Promoting good agricultural land management strategies in Malawi, Africa

Initiative

For her BBSRC sponsored PIPS Helena decided to go and work as an agricultural consultant in Malawi, Africa. While she was there she wrote a proposal to set up a plant and soil testing laboratory, which has since received funding and is currently being built to be opened in the New Year. This will be the first of its kind laboratory in Malawi and provide local farmers with access to science, an important stepping stone for the development of Malawi. While Helena continues to work as an agricultural consultant in Malawi part-time, she has been developing her own strategies for ensuring that this access to science is made available for all citizens of Malawi, including small-holders. She has won a Social Responsibility award from SEES to research and deliver a free workshop to small-holders in Malawi on how to collect and analyse samples from their plots. Most recently she was awarded a Business Ignition fund from University of Manchester Intellectual Property (UMIP) to further the setup of African Precision Agriculture, APA, a start-up company based on a freemium model aiming to support agricultural advancement in Southeast Africa.

How Helena has made a difference

Malawi, a country ranked within the 5 poorest nations of the world is currently also on the list of the least developed countries globally. Malawi’s agricultural sector accounts for one third of the country’s GDP and approximately 80% of its exports. Agriculture thus holds great potential for enhancing development. Helena is actively working on providing Malawi with direct access to science in order to promote agricultural development. The freemium model approach she is working with is to provide subsistence farmers with continued access to science to improve their crop yields.