12</b>	<b>KM3, KM5, KM11, KM12</b>	<b>KM2, KM3</b>	<b>KM3</b>		<b>KM2</b>	<b>KM11, KM12, PK4</b>
SHA Gender training						<b>KM10, KM11</b> FGKM2		
Religion/ God	<b>PK5, KM11</b>					FGPK2		
Investment in livestock		PK1, PK2						
Investment in soy production		PK2, PK9						
Village savings and loans group		KM13		<b>PK3</b>				<b>PK3, KM7</b>
Increased farming of wetland			<b>PK3</b>	<b>PK3</b>	<b>PK3</b>	FGPK1, FGKM2	FGPK1	PK2, <b>PK3</b>
Other income generation			KM7, PK1, PK2, <b>PK5</b>	<b>PK5</b>				

**Bold type indicates the household were beneficiaries of the SHA project**

It is clear that the key positive drivers are related to SHA’s work in this area; training on improved farming approaches, gender training and the provision of groundnut seeds on credit. A few key households (KM2, KM3, KM10, KM11) have really benefited from the project across many different domains, potentially great case studies to help understand what particular circumstances led to these households seeing so much improvement.

Other income generating activities refer to a wide range of activities which some households engage in to top up their income. These are mainly non-beneficiary households, apart from PK5 who is a single female headed household who made a point that she has decided to sell beans in addition to groundnuts:



*“She said production of beans was the new activity she had undertaken so as to earn more cash. The beans were sold at Malingunde Trading Centre to vendors... She said that because they grew beans in the last growing season, they earned some extra money such that they bought new clothes.” [PK5 C2]*

The other positive drivers are cited by relatively few households so cannot be considered particularly significant.

Table 5.2. Drivers of negative change

	Health	Food production	Income	Purchasing power	Food consumption	Relationships (intra hh and village)	Assets	Overall wellbeing
Fertiliser cost (and subsequent lower yields)		PK1, <b>PK5</b> , <b>PK7</b> , <b>PK8</b> , <b>PK10</b> , KM6, KM7, KM9, KM13, <b>KM15</b> FGKM1, FGPK1, FGPK2	KM7	PK1, PK2, KM7, KM13  FGKM1, FGPK2	PK1, <b>PK5</b> , KM13  FGKM1, FGPK2	FGKM2 FGPK2, FGKM1	KM7  FGPK2	KM5, PK1, <b>PK5</b> , <b>KM13</b>  FGKM1
Illness/death	<b>PK8</b> , <b>KM1</b> , KM4, <b>KM12</b> , <b>KM15</b> , KM16	<b>PK7</b> , PK9, <b>PK10</b> , KM8, <b>KM12</b> , <b>KM13</b> , KM16	<b>PK8</b> , <b>PK10</b> , <b>KM1</b> , KM8, KM9, <b>KM12</b>	<b>PK8</b> , PK9, <b>PK10</b> , KM8, <b>KM12</b>	KM6, KM8, <b>PK10</b>		<b>PK10</b> , KM8	<b>PK8</b> , <b>PK10</b> , <b>KM1</b> , KM6, KM8, KM16
Loss of livestock (disease, theft)		PK1, <b>KM12</b> , KM14		KM9	KM9			KM9
VSL debt repayments	KM5		FGPK1			FGKM2	FGKM1 FGKM2	KM5, KM9 FGKM2
Erratic rainfall		PK2, <b>PK6</b> FGPK1		PK2				
Unprofitable business (crop sales and other)			<b>KM15</b> FGPK1, FGPK2				FGPK1	KM9
SHA seed credit debt (failure to germinate)		<b>PK7</b> , <b>KM15</b>				FGPK2		PK7
Domestic disagreements		KM14	PK9					PK9
Absent husband		PK4	PK4	KM5, PK4	PK4	KM5, <b>PK5</b>		
Low tobacco prices (stopped growing as a crop)			PK1, PK2					

**Bold type indicates the household were beneficiaries of the SHA project**

The cost of inorganic fertiliser is obviously, and unsurprisingly for Malawi, a major issue for many households, although some households have benefited from switching to or (at least supplementing with) organic fertiliser with support from SHA or FIDP.

Ill health was a widely cited negative driver, but there is little extra information to suggest that this is due to any common problem. Any sort of physical ailment is inevitably a major handicap for households so reliant on physical labour. There was a common theme around the difficulties experienced by elderly or frail people who have little else to fall back on.

*“They noted that both men and women have had their wellbeing improved. They however said that that was not the case for older men and women. They said these are unable to produce enough food on their own due to old age. They suggested that the able bodied relatives of the old people should take it upon themselves to make sure that the benefits that they enjoy should trickle down to the older generation too.” [FGKM2 G3]*

Difficulties paying back debts from village savings and loan organisations is another area of concern to some respondents. However, it’s worth noting that while two individual households cite them as a negative driver, three households cite them as positive drivers in the preceding table. Three focus group discussions raised it as a negative driver, but these contained previous respondents so there could be an element of repetition. CARE is mentioned many times in section G of the questionnaire by households as having been a significant, positive external relationship, second only to SHA. KM13 reports positive impacts from a local Village Savings and Loans club run by CARE (notable when most other changes in her life have been negative):

*“Respondent has been a member for three years and the group has helped her sustain her beer distilling business through loans. She also said that she has been able to buy a bag of commercial fertilizer after sharing the money at the end of the year. She also said that she was able to buy clothes and the kitchen utensils using money earned from being a member of the Village Savings and Loans club.” [KM13 G2]*

On the other hand, strong criticism of debt repayment issues came from the male focus group in Kumalindi:

*“For both [VSL groups], they almost refused to assign them a rank arguing that they did not deserve any rank because they are both like a tractor that clears out everything that Self Help Africa provides to them. They explained that these two organizations snatch assets when someone defers payment and that some people are forced to get multiple loans like from the VSL group so as to offset payment of another loan.” [FGKM2 G2]*

Only two households and one focus group are listed in this table as citing issues with germination of seed, despite it being brought up by more households as quoted earlier. This is because the Drivers of Change tables do not pull data from the section on links with other external organisations (which is where this issue was first raised by FGKM1, PK6 and KM7). This section is not coded for use in the Drivers of Change table, as it is the result of a direct question about benefiting from external help, thereby possibly contaminating the attempt to reduce pro-confirmation bias in the preceding sections.

The other negative drivers are cited by relatively few households so cannot be considered particularly significant.

It is clear from all the preceding tables that the focus group responses are clearly split by gender, with the older and younger men (from different villages) reporting positive changes, whereas the older and younger women (again in different villages) reported more negative changes. This difference in perspective is not borne out in the individual responses, with a fairly balanced mix of responses to the closed questions between the male and female respondents to the individual household questionnaire. The female focus groups made constant mention of the high price of fertiliser and consequent sharing of coupons as a key negative driver.

*“The women said that the well-being of the people is deteriorating due to lack of fertilizer due to the recent trend of sharing coupons.” [FGKM1]*

*“Regarding spending money, the participants stated that they are buying more maize now than before due to lack of fertilizer which has reduced their harvest considerably.” [FGPK2]*

The responses from the male focus groups cite similar issues with fertiliser, low selling prices and erratic climatic conditions, but are more positive about recent changes to farming techniques which have mitigated (if not radically improved) harvests. This more positive perception of change as compared with the negative responses from female focus groups could be attributed to their closer involvement to farming practices where they are obviously seeing some real changes on the ground.

*“The participants noted that their ability had slightly gone up, but mostly stabilized rather than improved a lot. They said that their harvests are still on the lower side due to the erratic supply of rain as was the case in the last growing season. They said the rains started late but stopped earlier. They also said that fertilizer, chemicals and seed are very expensive therefore leading to low farm produce. They also attributed their inability to buy inorganic fertilizers and chemicals to low crop selling prices...”*

*They said that the ability to produce their own food had stabilized due to the use of manure - both compost and livestock - in their fields and planting two seeds or one seed per station as trained by Self Help. They said that*

*Self Help trained them on how they can make manure and advised them to be applying them to their fields... They noted that the adoption of irrigation farming in the wetlands has been the most important change because they are now able to have disposable income unlike in the past when they were always waiting for rain-fed crop production. [FGPK1]*

*“They also revealed that the manure making training they also got from Self Help Africa has also helped to improve their crop yields in the light of the increasing prices of inorganic fertilizer. They also revealed that through the adoption of winter irrigation farming, they are able to produce their own food all year round.” [FGKM2]*

There were, however, starkly different perceptions of change with regards to cash spending and food consumption which are harder to explain:

*“They also said that they used to spend money on beef and tea but can no longer afford these... Commenting on food consumption, the women said that there have been great changes; meals are being skipped due to the low yields experienced and some children are suffering from malnutrition.” [Female - FPK2]*

*“On food consumption, the participants said that people used to take tea with sugar, eat beef and chicken but not anymore due to the financial problems brought in by poor harvests” [Female – FGKM1]*

*“They further said that unlike in the past, they now have money each month which is used to buy soap and ensure that children are not chased away from school because they don’t have money to contribute towards a development fund which students contribute to at their schools... They also said that nowadays they prepare their relish using cooking oil unlike in the past when only few people, especially those who were growing tobacco were the only ones eating relish prepared using cooking oil. Instead of just eating nsima, they said they are now able to buy rice. They also said they can now also choose to prepare pumpkins as a meal when they actually have maize not because they don’t have maize flour. They said this has been the most important change - diversity in food consumption- because the households are now able to eat the type of food that they want.” [Male – FGPK1]*

*“They also said that before they used to eat vegetables without groundnut flour added to them but these days they are eating more nutritious vegetables which have groundnuts flour added to them. They also said that most of them eat relish prepared with cooking oil unlike in the past. They also said that they now consume more meat than before because they are now able to buy. They said the most important change for them is that they are now eating better food and they are healthier. [Male - FGKM2]*

### **Interventions vs. reported drivers of positive change**

The previous two tables give us a clear view of the reported drivers, what respondents told us. They don’t, however, show what respondents *didn’t* report, e.g. which households are missing in areas where they may have been expected to feature.

As a reminder, the FEDFES project is seeking to demonstrate impact in the following areas (at a household level):

1. Seed growers applying agricultural practices learnt
2. Increase in yield of locally produced certified seeds
3. Smallholders applying business skills and enterprise development skills
4. Increase in household income generated from commercial agricultural production
5. Smallholders reporting improved access to markets

The following Table (5.3) takes the list of beneficiary households and combines information about known interventions, alongside reported drivers of positive change. A shaded box indicates that the household was a beneficiary of that particular intervention. A tick indicates that the household reported a positive change (in any dimension) citing a driver relevant to that intervention. (No non-beneficiary households are in this table)

Table 5.3. Interventions vs. reported drivers of positive change

DATE	SHA Intervention	KM1	KM2	KM3	KM10	KM11	KM12	KM15	PK3	PK5	PK6	PK7	PK8	PK10
Q4 2012	Training in crop husbandry practices				✓	✓			✓					
	Groundnut seed distributed			✓		✓	✓							
Q1 2013	Training in value addition													
Q4 2013	Training of farmers in seed multiplication principles and general crop husbandry practices		✓		✓	✓			✓					
	Groundnut seed distributed (basic)					✓								
	Groundnut seed distributed (certified)			✓			✓							
	Soya seed distributed (basic)		✓											
Q3 2014	4 groundnut shellers given to the cooperative													
Q4 2014	Groundnut seed distributed (basic)			✓										

NB. KM5 and PK4 were beneficiaries in previous years, and both cited seed credit as a positive driver. They are not marked on this table as they are not current beneficiaries.

An ideal scenario would be shaded and ticked boxes in as many areas as possible in Table 5.3. In this case there are six households who cite SHA interventions as having driven positive change (column with at least one tick in a shaded box), and six beneficiaries who do not cite SHA's work as having led to any positive change. Two of those households, PK7 and KM15, claim that the seed given to them failed to germinate, and was therefore unsuccessful (as cited in table 6.2). The other four households make no mention of the SHA project. Given the 'blind' nature of the questionnaire, this does not necessarily mean that they have not benefitted from the interventions, but we can surmise that the impacts were not significant enough for them to spontaneously cite them when talking about changes in their lives.

Looking back at the previous tables we can see that evidence of positive impact from activities explicitly or implicitly linked to SHA's project aims is predominantly limited to beneficiary households from village KM. Households KM3, KM10, KM11 report wide ranging, knock-on positive effects from an increase in money made from groundnut sales, and improved maize harvests following use of organic fertiliser. These are the same households who report overall positive changes to their lives and livelihoods. However, given that six out of the ten households interviewed in village PK are beneficiary households, it is significant that they do not cite many project explicit or implicit positive changes. Only one PK household, PK3, reports overall improvement in the responses to the closed questions detailed in Table 3.2, and cites changes relevant to SHA's interventions in Table 5.1.

It is also significant to note that in Table 5.3 there were no references to the interventions on training in value addition and boosts to the cooperative, which most beneficiaries are members of. Overall, throughout the questionnaires, there was no evidence raised related to the project aim 5, improved access to markets or aim 3, improved business skills. Those beneficiaries who cite positive change demonstrate improved skills in agricultural practices (1) and an increase in yield (2) and household income (4).

## 6. EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

Towards the end of the questionnaire interviewees were asked to list and rank - without prompting - the most important ties they had with organisations from outside the village. The chart below shows how frequently different organisations were cited and ranked. This question seeks to elicit *perceptions* about which organisations are linked to changes in livelihoods and wellbeing, rather than ascertaining who has delivered what. The fact that some respondents may have wrongly attributed an intervention to another organisation is of interest in itself.

Table 6.1: External Organisation Ranking – Household Interviews (26)

Ranking	Number of times organisation was ranked as being important to the household		
	SELF HELP AFRICA	CARE (VSL)	CUMO
1	10	5	1
2	2	1	-

Table 6.1 shows that of the 26 interviews undertaken, 12 people ranked SHA as being important to them. Out of these, eight households were listed as beneficiaries. Six out of the seven beneficiary households in Kumalindi village cited SHA; only two out of the six beneficiary households in Pokondodo village cited SHA. Another organisation working on Village Savings and Loan groups in the area, Care, was also highlighted by six households as being important.

When the focus group participants were asked to list and rank organisations that were important to them, a wider range of organisations were mentioned. SHA and Care however remained the most frequently mentioned and highest ranked organisations.

Table 6.2 External Organisation Ranking – Focus Group Interviews (4)

Ranking	Number of times organisation was ranked as being important to members of the group						
	SELF HELP AFRICA	CARE (VSL)	TASO	RED CROSS	FIPAM	CUP MALEZA	FIDP
1	3	-	-	-	-	1	-
2	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
3	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
4	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
5	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
6	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

## 7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This report provides an overview of a pilot study based on data collection in two villages, and findings cannot be taken as representative of the whole FEDFES project. Indeed, the variation in results between the two villages points to the sensitivity of results due both to context (including proximity to trading centres) and to variation in the mix and intensity of project activities undertaken in each. Nevertheless the report raises numerous points for discussion and learning. In the first village, explicit positive reference to the project was volunteered without prompting by nearly all respondents known to have been direct participants in project activities. This positive feedback also spanned most wellbeing domains, with the households citing most positive change overall all coming from Kumalindi. Positive feedback from the second village was much less, with no explicit references to the project and implicit feedback from only one project participant. Male focus groups in both villages did volunteer positive statements about the impact of the project, but the two female focus groups were more negative.

There were numerous references to the benefits of SHA training, particularly in how to use compost and manure. Others referred to benefits arising from SHA's previous involvement in the area – in promoting pig rearing and winter vegetable growing, for example. Some individual household members did also report on shifts in male attitudes towards women as a response of SHA gender training. Feedback on access to improved groundnut seed was also generally very positive, but

with criticism of quality from a few households. There were no references to availability of groundnut shellers through the cooperative. This may be due to their more recent installation or geographical location relative to the two villages, but is worth investigating further.

The negative drivers of change were predominantly unrelated to SHA, although the high cost of fertiliser is very relevant to the project's theory of change, given the training in decreasing dependence on inorganic fertiliser. Respondents highlighted their continued reliance on rain fed maize production and dependence on subsidised fertiliser, despite diversification into groundnut production and other activities. SHA was the first ranked and most frequently cited agency assisting them, but maintaining food security for most respondents remains a challenge.

References, particularly in focus groups, to net costs as well as benefits of loans obtained through Village Savings and Loan Associations (these were not part of the SHA project) highlight the need to pay close attention to the wider impacts of such schemes.

A first round of QUIP data was collected in November 2013, the sample this time covers different households and is much larger (the pilot sample was 8 households, this sample is 26 households). It is difficult to compare the two studies due to sampling differences, but it is worth highlighting that there was no mention of issues with seed germination in that study. This may point to the fact that this was an isolated problem in one year and/or one area. The positive drivers cited were very similar; positive mention of the changes to harvests and income after training on farming practices and groundnut seed credit from SHA. The cost of fertiliser was a key issue in the 2013 study, but the other main negative driver was the low purchase price for crops which is no longer coming up as a main driver. There was no mention of issues relating to illness or weather changes. With regards to any trickle-down effect in the theory of change, there is not much evidence within this sample of beneficiaries (13) and non-beneficiaries (13) of spill-over of advice and resources from beneficiaries to non-beneficiaries. Those non-beneficiary households listed as having cited an 'explicit' link to SHA were all previous beneficiaries and therefore had been impacted directly by the project at some previous stage.

Overall, it is clear that SHA's FEDFES project is having a very positive impact on beneficiaries – particularly in one of the villages sampled. Given the 'blinded' nature of this data collection, this is testament to SHA's work. This report provides staff with more information on how households believe the project has affected them, and offers the opportunity to undertake further analysis into why one village and certain households within that village benefited more than others.

## Appendix 1. The QUIP protocol

The QUIP is an experimental tool for credible qualitative assessment of the impact of development activities (referred to for simplicity as projects) in the context of complex rural livelihood transformations. A full draft of the QUIP guidelines is available at <http://go.bath.ac.uk/art>. The main purpose of the QUIP is to elicit evidence of household level impacts that can credibly be attributed to a project: (a) to complement quantitative monitoring of project activities and before-after changes in key impact indicators; (b) by relying on self-reported attribution of drivers of change from intended project beneficiaries without the need for a control group; (c) mitigating potential response bias by framing data collection sufficiently broadly that both interviewers and respondents are unaware of the specific impact hypotheses, or theories of change, being investigated.

A key design feature is that the lead researcher employed to collect primary data is recruited and inducted into the task in such a way as to remain as unaware as possible of the project being evaluated. For this reason separate guidelines have been drafted for the commissioner of the evaluation and the lead researcher. Primary data collection is structured to create opportunities for respondents (both in household level interviews and focus group discussions) to volunteer cause-and-effect observations linking project activities to intended impact alongside unintended impacts and indeed observations on drivers of change that are unrelated to the project. This serves as an exploratory reality check for the project. At the same time analysis independently and logically identifies evidence that explicitly or implicitly confirms or refutes the project's theory of change.

The first step of data collection is for the research commissioner to provide the lead researcher with a list of households who are ideally representative of the intended beneficiaries of the project, or at least not untypical of them. The lead researcher then selects an agreed number of households from this list for semi-structured interviews. This data is triangulated against data collected through focus groups attended by members of the same household plus additional friends and/or neighbours. Their responses are noted down by the research team using pro-forma sheets and then transcribed into matching Excel sheets to facilitate rapid coding and classification of the data.

Development of the QUIP is part of the "ART project" - action research into "assessing rural transformations" - being conducted by the Centre for Development Studies at the University of Bath in collaboration with the NGOs *Self Help Africa*, *Farm Africa*, and *Evidence for Development*. The research is sponsored by the UK Department for International Development and the Economic and Social Research Council [grant number ES/J018090/1].

Pro bono support with spreadsheet design was provided by *F1F9* and is gratefully acknowledged. For further information about the ART project contact James Copestake [j.g.copestake@bath.ac.uk](mailto:j.g.copestake@bath.ac.uk) or Fiona Remnant [f.l.remnant@bath.ac.uk](mailto:f.l.remnant@bath.ac.uk)

## Appendix 2. Details of interviews and focus group discussions

Households*	Beneficiary?	Respondent Gender	Respondent Age	Respondent Education	Household Size***	Under 16s	Gender of head of hh	Interview Date	Duration (mins)
PK1	/	Female	37	STANDARD 8	7	4	Male	24/11/14	42
PK2	/	Female	39	STANDARD 6	7	4	Male	24/11/14	56
PK3	++	Male	46	STANDARD 3	7	3	Male	24/11/14	50
PK4	/	Female	24	STANDARD 3	5	3	Male	24/11/14	35
PK5	+	Female	54	STANDARD 2	4	2	Female	25/11/14	43
PK6	++	Female	29	NONE	-	3	Male	24/11/14	61
PK7	++	Female	42	NONE	5	3	Male	24/11/14	57
PK8	+	Female	50	NONE	4	2	Male	24/11/14	39
PK9	/	Female	30	STANDARD 3	5	3	Male	24/11/14	35
PK10	+	Female	68	STANDARD 4	5	3	Female	25/11/14	45
KM1	+	Female	80	CLASS 2	2	1	Female	25/11/14	33
KM2	+	Male	46	STANDARD 7	8	4	Male	25/11/14	62
KM3	++	Female	34	STANDARD 7	6	4	Male	25/11/14	43
KM4	/	Female	22	STANDARD 2	-	2	Male	25/11/14	25
KM5	/	Female	37	NONE	7	4	Male	25/11/14	40
KM6	/	Female	83	STANDARD 2	1	-	Female	26/11/14	28
KM7	/	Female	45	STANDARD 5	3	1	Male	26/11/14	35
KM8	/	Male	40	STANDARD 4	7	5	Male	25/11/14	42
KM9	/	Male	36	STANDARD 1	5	3	Male	26/11/14	34
KM10	++	Male	60	STANDARD 6	7	2	Male	25/11/14	49
KM11	++	Male	55	STANDARD 3	6	1	Male	25/11/14	62
KM12	++	Male	67	STANDARD 5	3	-	Male	25/11/14	42
KM13	/	Female	70	STANDARD 4	5	3	Female	25/11/14	32
KM14	/	Female	30	STANDARD 3	7	4	Female	25/11/14	28
KM15	+	Female	DON'T KNOW	STANDARD 1	3	-	Male	26/11/14	49
KM16	/	Female	82	STANDARD 1	4	-	Female	26/11/14	49

\*Household codes differentiate between two villages (KM - Kumalindi & PK - Pokondodo)

\*\*++ Beneficiary from early 2013 to end 2014; + Beneficiary from late 2013/early 2014 to end 2014; / Non-beneficiary (see Interventions Table overleaf for more details on interventions each household received)

\*\*\*Household size only includes those who were resident for more than six of the previous twelve months

Focus groups*	Participants	No. Participants	No. from households already interviewed (of whom beneficiaries)	Date	Duration (mins)
FGKM1	Older Women	9	6 (1)	29/11/14	73
FGKM2	Older Men	6	4 (4)	01/12/14	96
FGPK1	Younger Men	6	3 (3)	25/11/14	72
FGPK2	Younger Women	14	6 (5)	25/11/14	72

\*Focus Group codes differentiate between two villages (KM & PK)



<b>INTERVENTION TABLE: Kumalindi and Pokondodo Villages: TA Masumbankhunda Lilongwe District</b>			
	<b>Intervention</b>	<b>HH involved</b>	<b>Weather, diseases, pests</b>
Q3 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness meetings on beneficiary identification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All</li> </ul>	
Q4 2012	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training in crop husbandry practices</li> <li>Groundnuts seed distributed to farmers (25kgs each)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KM3, KM10, KM11, KM12, PK7, PK3, PK6</li> <li>KM3, KM10, KM11, KM12, PK7, PK3, PK6</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good rainfall which resulted in high yields</li> </ul>
Q1 2013	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow up visits to g/nuts fields</li> <li>Training in value addition</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KM3, KM11, PK3, PK6</li> <li>KM3, KM10, PK7, PK6</li> </ol>	
Q2 2013			
Q3 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness meetings for 2013/14 season</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All</li> </ul>	
Q4 2013	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training of farmers in seed multiplication principles and general crop husbandry practices</li> <li>Distributed groundnuts basic seed to farmers (30kgs each)</li> <li>Distributed groundnuts certified seed to farmers. (25kgs each)</li> <li>Distributed soya basic to farmers (25kgs each)</li> <li>Distributed soya certified to farmers. (20 kgs each)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KM3, KM10, KM11, KM12, KM15, PK7, PK3, PK8, PK6</li> <li>KM10, KM11 and PK3, PK10, PK8 Basic g/nuts.</li> <li>KM3, KM1, KM12, KM15, PK6, PK5 Certified g/nuts</li> <li>KM2, PK7 Received basic soya</li> <li>None received certified soya</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relatively poor rains which resulted in poor harvest especially soya.</li> <li>Rosette attack on groundnuts.</li> <li>Afratoxin was high</li> </ul>
Q1 2014	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inspection of basic seed fields by research station staff (Chitedze)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KM3, KM1, KM10, KM11, KM12, KM2, KM15, PK7, PK3, PK10, PK8, PK5</li> </ol>	
Q2 2014			
Q3 2014	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distributed 4 groundnuts shellers for the cooperative</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KM3, KM1, KM10, KM11, KM12, KM2, KM15, PK7, PK3, PK10, PK8, PK5 - Members of Chikondi co-operative</li> </ol>	
Q4 2014	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distributed basic groundnuts to farmers (25kgs each)</li> <li>Distributed certified groundnuts to farmers. (17kgs each)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KM3 and PK3 received basic g/nuts</li> <li>None received certified seed</li> </ol>	