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**MALAWI**

# FIRST PERSON Aquaculture Boosts Income and Security

**A clever aquaculture set-up helps a farmer make a good living**



Photo: USAID/Levi Manda

One of Osman Mohammed's five fish ponds in Mchengawede, in Malawi's southern Zomba district.

***Because of the income Osman Mohammed generates from selling fruit, vegetables, and fish, he has become one of the wealthiest members of his rural community.***

In 1999, Osman Mohammed and 10 others introduced fish farming into their community in Mchengawede, southern Malawi. Since then, Osman has expanded his operation to five ponds. He is now recognized by everyone in his community as a successful commercial fish farmer.

Osman and his peers started fish farming thanks to help from a USAID-sponsored project that introduces rural Malawians to new ways of generating income.

Osman's five fish ponds are integrated into a plot with irrigated vegetables, fruit trees and sugarcane. He uses the drainage water from fish ponds to irrigate his crops. In addition to providing water for his crops, this method also enriches soil fertility. Surplus vegetables and corn husks are used to feed the fish.

With the income he makes from his plot, Osman supports his own family plus his seven sisters and brothers, their families, and four grandchildren. And, he still manages to pay fees for his children at good schools.

In 2005, the five fish ponds provided Osman and his family with an income of \$1,339 from a total harvest of 950 kilograms of fish, greatly exceeding the income made by the many Malawian families who live on less than \$1 per day. In fact, the income Osman generates from selling fruit, vegetables, and fish has made him one of the wealthiest members of his rural community.

The resource management practices that Osman uses provide not only income, but also food security. Since the water from the fish pond is used to irrigate crops, and fish are fed with crop leftovers, the farm uses fewer resources to generate more. When resources are scarce, Osman's farm is not as dependent on external factors, like good rainfalls, as traditional farms.

Osman credits his success to hard work and the assistance that he and his colleagues received from USAID and its partners. To encourage others to adopt this model, USAID is working with its partners to develop a Malawi Gold Standard, a set of best aquaculture practices that will help other farmers achieve similar successes.