



**CRWRC**  
DISASTER RESPONSE

# Food For The Hungry

[www.crwrc.org](http://www.crwrc.org)

March 2011

## The Life of an International Relief Manager

We have just returned from a week of distributions where we are privileged to see places we would certainly not see as a tourist!

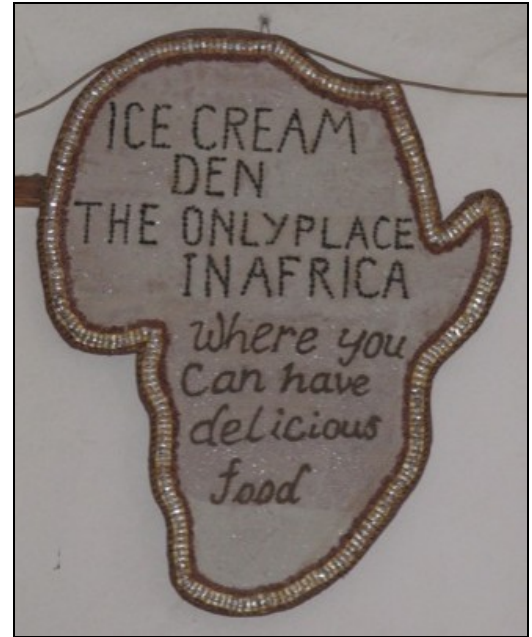
This past month had a number of interesting bits. For example, while parked one night for an hour and a half at a gas station waiting for someone to guide us to a guesthouse, we collected bright green grasshoppers on our vehicle – inside and out! They were everywhere. We observed the security guard collecting dozens of grasshoppers off a well-lit wall! It seems they are a delicacy!

We also enjoyed some off road adventures on semi non-existent

roads while travelling to see some community gardens. Grass as tall as 10 feet made it hard to see the path/road! We were entertained by some interesting African distance estimates and directions, not to mention the Malawian humor.

Another day we noticed a small lizard clinging for dear life to the windshield wiper as we were driving down the highway. We stopped to let it get off but it decided to hang out under the drivers door rain protector instead! For 2 days!

Now for some more serious information!



*Now you know!*

## Bridging the Hunger Season in Malawi

CRWRC continues to facilitate long-term solutions to drought prone areas of Malawi.

Food distributions have just been completed in five centers. Three thousand needy families each received 50 kg of maize to help them through the month ahead. Two more distributions are planned.

Maize seed and fertilizer distributions have taken place for those involved in the Food for Work / Conservation Farming program, and vegetable garden seeds have been distributed to those who cannot do the work for various reasons.



*Pictured left: beneficiary cards at a distribution*



*Pictured right: don't try this at home!*



*Pictured below: The sun is out and so are the umbrellas!*

## Meet Our Accountant - Richard Tseka

Richard Tseka is a valuable member of our relief team. He keeps the finances in order and takes a keen interest in the overall program, sometimes acting as our interpreter. He is a fine man and we enjoy each others company. He is talking about getting Ron to a tailor for some African shirts!

Richard sometimes accompanies us to the field and it was his translation that made the following stories possible.



## Painting the Picture

In Malawi 60% are living on less than \$2/day and, of that number, 38% are living on less than \$1/day. The need is great! Malawi's population continues to grow in part because of immigration. Despite a growing population, Malawi's land mass has, of course, remained the same. It is therefore important for farms and gardens to increase in productivity. Conservation farming has a lot to offer, and those who participate in the current CRWRC project are testifying to its value. Meet a few people from Ntonda. Their stories and pictures are used with permission.



### Patumi Ali - age 17

Patumi Ali is the head of the household for three stepbrothers who are orphans (ages 15, 13 and 8) and her daughter Shakile. Daudi Buba is Patumi's 8 year-old stepbrother. He is chronically ill and Patumi frequently takes him to the hospital where he receives treatment for a chronic illness. He also suffers regularly from malaria.

Their household has a small garden with maize and ground nuts. They have no other source of income. Before the CRWRC/CFGB intervention, they were eating one meal per day. Now, with a monthly ration of 50 kg maize, they are eating twice a day. They also received 10 kg maize seed and 25 kg of fertilizer.

Patumi participates in the food for work activities at a community garden. She works twice a week in the garden using conservation farming techniques. On their own plot, both conservation farming and traditional ridge farming techniques are used. She explained that the conservation plot is doing better because the moisture is held in the soil between rains. This keeps the crops growing. In ridge planting the land dries out too quickly. Next year she will do more conservation farming in the household garden.

### Alesi Tabu - father of 6

Alesi Tabu speaks Yao only. We needed the help of two translators to speak with him. Last year Alesi was unable to plant crops due to illness. He suffers from a memory problem and the family falls under the category of highly vulnerable households.

He has six children and four grand children all living together.

Alesi's family were simply living in poverty prior to the CRWRC/CFGB intervention and often ate only one meal per day. Sometimes they ate none. Now the family eats two times per day for two weeks each month. For the rest of the month, Alesi goes to others and asks for work.

Alesi received vegetable seeds for his home garden but has not yet planted. He is afraid to plant now because he might spoil the seed. Along with other farmers in the area, he wants to wait until the rains stop. Rains in this area are irregular and very intense when they do come. The seed could wash away.



## PRAISE POINTS:

- Fuel is easier to come by!
- The benefits of conservation farming are becoming clear to the beneficiaries.
- There has been rain in some areas.
- We have received wise council from CRWRC Staff.

## PRAYER REQUESTS

- Some areas in rain shadows are still too dry! Pray for rain but that the roads will still be pass-able!
- For the May harvest.
- That the people will be wise in the use of their harvest.



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## Ruoda Katengu - Age 56



Ruoda and her husband have three children, two girls ages 16 and 14 and one boy, age 12. They also care for two orphans - a girl, 10, and a boy, 12.

Ruoda participates in the food for work program twice a week in a community garden. The family plot is two acres. This year, for the first time they have planted maize on a 15 x 15 metre plot of land using conservation farming (CF) methods. The remaining land was planted using conventional ridge farming methods, and the same seed which she received from CRWRC.

Birds disturbed the CF plot and it had to be replanted one week later. Today, the CF and ridge farming crops are similar in height but the CF plants are healthier because moisture is retained between rains by the grass that she has used for mulch.

Ruoda is enthusiastic about mulching. It is easy to find. She primarily uses grass and tree leaves. The grass rots very quickly. Because of this mulch, Ruoda expects the CF crop will be OK but has doubts regarding the outcome of the conventionally planted maize.

Prior to CRWRC program, they were eating one meal per day plus local fruits. Now her family eats two meals per day. Next year she plans to increase the size of the CF portion of her land. Ruoda is also eager to pass on the good news of conservation farming to others.

## Rose Phiri - Mother of 3



Rose and her husband, Allan, have three daughters, ages 14, 9 and 5. She is thankful for the assistance from CRWRC which is going to families who may have died without this help. She said it is rare that someone comes to assist others when they have problems.

Rose, a leader in her community, mobilizes people for doing food for work. She and Allan farm. This has proven to be a struggle of alternating between good years and bad years. From time to time, she has also done piece work for food or cash when the family was hungry.

Rose was grateful to have received both maize seed and fertilizer. She planted a 20 X 20 metre area using the conservation farming techniques she has learned through the current relief response. She can see that conservation farming is producing a healthier crop due to moisture preservation. The rains have been poor and ridge farmed plants are dry. Next year the conservation farming portion will increase in size. Rose is also thankful for a good husband who works hard and agrees with the planned increase for next year.

Prior to CRWRC/CFGB program they ate two times a day. Now they enjoy eating three times a day. Rose is also thinking ahead to other possibilities. They presently grow cotton and ground nuts. The ground nuts are for household use and cash sale. The rains have been inadequate for cotton this year, leaving Rose uncertain about this year's crop outcome. She would like advice on the suitability of conservation farming for growing cotton and tomatoes.