



Planet

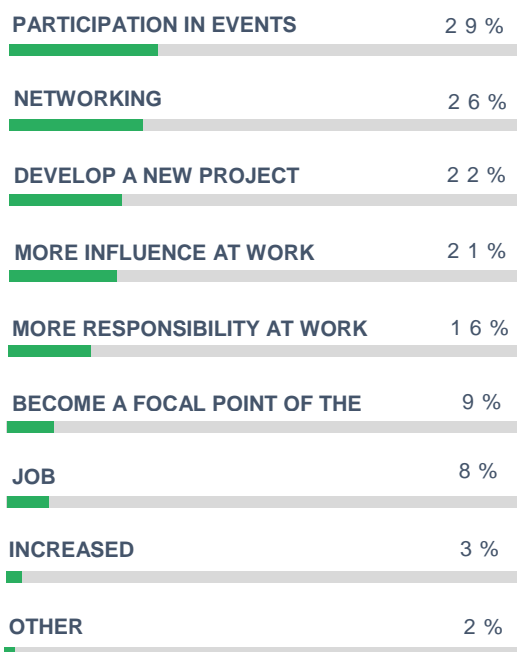
IMPACT STORY

UNITAR Support for National Adaptation Plans

Background

The National Adaptation Plans (NAP), coordinated by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), aim to reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, by building adaptive capacity and resilience. It further facilitates the integration of climate change adaptation, in a coherent manner, into relevant new and existing policies, programmes and activities.¹ UNITAR is involved in several of the programmes of the NAP process such as the Integrating Agriculture in NAPs (NAP-Ag) and it is a partner in the NAP Global Support Programme (NAP-GSP). UNITAR's role has been to provide trainings and skills assessment services, to develop training materials (for e-learning and face-to-face trainings), and to help disseminate the work of the programmes themselves.

Figure 1. Which of the following did the training/workshop help you improve?



This story is focused on one training organised by UNITAR, the National Adaptation Plans Building Climate Resilience in Agriculture Massive Open Online Course (NAP MOOC), part of the NAP-Ag programme. By zooming in and focusing on one course and highlighting how it has had an impact on one particular sector, namely agriculture in Malawi, we can make a link to the impact on one group while also presenting a broader picture of the impact of the NAP trainings. We interviewed Steven Banda, who works in agriculture and production in Malawi, to see how the NAP MOOC had a practical impact at the grassroots level, at the point of production. This interview was complimented with data from a survey of 533 beneficiaries of NAP related UNITAR events in 2016 and 2017 to show the link to a wider group impact.² As can be seen in figure 1 here and in figures 2, 3, 4 and 5 on the following page, the training has helped individuals in a variety of ways, and the more involved in NAP activities they are, the more they have been able to apply the knowledge and skills from the courses and trainings.

¹ <https://unfccc.int/topics/resilience/workstreams/national-adaptation-plans/overview>

² Survey distributed to 1427 beneficiaries, resulting in a response rate of 36 per cent. Ninety-three per cent of respondents took part in the NAP MOOC on Building Climate Resilience in Agriculture

Figure 2. How involved are you in NAP related activities since taking the training/workshop?

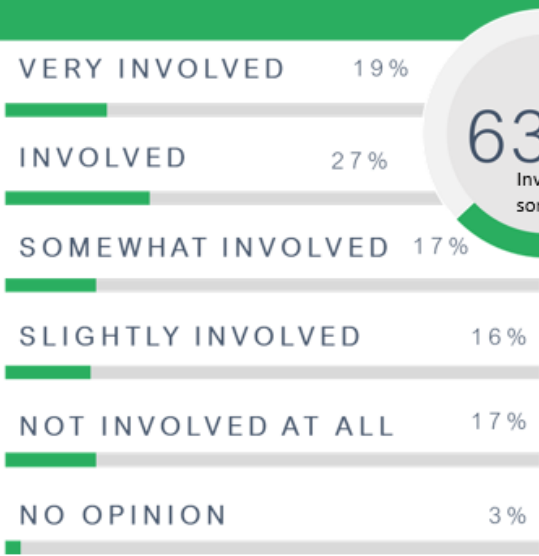


Figure 3. Have you applied/used the acquired knowledge from the NAP training/workshop content?

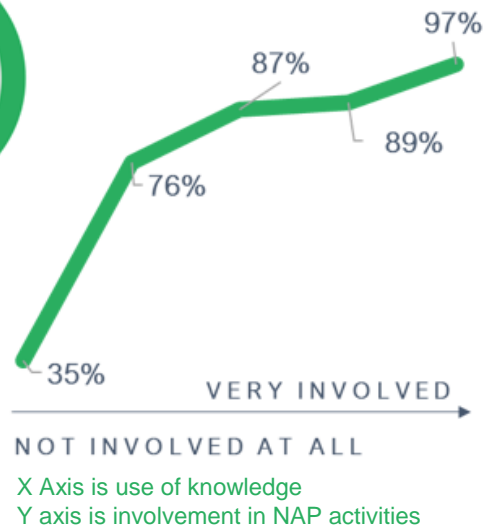


Figure 4. How confident are you in transferring or applying the knowledge/skills gained in the training/workshop to your work?

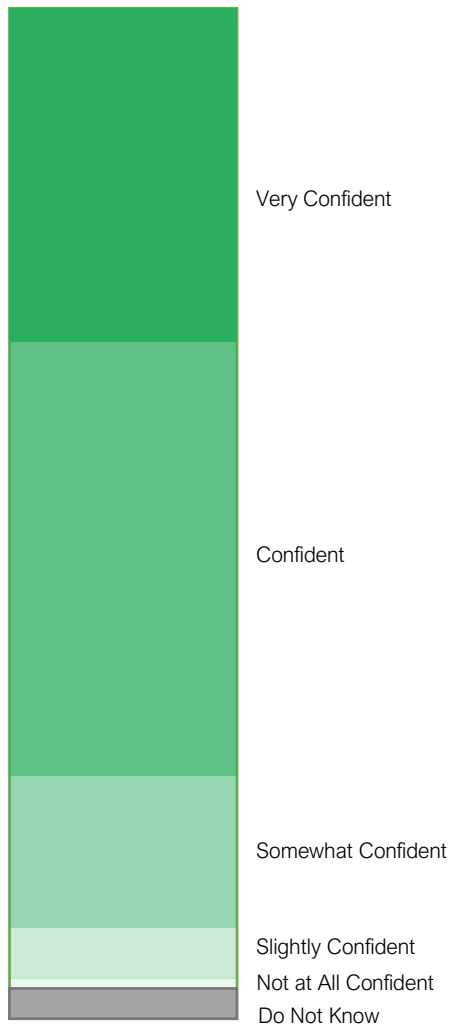


Figure 5. As a follow-up to the course, what specific actions or measures have you taken





STEVEN BANDA

Participant of the National Adaptation Plans Building Climate Resilience in Agriculture Massive Open Online Course

Putting cultural knowledge into practice


Lake Malawi, the third largest lake in Africa, has seen its water levels drop by nearly three metres in the past 30 years. Driven by population growth, climate change and deforestation, this has resulted in a 90 per cent drop in fish stocks, a devastating situation as fish from the lake account for 60 per cent of all protein consumed by the citizens of Malawi.³ The situation is perilous for those families whose livelihoods depend on fishing. Steven Banda's family is one such family. Steven currently works in agriculture, but his family background is in fishing. It was watching this situation unfold, and the impact it was having on his family and community, that spurred Steven to join the National Adaptation Plans Building Climate Resilience in Agriculture massive open online course (the NAP MOOC) in November 2017. As Steven explains, the fish breed in shallow water, so if water levels drop, this severely limits the breeding areas for the fish. He had to think, if this situation continues, **what will life look like in five- or ten-years' time?** It was clear to him that these resources must be conserved, so they can be of use in the future. Through reading and involvement in a number of related projects, he found out about the NAP MOOC. He saw this as an opportunity to gain some knowledge, so he could do his part to conserve, that **"other people can enjoy the food that is being supplied by Lake Malawi."**

Since taking the course, Steven has put into practice what he has learned, while tailoring it to the specific situation in Malawi. There have been two practical impacts in Steven's behaviour, as well as attitude changes since he participated in the training.

Steven currently works in the agriculture production sector, working with many different producers in both Malawi and Mozambique. Since the training he has focused on the supply of organic crops. As he says, this is important to **"sustain the soil and produce crops with friendly practices."** This is something that those on the ground working on the farms innately understand. He has been sharing the knowledge and skills he learned in the training with farmers he works with, who then spread the word to others. He says this cooperative approach, of sharing knowledge with his peers, has been very effective.

Steven's organization has instituted two strategy changes since he took the training, something that is a core part of the NAP process, and a longer-term impact. The first strategy change is with regard to afforestation. The two crops Steven's organization primarily produced in 2017 and 2018 are garlic and ginger. To make room for these crops, many trees were removed. As a result, nutrients have been lost from the soil meaning fertiliser and other chemicals have been required in the production process. Since taking the training, Steven has been part of an initiative to ensure that each individual in his organization plants at least ten Msangu trees, native to the region. These trees preserve and restore the nutrients to the soil and remove the need for

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/may/22/lake-malawi-water-levels-fish-stocks>



fertiliser. This type of agroforestry, for which there is much scientific evidence in support⁴, has been a practice on smallholder farms in Malawi for a long time, and the training inspired Steven to bring it back and institute it as a strategy change in his organisation.

A linked cultural practice that has been reintroduced by Steven, which is the second strategy change, is regarding the use of pesticides. Using the Neem leaf, a local leaf which is powdered, soaked for a day and then sprayed on crops, it is possible to forgo the use of pesticides entirely.

The use of pesticides and other chemicals in food production in his organization has thus dropped considerably. **These are traditional techniques, which had fallen out of use, and are examples of the best the NAP has to offer; empowering local people to use knowledge specific and localised to their community and country, to tackle the global problem of climate change.**

Steven is passionate about the role that youth can and must play in any climate adaptation plan. He says that unfortunately, many youths working in the agricultural sector are using harmful practices, as their financial situation forces them to. This is why he says it is so important to engage the youth in sustainability and ensure that doing so makes financial sense. This will allow youth to benefit from climate change adaptation, and to be integrally involved, bringing new ideas and approaches that older generations have not considered. As Steven says, “the leaders of tomorrow are the youth” of today.

When asked about the role the course has played in these changes, Steven said the course came along at exactly the right time. Just as he was wanting to be more involved and active in tackling climate change, he found out about the course. The course gave him the confidence and understanding to integrate the knowledge and skills, some new and some old, into his work and that of his organization. He says the fact that the strategic changes mentioned above have been embraced in his organization is primarily down to the attitudes towards innovation, in the organization and in the country. People recognise how bad the situation has become and understand how bad it will be in the future. As Steven says, **“if the environment is being destroyed because I am keeping quiet, then I am the one destroying it.”** This recognition spurs the openness to innovation informed by the course, and when he has conversations with colleagues and others working in agriculture and in the timber industry, they too recognise this importance. It is hard to measure the impact these conversations have, but they are undoubtedly fulfilling the objective of the course to spread knowledge and understanding about climate change issues in agriculture, resulting in a multiplier effect that is vital for meaningful impact.

Link to the wider NAP Process

The multiplier effect of the training can be seen when we examine the survey data of 533 beneficiaries of NAP programmes, 93 per cent of whom took part in the in the Building Climate Resilience in Agriculture course. Eighty-one per cent of those surveyed engaged in some kind of follow up activity to multiply the knowledge from the course, be it telling their colleagues, sharing training materials or encouraging others to enrol. This aligns with the intended outcome three of

⁴ Tree planting by smallholder farmers in Malawi: Using the theory of planned behaviour to examine the relationship between attitudes and behaviour, Seline S.Meijer, Delia Catacutan, Gudeta W.Sileshid, Maarten Nieuwenhuis. Journal of Environmental Psychology Volume 43, September 2015, Pages 1-12

the NAP-GSP, which calls for “exchange of lessons and knowledge through South-South and North-South cooperation to enhance international and regional cooperation to formulate and advance [the] NAP process.” The exchange of knowledge and lessons can also be seen in the interview with Steven, as he shared knowledge with his colleagues and peers. The survey shows how the course and other NAP related events have helped beneficiaries in improving a wide variety of competencies related to NAP activities, that beneficiaries are overall very confident in transferring or applying the knowledge/skills to their work, and that 78 per cent had done so. Thirty per cent of respondents said that their institution documented a strategy change, and among them, 33 per cent said that the changes were based on their suggestion. **All of this data taken together is a clear indication of a trend where an impact is taking hold, with the knowledge of the course being spread far beyond the immediate participants of the course, changing individual and organisational behaviour.** The impact is widespread and can be seen across a wide variety of sectors, with beneficiaries from diverse backgrounds and sectors engaged in the NAP events.

“I have applied the knowledge of NAP in the organisation that I lead by setting up a plan for waste disposal and working out a biogas plant plan for our factory to minimize carbon emissions.”

“Through the knowledge acquired, I have been able to organize a series of workshops with the help of the Ministry of Agriculture to educate farmers in climate prone areas in my country on the need to adapt diverse mitigation methods in dealing with climate change. I have also opened Climate change clubs in High schools to embark on climate change campaigns.”

“I deal directly with local farmers and most of the challenges which are responsible for low productivities were discussed. All the recommendations (from the course) are being applied and better results are coming in.”

You can read testimonials from other participants of the NAP-MOOC, separate from this Impact Story, [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

NAPs and the Sustainable Development Goals



Supporting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda was implicit throughout the course and the impact since the course has furthered this Agenda. The clearest link is with SDG 13: Climate Action, but goes much further than this, to SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, and SDG 15: Life on Land. It can also be said there are greater effects, on SDG 2, SDG 8, SDG 9, SDG 11 and, through the partnership nature of the NAP-GSP process, SDG 17: Partnership for the Goals.



Conclusion

It is clear that the NAP-Ag programme has had a significant effect on Steven, on how he works, his attitudes and his behaviour. He has been able to multiply these effects through conversations with colleagues, acquaintances and others, as well as by integrating what he learned from the course into his day to day work. The clearest impact is the fact that Steven has been inspired to take up traditional alternative practices and techniques, locally relevant but which together with others doing the same across the world, will have a profound impact. The survey shows that people from all over the globe and from many walks of life, from academia to government workers, from those working in international organisations and non-profits to those in the private sector, have benefited from NAP related events. The positive impact of this, for the individuals, for their organisations and ultimately for the climate and us all as a result, has already begun. The link to the wider group impact is not strong, but the evidence suggests this impact will only grow greater as time goes on.