

FARM STEW PLANTERS' TRAINING DONE: AS VOLUNTEERS FEEL SO EMPOWERED TO DELIVER



Venue: Malawi Adventist University, Lakeview Campus

Dates: 14th to 18th October 2024

Background:

Edunite2serve and FARM STEW International agreed to implement a FARM STEW Project in Malawi. The project is expected to be implemented using volunteers (FARM STEW Planters) who will be in touch with community members. Training these volunteers was deemed necessary to ensure that they are empowered and get equipped to engage their communities. This report shades more light on the selection of the districts for FARM STEW, the selection of volunteers and the actual training.

Selection of the districts:

The selection of the districts was guided by the Fourth Integrated Household Survey (2016-2017) which categorized districts in Malawi based on the incidences of poverty, poverty gap and distribution. This resulted in some districts being labeled DEEP RED, RED, BROWN, and YELLOW. This meant that the districts with deep red were the most affected and those with yellow were the least affected.

When selecting the districts for piloting FARM STEW, districts were chosen based on how the district was affected by these poverty indicators. Secondly, using the district population figures and the total membership for Seventh Day Adventist (SDA), an evangelism ratio was calculated by dividing district population with total SDA membership. This showed that other districts had a high evangelism ratio than others as such some districts were selected based on this like Ntchisi district whose evangelism ratio is 1:214 (1 SDA member to reach out to 214 non SDA members in the district). Even though using the national poverty indicators, Ntchisi was falling under BROWN category, but it was chosen based on its high evangelism ratio. Finally, there were other districts that were chosen because there were initial community engagements regarding FARM STEW project, these districts were chosen to have their FARM STEW planters trained during this training.

FARM STEW planters' training:

The training was conducted at Malawi Adventist University, Lakeview campus from 14th October 2024 and it ended on 18th October 2024. There were twenty one volunteers that attended full time and they arrived on 13th October 2024. Out of these twenty one volunteers, eight were female participants and out of these females, five were shepherdesses.

It was interesting to see two MAU students who attended the training voluntarily on top of the invited 21 participants. The table below shows details of 21 invited participants that attended this training:

Name of government district	Name of SDA district	Name of pastor	Contacts of pastor	Name of volunteer	M	F	Contacts of volunteer
Karonga	Sangiro	Pst. Valen Ndimbwa	994697354	Winford Mbale			880378226
Mzimba	Nkhorongo	Pst. W.Z. Kahango	888500972	Shepherdess Anastazia Kahango			999388519
				Allan White Kamanga			880824168
				Benson Mkandawire			884014030
	Chikangawa	Pst. Soko	881085171	Lloyd Chirwa			888137088
Kasungu	Kasungu (Malombe South Area)	Pst. Kamzangaza	982552282	Stevie Macheka			999714388
Ntchisi	Ntchisi (Mwera Hill)	Pst. Andrew Chinyama	997688221	Yobe Kachiwawa			986113924
Lilongwe	Mchezi	Pst. Kamphar	099311782 4/08848709	Shepherdess Kamphani			992738909
Dedza	Thete	Pst. Nkhoma	998024031	Ruth Phiri			997912474
Salima	Chipoka	Pst. Maganizo Mdzipisira	993235518	Shepherdess Mdzipisira			991158897
				Madalo Chiyambeni			984921237
Ntcheu	Lakeview	Pst. Kayira	999375735	Sherpherdes s Pemba			0995859166
	Lizulu District	Chimphonda Banda	991428458	Gift Kaselema			0992218724
Balaka	Bwaira	Pst Makuluni	993680912	Maxwell Fodya			0881870997
Machinga	Ntaja	Pst. Kachingwe	999600966	Ganizani Peter			0993580688
Mulanje	Naluso	Pst. Kanama	994593908	Masautso Sankhulani			884394720
Phalombe	Chiringa	Pst. Chisoni Banda	883168788	Shepherdess Linda Banda			0888733596/0 999873234
Thyolo	Luchenza	Pst Mphepo	999729906	Hamanson Kaombe			0997373018/0 880904485
	Malamulo	Pst. Nakaole	881830091	Madalitso Kaira			997511777
Chikwawa	Muona	Pst. Ganamba	888720014	Evance Anderson Banda			888720014
Nsanje	Nsanje	Pst. Tethiwa	993759495	Yobu Harrison			882994493

Facilitation and training methodology:

The lead facilitator was Dr. Mwale who is the Coordinator for Farm Stew activities for the SID countries that include Malawi. The other facilitators were Grey Sagawa from Edunite2serve, Juliet Dzikolo from Edunite2serve and Kera Chimwemwe Mkandawire who works with Ministry of Agriculture and also happens to be a student at Malawi Adventist University.

Every morning, Pastor Dr. Mwale was leading a morning devotion and also before closing the day, the pastor made the participants to meditate on God's word. At the beginning of the training, participants were given a pre-training evaluation form for Farmstew which had 43 multiple choice questions. It was very hard for most participants. This showed the trainers the level of knowledge gap participants had on different topics that were to be covered by Farmstew recipe manual. The trainers had Farmstew presentations that were made and the participants were engaged in the hands-on practical sessions as outlined in the Farm stew recipe manual. There were also times for interactive sessions between participants and the facilitators whereby participants were directly applying what they learnt to practical life experiences. At the end of the training, the same questions on the pre training evaluation form were also asked in order to help the trainers gauge level of understanding of Farmstew planters on issues that were presented during the training. Participants answered the questions.

Training content:



FARM STEW is an acronym and this was unpacked to make the participants know that FARM STEW stand for **F**arming, **A**ttitudes, **R**est, **M**eals, **S**anitation, **T**emperance, **E**nterprise and **W**ater. Each of these terms were covered in details using power point presentations as well as videos where it was necessary. In addition, every participant was given reference materials that included Farmstew recipe manual, Farmstew Pantry folder and the Farmstew flip chart. These materials helped the participants to access additional

information from their FS recipe manuals at any time. Refer to the picture.

Additionally, the participants were taken to the field where they had a chance of having hands-on practical on what they learnt in class as demonstrated by the pictures below:



In the picture, Dr. Mwale in blue golf shirt was telling the participants the importance of using Delia shrubs as a source of liquid fertilizer. The participants were told the process of soaking Delia leaves and tender branches in a 200 liters drum. Then they were told also on how to reduce the concentration of the contents in the drum by taking 1 part of the contents and mix with 10 parts of water. This can then be applied to crops using a 300 ml cup measure.



Compost heap making practical:



This was led by Dr. Mwale and was assisted by Mr. Isaac Chinula of Malawi Adventist University in making the participants come up with a compost heap. The participants were told that



making a compost heap requires one to have dry plant matter, green plant matter, animal dung, water and implements for mixing animal dung and watering the heap. The participants hunted for these materials everywhere to ensure that they construct the right height and size of the compost heap. The heap was left in the hands of MAU for their students to keep on turning the heap till the time it will be matured. On average, one may need to turn the heap at least once per week for about 3 weeks on the minimum.



God's rainbow colour meals demonstrations:



There was a demonstration on what it meant to have a colourful meal. This demonstration was done by Juliet Dzikolo and Kera Chimwemwe Mkandawire. It was revealed that making of colourful meals would require foods of different

colours like Red, Green, Yellow, Blue, Orange, white, etc because these have different contents in terms of vitamins and other essential elements that are required by the body. As such, Juliet and Kera demonstrated on how to make these.



How to access the materials/ingredients for colourful meals was a big question considering that community members have financial and food security challenges and they do not look at nutrition as an issue. They only fight for getting something to feed their families even though the food may be of poor quality. With the FARM STEW diversified activities, it was the hope of every volunteer that farm stew will do away with poverty, hunger, diseases, hopelessness and dependency that have been so rampant in their communities.

Issuing of bicycles:

In order to facilitate smooth mobility of the trained FARM STEW planters, FARM STEW project purchased 20 bicycles that were given to these volunteers. They were made to sign memorandum of understanding for the bicycles that was highlighting the terms and conditions for the use of the bicycles they received. The volunteers were very happy and indicated that the bicycles will help them reach hard to reach areas to implement FARM STEW activities. The picture below shows the volunteers displaying their newly received bicycles:



Presentation of certificates:

All participants were given certificates of completion as shown in the picture below:



Action planning for volunteers:

As the training went to an end, they were told on what they are supposed to do and one of them was to ensure that they make households they will work with sign a household commitment form as attached below. Further, the participants were given copies of work plan for Oct-Dec 2024. Furthermore, they were also given quarter 1 FARM STEW lesson plan as attached.



Microsoft Word
97-2003 Document



Microsoft Word 97 -
2003 Document



Microsoft Excel
97-2003 Worksheet

Closing remarks:

Pastor Dr. Mwale thanked everyone for their active participation in the week and requested them to show high levels of commitment as they take FARM STEW to their communities.



Before Dr. Mwale spoke, the President of the participants for the week, Masautso Sankhulani from Naluso SDA district in Mulanje, thanked Edunite2Serve and FARM STEW for organizing the training where volunteers had an opportunity of receiving golf shirts, bicycles and training manuals. He said that this is a motivation on the part of the volunteers. He however, did not mince his words when he indicated areas which need to be improved on next time a similar training will

be conducted:

- i. Participants to be given room to have the money for them to chose what to eat and not booking for them as was the case.
- ii. The need for additional materials that will aid their work especially rain suits and gumboots as they will be required by circumstances to work and travel when rains are on in their working areas.
- iii. There were other volunteers who wanted the project to buy for them phones and deduct them from their monthly honorarium. Out of the 21 volunteers, 12 volunteers submitted their names for consideration for phone loans.

Dr. Mwale gave the feedback to the concerns raised by the president of the participants as follows:

- i. FARM STEW does not give allowances but provide food and accommodation.
- ii. There are no resources in the project to help in purchasing rain guards and gumboots as were mentioned by the president.
- iii. It was mentioned that only those willing to have the phones should expect to have their honorarium deducted as a way of paying for the phones.

Closing prayer for the workshop was made by Pastor Dr. Mwale.

THE END !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!