

Farmers turn to Fish

Litanda is a remote village within the Manda Wilderness in Mozambique. With a population of about 500 people, 70 percent of whom are children, economic activities revolve around maize cultivation, fishing, and small retail shops. The sole source of animal protein is fish from faraway Lake Niassa, the supply of which is occasional. Litanda residents eat *nsima* (porridge made from maize and cassava) with vegetables and fish, when available. In a bid to improve nutritional standards and revitalize Litanda and its environs, the community wrote a fish farming proposal that would be funded through the United States Ambassador's Special Self-Help program.

In 2012 the U.S. Embassy awarded \$8,000 to the Litanda Fish Farming Project. With technical support of the Manda Wilderness Community Trust and the leadership of a locally elected representative committee, 18 association members constructed two fish ponds and stocked them with 2,305 fingerlings (baby fish) in September 2013. The project manager had previous training in fishery and marketing.

In April 2014 the Litanda community harvested 220 fish, which were sold for 2,200 Meticais (\$73). They plowed back the profits into the project. The success of the Litanda Fish Farming project has become a unifying factor in the community. Apart from offering improved nutrition for the villagers, the scheme helped foster team work, sharing of resources and ideas for developing Litanda and surrounding villages.



Dug fish pond awaiting fingerlings



Projects Manager Leti Galak (red T-shirt) and community members feeding fish in the pond

Despite meeting overall project objectives, there have been challenges, notably low water levels for the pond. Also, a vegetable garden that was a secondary project objective is failing due to the poor soil type. Members will identify a richer piece of land elsewhere for the garden.