

Malawi

Story from the field: Work-integrated Learning helps to improve efficiency and market access for Eden Farm

Moses is a farm manager at Eden Farm, a family-run business that he inherited from his father. The farm is involved in the production of vegetables, fruits and other field crops. Although Moses is the manager of the family business, he had never undertaken specific training in farming in general, and horticulture in particular. He faced challenges in the course of running the family business. Most of the products of the farm did not meet the quality requirements of the supermarkets which were the farm's desired customers. More often than not, Moses ended up selling his produce at low prices at local markets, to which he had limited access. This would translate into post-harvest losses, as well as being a source of frustration since the farm is the only means of livelihood of Moses' family.

The WIL programme on horticulture includes several aspects, including how to display produce in the shop.



An opportunity arose when a supermarket which he occasionally supplied with produce invited him to be part of the ILO-supported Work-integrated Learning (WIL) training programme. “After I enrolled for the WIL course”, says Moses, “I was introduced to essential knowledge in horticulture production, and to protected cultivation in particular. The programme went through various stages, up to packing and displaying in shops.”

Moses attended the classroom-based component of the WIL at DAPP Mikolongwe College, in Thyolo, and the work-based components at several farms and supermarkets. The WIL programme has helped him to more clearly understand the practicalities of nursery and field management, covered vegetable production, quality control, marketing and customer care. Moses is especially satisfied with the WIL programme since he feels that it has transformed his attitude towards farming as a business:

“I am now back at my farm where I am using the knowledge and experience I got from WIL to produce good quality fruits and vegetables. My farm is now a regular supplier of fruits and vegetables to different supermarkets, hotels and other local traders. They are particularly happy with the quality and packaging of my products, and with my efficient supply.”

The WIL was implemented jointly by the Department of TVET in the Ministry of Labour, TEVETA and the Employers' Consultative Association of Malawi, with technical support from the ILO.