

CSAWE-TILTH · FIELD LEARNING SERIES

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This phase showed that the project was no longer only being introduced. Farmers were beginning to compare experiences, ask more detailed questions, and discuss what is needed for cone gardens to work well at household and group level.

Location

Across the meetings,

Report series

CSAWE-TILTH Field Report



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

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Across the meetings, CSAWE saw strong interest in cone gardening, especially as a practical response to reduced rainfall, shrinking land sizes, food insecurity, and rising vegetable costs. At the same time, farmers continued to raise important challenges: watering, fencing, seedlings, pests and diseases, overharvesting, and the need for more regular training.

Phase 3 showed that TILTH is becoming more rooted in the field. The work is now moving from first demonstrations toward deeper learning, farmer feedback, and wider community interest.

Period: June – July 2026 Location: Homa Bay County, Kenya Focus: Follow-up, practical training, farmer feedback, and wider adoption Groups visited: Kipasi Women Self-Help Group, SINGENGE Self Help Group, Erokamano Self Help Group, TICH MATEK Group, and Ranalo Support Group Main activities: CSAWE introduction, cone garden training, cone garden installation, planting, farmer discussions, and experience sharing Main learning: Farmers are interested in cone gardens, but need continued support with watering, fencing, seedlings, pest management, and follow-up training Next step: Strengthen follow-up, support garden management, and continue preparing groups for wider adoption and replication

FIELD NOTE

CSAWE met with Kipasi Women Self-Help Group at Oyugi's home. The meeting began with prayer, followed by introductions and an overview of CSAWE by Dr. Emily.

During the discussion, members shared challenges affecting their livelihoods, including reduced rainfall, shrinking land sizes, and the need to fence farms to protect crops from animals. The group expressed strong interest in cone garden technology, with many members saying they would like to own and manage cone gardens at home.

Two cone gardens and one weighing scale were presented to the group. Both cone gardens were installed, but only one was planted because there were not enough seedlings available. The second cone garden was left to be planted later once seedlings became available.

The meeting ended with a meal and further interaction among participants.

WHY THIS MATTERED

This meeting showed how closely farmers connect cone gardens with their everyday challenges.

Reduced rainfall, smaller land sizes, crop protection, and household food needs are not abstract problems. They are the conditions farmers are working with. The strong interest from Kipasi Women Self-Help Group showed that cone gardens are being understood as a practical tool that could help households grow food in difficult conditions.



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

FIELD NOTE

CSAWE met with SINGENGE Self Help Group at William Okuta's home in Lambwe West. The meeting began with prayer and introductions, followed by a presentation from Mr. Denis on climate change and its effects on people and livelihoods.

Dr. Emily then introduced CSAWE and explained the organization's mission to support food security while promoting environmentally sustainable farming practices. The discussion was active, with members asking questions and showing strong interest in climate-smart agriculture.

Participants then moved into a practical session where they installed and planted a cone garden. Topics discussed included climate change, environmental health, food security, economic empowerment, bio-inputs, and cone gardening.

Members also raised important questions. They wanted more awareness on the negative effects of agrochemicals on the environment, asked how they could acquire cone gardens, and wanted to know whether other crops such as soya beans and groundnuts could be planted in cone gardens.

WHY THIS MATTERED

This meeting showed that farmers are not only interested in the cone garden structure. They are also thinking about environmental health, crop choices, and how cone gardening connects to broader farming practices.

The questions about agrochemicals, soya beans, and groundnuts are important because they show farmers are beginning to imagine how cone gardens could fit into their own food systems, not just as a demonstration but as something they can adapt.



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

FIELD NOTE

CSAWE met with Erokamano Self Help Group in Gembe Central at the home of Theresa Wenwa. The meeting began with prayer and introductions. Mr. Denis introduced the project team, and Dr. Emilly gave a presentation on climate change.

The presentation focused on the effects of climate change, shrinking arable land, increasing population pressure, and the urgent need for climate-smart agricultural practices. Dr. Emilly emphasized cone gardens as a practical and sustainable solution for food production, especially where land is limited.

The presentation led to lively discussions. Participants asked where cone gardens could be sourced, what types of crops could be grown in them, and whether cone gardens could be used in areas affected by saline water.

The group was introduced to cone garden training, installation, and planting. Members responded positively and asked for more training in the area.

WHY THIS MATTERED

This meeting showed that cone gardens were new to many participants, but immediately interesting.

The questions from the group were practical and important. Farmers were already thinking about sourcing, crop suitability, and whether the technology could work in difficult environmental conditions such as areas affected by salty water.



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

FIELD NOTE

CSAWE met with TICH MATEK Group at Stephen Ouru's home in Lianda Village, Rusinga. Attendance was lower than expected because many members were attending a funeral in the village.

Dr. Emily gave a brief introduction to CSAWE and explained the organization's current activities in Homa Bay County. The meeting then included experience-sharing from two lead farmers who had already received cone gardens.

The lead farmers explained that the cone gardens had been useful for vegetable production, but they also shared challenges. These included frequent watering, pest and disease management, and overharvesting because the existing cone gardens were not enough to meet the needs of all group members.

The group was provided with two cone gardens, which will be installed later when more members are available to participate.

WHY THIS MATTERED

This meeting was important because it showed the value of lead farmer experience.

The discussion was no longer only about introducing the technology. Farmers who had already used cone gardens were sharing what worked and what was difficult. Their feedback helped make the project more realistic.



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

FIELD NOTE

CSAWE met with Ranalo Support Group in Yokia Village, Mfangano, at the home of Ruth A. Osongo. The meeting began with prayer and introductions.

Mr. Denis spoke about food security and sustainable agricultural practices and explained why he had introduced the group to CSAWE. Dr. Emily then gave an overview of CSAWE, its mission, and the purpose of the visit to Mfangano.

Two cone gardens were presented and installed. One cone garden was immediately planted with kale seedlings as a demonstration.

A lead farmer who had previously hosted CSAWE shared her experience with the group. She explained that the cone gardens had benefited her household. They had first planted kales and were now successfully growing onions. She also shared challenges, including overharvesting by group members and the need for regular watering.

Another lead farmer, whose group is expected to host CSAWE in the fourth round of the project, expressed appreciation and said her group was excited and ready to host CSAWE. Two additional community groups that are not currently CSAWE lead farmer groups also attended the meeting to learn more. After hearing about the benefits of cone gardens, they expressed strong interest in partnering with CSAWE in the future.

WHY THIS MATTERED

This meeting showed that interest in CSAWE is spreading beyond the first lead farmer groups.

The presence of other community groups is an important sign of wider visibility. It shows that people are hearing about the project and coming to learn more.



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

Phase 3 showed that TILTH is moving from first interest toward deeper field learning.

Farmers are now asking more specific questions: where to source cone gardens, which crops can be planted, how to manage pests and diseases, how to water regularly, how to protect gardens from animals, and whether cone gardens can work in different environmental conditions.

This phase also showed that lead farmers are becoming important voices in the project. Their experiences help other groups understand both the benefits and the challenges of cone gardening.

At the same time, Phase 3 made several needs clearer: more seedlings, more cone gardens, water storage, fencing, pest and disease training, and regular follow-up. These needs are important because they show what is required for cone gardens to move from demonstration to sustained household use.

After Phase 3, CSAWE continued preparing for the next round of field visits and follow-up activities.

The next phase will focus on continuing group engagement, strengthening support for garden management, and learning more from groups that are already using cone gardens.

Phase 3 confirmed that the project is becoming more visible in the communities. The next step is to support this growing interest with practical follow-up, better resources, and continued documentation.