



Name of Program: Mlera Dziko

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Presenter: Sophie Gomani

Young people of Malawi and the Zero Hunger Goal

Sophie: Climate Change is not strange in Malawi and other Sub-Saharan African countries. Most people in Malawi rely on agriculture for their income and food. Last year, Malawi was affected by drought which has resulted in low production of maize and other cash crops, because of this government and other non-governmental organizations are promoting winter cropping and irrigation as a response to drought.

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My name is Sophie Gomani and my colleague Pauline Kalumikiza Mbukwa.

Pauline: The future of this country lies in the hands of the youth, so in this program we chat with young people who are practicing winter cropping

We started chatting with Kondwani Kaliati who is practicing horticulture using irrigation farming, so how did you find yourself into this?

Kondwani Kaliati: "I started farming when I heard of a common problem that arises in tomato farming. In the months of January to March, tomato is always in short supply. I decided that I will be one of the people to provide a solution to this problem, so I rented a garden in November 2014 Lumbadzi, I grew tomato and

the harvest was plenty... so much that the target changed from retail customers to big hotels. The hotels also created demand for other vegetables. There is huge benefit from growing vegetables and there is growing interest for vegetables. There are a lot of vegetables. In Malawi, we have left horticulture for the smallholder farmers who were exploited maybe that is why the people who grow vegetables have not progressed. There are some people who do not buy vegetables from markets. They buy from large super markets such as Chipiku, Spars... If you look at their prices and the farmers' prices, the shops are pretty expensive. So if you start farming and find those types of customers, you make profit. We have the ability to do something. Of course every journey has challenges. One of the challenges in growing high value vegetables is lack of seed, sometimes you need to source it from outside the country, for example yellow paper seed. Some vegetables need proper care during the rainy season; you need a greenhouse to prevent losses, but this needs investment to be able to do that. My vision is that in 5 or years to come, I want to have a horticulture farm with fruits and vegetables, a farm which you will not want to remove your eyes off the garden. I want to create employment, to provide a solution to the availability of seed, to provide a variety of vegetables to people so that they do not eat the same kind of vegetables that they have accustomed to. To me when people say eating healthy they mean vegetables.

Sophie: This is an amazing story of Kondwani Kaliati, a young farmer from Lilongwe who has a white collar job but is doing horticulture, he is thinking futuristic.

Pauline: We did not end there, girls too do not want to remain behind, and so we had a chat with Rose Chisowa who is also doing farming. What are you doing to end hunger?

Rose Chisowa: It was in 2013, when I was working for Bootnet Alliance for Research and Education Network, I used my savings from there to purchase land in Msundwe. I did not do what to with the land then, I was just planting maize and soybean. But I thought about what my father used to do; he used to make profits from farming. So I consulted some extension staff in constructing standard houses

for livestock. I started with four pigs but it only took four months and the pigs matured and conceived and they have now multiplied. I used the proceeds from the sales of pork to construct additional houses for goats and chicken. I have also bought another land close to the dambo where I will be practicing irrigation farming. I want other organisations to support young people who have keen interest in farming. My vision is to increase the number of livestock to a thousand. There are a lot young people who want to do farming but they are afraid to take risks. Otherwise most people are nowadays having interest in farming.

Cue out:

Sophie: This is Rose Chisowa a young ambitious farmer who stopped practicing journalism to start farming. Imagine if 3 million young people venture into farming as business. Could Malawi face the hunger crisis? Do not just stay idle, do something.

With this we have to come to the end of the program of *Mlera Dziko*. What are you doing to end hunger in your area?

Pauline: This segment is part of an audio series highlighting the importance of Communication as a major tool for Development. It has been produced with the support of the World Association of Community Broadcasters and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.