

CSAWE-TILTH · FIELD LEARNING SERIES

Phase 2

April – June 2026

Location

Homa Bay County, Kenya

Report series

CSAWE-TILTH Field Report



Field learning rooted in community, practical action, and climate resilience.

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Short Introduction

During Phase 2, CSAWE-TILTH continued moving deeper into field-based learning with women's groups, farmer groups, lead farmers, students, and local community members.

This phase built on the first demonstrations and showed that the project was beginning to create stronger local interest. Groups were no longer only listening to introductions. They were installing cone gardens, asking practical questions, sharing early experiences, discussing household adoption, and thinking about how to organize themselves to access cone gardens more widely.

Phase 2 also marked an important step toward impact tracking. Weighing scales and data collection tools were distributed to lead farmers so that CSAWE could begin monitoring vegetable harvests, water use, and challenges in managing the cone gardens.

At a glance

PERIOD

April – June 2026

LOCATION

Homa Bay County, Kenya

FOCUS

Continued field demonstrations, local adoption, and early impact

VISITED

Dugna Self

ACTIVITIES

Cone

LEARNING

Interest is

STEP

Strengthen

30 April 2026 - Meeting in Gembe with Dugna Self Help Group

FIELD NOTE

CSAWE met with Dugna Self Help Group at Benedict Mitema's home in Gembe. The meeting began with prayer and introductions, followed by Dr. Emilly explaining CSAWE and the purpose of the visit.

The group moved directly into cone garden installation. One cone garden was fully installed and planted on-site, while the second was left for later because of time limits. During the activity, Irmak joined the group through a video call, and the participants were happy to meet and interact with her for the first time.

Group members were impressed by the idea of cone gardening and expressed interest in adopting it at home. One member mentioned that she wanted to introduce the idea in her Pathfinder Club project.

WHY THIS MATTERED

This meeting connected the field team in Kenya with CSAWE's Swiss-based coordination in a direct and personal way.



CSAWE-TILTH field learning in Homa Bay County, Kenya.

6 May 2026 - Meeting in Kasungu Ward with Upper Hill Women Group

FIELD NOTE

CSAWE met with Upper Hill Women Group at Pecilla Okumu's home in Kasungu Ward. The meeting began with prayer and brief introductions, followed by an introduction to urban agriculture from Denis and an explanation of CSAWE's work by Dr. Emilly.

After the introductions, the group moved directly to cone garden installation. Representatives from another group were also present and were strongly impressed by the project. Both the visiting representatives and the host group expressed interest in raising funds so that their members could eventually own individual cone gardens.

Because the seedlings had not yet arrived, members took a short break for tea and mandazi. The seedlings arrived later, and the host and group members continued with the planned activities.

WHY THIS MATTERED

This meeting showed that interest in TILTH was spreading beyond the first host group.



CSAWE-TILTH field learning in Homa Bay County, Kenya.

27 May 2026 - Meeting on Rusinga Island with Boundary Women Group

FIELD NOTE

CSAWE held a meeting at Madam Carolyné's lead farmer home on Rusinga Island with Boundary Women Group. The meeting was attended by group members, lead farmers from different groups, students on attachment from institutions in Kenya, and a student from Switzerland interested in writing her bachelor's thesis with CSAWE.

The Chairlady of Boundary Women Group shared that the group was established in 2004 and currently has 25 members. She also explained that some older members now send their children or grandchildren to represent them during activities that require more physical energy.

After Dr. Emily introduced CSAWE and cone gardening, the meeting became very interactive. Students asked many questions and showed strong interest in the project. Some participants suggested that training could also be extended to institutions and local communities, especially because young people may be able to adopt and spread the innovation quickly.

After the discussion, participants moved to the field. One cone garden was installed collectively by the group, and another was installed by the students themselves. The cone gardens were planted with sukuma wiki and spring onions.

WHY THIS MATTERED

This meeting showed the value of involving young people and students in the project.

It also showed how CSAWE's work can connect generations: older group members, younger representatives, local students, and international academic collaboration were all part of the same learning space.



CSAWE-TILTH field learning in Homa Bay County, Kenya.

1 June 2026 - Meeting on Mfangano Island with Wacho Gi Timo Group

FIELD NOTE

CSAWE met with Wacho Gi Timo Group at Steve's home on Mfangano Island. The group has 28 members, but only a few were able to attend the morning meeting.

Many of the women in the group are involved in the omena business, which is an important source of livelihood on Mfangano Island. At the time of the meeting, fishing boats were returning from the lake, and many women were busy buying omena from fishermen and spreading it out for sun-drying along the lakeshore. Because this work requires constant attention, many members could not leave their stations to attend.

During the meeting, Dr. Emily explained CSAWE and clarified that the project provides training and starter kits such as cone gardens, rather than cash payments for attendance. This was important because some members initially associated attendance registers with meetings where participants receive monetary allowances.

After the introduction, CSAWE demonstrated cone garden installation and management. Members showed strong interest in the technology, especially after seeing how practical and simple it was. Some participants requested the contact details of the cone garden supplier so they could make arrangements directly.

WHY THIS MATTERED

This meeting gave CSAWE an important lesson about local livelihoods and timing.

Women's daily work cannot simply be paused for a project meeting. TILTH must fit into the realities of local life, including fishing, omena processing, household work, and seasonal responsibilities.



CSAWE-TILTH field learning in Homa Bay County, Kenya.

9 June 2026 - Meeting in Kasgunga Ward with Daily Challenge Women Group

FIELD NOTE

CSAWE met with Daily Challenge Women Group at the home of Esther Atieno in Kasgunga Ward. The group has 25 women members.

The meeting started later than planned because the cone gardens intended for the demonstration had been misplaced after being taken by an unknown person while Dr. Emilly was waiting for transport in Mbita Town. Although efforts were made to locate them, they could not be found. Since the group members were already gathered and waiting, Dr. Emilly brought one of her own cone gardens to use for the demonstration.

After prayer and introductions, the group moved directly into cone garden installation. Students on industrial attachment also joined the activity. With the support of students and group members, one cone garden was successfully installed and planted.

During the discussion, members shared that they had already started a merry-go-round savings scheme to help members purchase cone gardens for their households. Several members who already had cone gardens also shared their experiences. They explained that the gardens had been helpful during the dry spell, when vegetables were scarce and expensive.

On the same day, seven weighing scales and data collection tools were distributed to lead farmers who were present and had previously received cone gardens. These tools will help monitor harvest yields, water usage, and challenges in managing the gardens.

WHY THIS MATTERED

This meeting showed resilience in practice. Even after a difficult logistical problem, the team found a way to continue the demonstration.

It also showed that adoption was already beginning. Members were not only interested in cone gardens; some were already saving together to buy them, and others were sharing early benefits from their own gardens.



CSAWE-TILTH field learning in Homa Bay County, Kenya.

What this phase showed us

Phase 2 showed that TILTH was beginning to move from introduction toward local adoption.

Women's groups were asking how members could own their own cone gardens. Some groups were discussing savings schemes and local fundraising. Participants who already had cone gardens were beginning to share their experiences with others. Students and younger people were also becoming part of the learning process.

This phase also showed that CSAWE must stay flexible. Delays, transport problems, livelihood commitments, missing materials, and timing challenges are part of field work. What matters is how the project adapts while keeping the learning process moving.

Most importantly, Phase 2 showed that the next stage of impact must be documented better. The distribution of weighing scales and data collection tools was an important first step toward tracking harvests, water use, and the challenges farmers face while managing cone gardens.

What came next

After Phase 2, CSAWE continued strengthening its work with lead farmers, women's groups, and demonstration sites.

The next phase focuses on follow-up, field data, farmer feedback, and supporting groups as they move from first interest toward more structured adoption.

Phase 2 confirmed that TILTH is no longer only being introduced. It is beginning to be owned, questioned, tested, and carried forward by the people involved.