



Trip Report: Promoting Equitable Access to Water Resources

Country: Malawi Dates: August 7-13, 2003
By John Kerr, Michigan State University

Purpose of trip

The main purpose of this trip was to clean data collected in the most recent rounds of surveys.

Itinerary

Aug 7 travel from Michigan to Malawi, via Johannesburg

Aug 7-13 Work with team members on data cleaning

Aug 13 travel to Pumula Beach (Durban), South Africa to attend BASIS Technical Committee Meeting

Aug 14-15 BASIS TC Meeting

Aug 19 return to Michigan via Johannesburg

Technical observations

The project gathered a substantial amount of data on the implications for access to irrigation water of informal irrigation practices and the handover of government irrigation schemes. The data were entered behind schedule due to electricity problems in Malawi, and once they were finally entered there were problems related to poor coding plus the usual typos and things like that. I spent most of my time working with the data entry team at Chancellor College putting the data set in order and ensuring that data entry goes more smoothly in the future. Daimon Kambewa, a new graduate student on the project, now has a really good understanding of the data and it should go more smoothly in the future.

I also worked with Pauline Peters, Wapu Mulwafu and Daimon Kambewa to discuss some preliminary findings and plan next steps in the research. Some interesting issues have arisen related to the introduction of treadle pumps in the study area and I am preparing a small study of them. The key question for me is whether the pumps are just another donor program forced upon people or whether something resembling induced innovation is going on. In particular, are farmers finding treadle pumps to be a useful way to augment scarce water resources by using treadle pumps to expand irrigated area along streambanks? If so, do externalities arise as pump owners increase their share of irrigation water, which becomes scarce in the dry season? We will start by taking a census of treadle pumps in the study area and find out what kind of study design would make sense.

List of contact people and their title and organizational affiliation

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Posted 23 October 2003

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