

CSAWE-TILTH · FIELD LEARNING SERIES

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Location

The field visits also brought

Report series

CSAWE-TILTH Field Report



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The field visits also brought CSAWE into contact with agricultural stakeholders and highlighted recurring challenges such as water access, fencing, seedlings, farm inputs, pests, Striga weed, saline water and difficult road access.

With all 20 lead farmers now onboarded, TILTH is ready to move into its next stage: beginning work on the CSAWE Demonstration Plot, where CSAWE and the lead farmers will start developing a shared practical training centre for continued learning, testing and farmer-to-farmer exchange.

Period: July 2026 Location: Homa Bay County, Kenya Focus: Completing lead farmer onboarding, practical cone garden training, installation, planting, and strengthening local adoption Groups visited: Agents of Change, Nyaruenya Light Women Group, Nyawana Group, Bidii Women Self Help Group, and Ten Ladies Women Group Main activities: CSAWE introduction, cone garden training, installation, planting, farmer discussions, and stakeholder exchange Main milestone: Onboarding of all 20 TILTH lead farmers completed Main learning: Interest is moving beyond first exposure toward household adoption, local knowledge sharing, and in some cases farmer-funded expansion Next step: Begin developing the CSAWE Demonstration Plot and training centre together with the lead farmers

FIELD NOTE

CSAWE met with Agents of Change in Kamayoge, Rusinga, at the home of Jeff Ongoto. The meeting started after a short delay because several members were engaged in work along the beach. The host explained that some members were temporarily working outside Rusinga, while others had left for college or university, but remained aware of and supportive of the project.

The session covered food security, climate change, urban agriculture and cone garden production. A cone garden was presented, installed and planted. The group expressed strong enthusiasm and requested support to establish more cone gardens, including individual gardens at members' homes.

Participants identified seedlings, fencing materials and financial limitations as important constraints to establishing and maintaining gardens. They asked for continued support with seedlings, cone gardens, fencing and training.

WHY THIS MATTERED

This meeting showed that participation can continue even when members have changing work and education commitments. The interest in individual household cone gardens is particularly important because it points toward adoption beyond the shared demonstration garden.

It also reinforced a recurring lesson across TILTH: interest in the technology is strong, but access to basic inputs and continued practical training will influence how quickly households can adopt it.



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

FIELD NOTE

CSAWE met with Nyaruenya Light Women Group in Gembe East at the home of John Odiwuor. Implementation with the group had started later than planned because several members had other commitments and many are employed full-time, particularly as teachers.

Despite this, the majority of members attended and participated actively. The session covered food security, urbanization, climate change and cone gardening. A cone garden was presented, installed and planted.

Members welcomed the project and expressed interest in establishing their own cone gardens after seeing how the distributed gardens develop. The group identified water as a major challenge because some members travel long distances to collect it. Other concerns included the cost of farm inputs, Striga weed, pest and disease management, and animal diseases.

WHY THIS MATTERED

The meeting showed that adoption does not always happen at the same pace. Groups have different schedules, resources and constraints, and TILTH needs to remain flexible enough to work with these realities.



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

FIELD NOTE

CSAWE visited Nyawana Group in Soklo Village on Mfangano Island, hosted by Margaret Adoyo Okech. Reaching the group required a steep uphill journey to the plateau, where members were already gathered and waiting for the team.

Members explained that the visit itself was meaningful because other projects had previously promised to come to the area but had not followed through. They participated actively in the training and showed strong enthusiasm for cone gardening. A cone garden was presented, installed and planted with kale.

The group expressed interest in establishing cone gardens at their own homes in addition to the demonstration garden. Their main challenges included water, difficult road access, fencing needs and financial limitations affecting the purchase of farm inputs.

WHY THIS MATTERED

This visit highlighted that access is part of inclusion. Reaching communities that are harder to travel to requires more effort, but it also helps build trust when commitments are followed through.



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

FIELD NOTE

CSAWE met with Bidii Women Self Help Group in Lambwe West at the home of Silpa Okoth. The group welcomed the project and requested additional cone gardens to expand their activities.

Unlike groups encountering cone gardening for the first time, Bidii members already had practical experience with the technology. They regularly train others in cone gardening, and one member is involved in selling cone gardens. During the meeting, two cone gardens were installed, while CSAWE also learned from the group's existing experience and practical ideas.

The group identified several challenges, including the need for farm inputs, water pumping, fencing, Tsetse fly affecting livestock, Striga weed and access to markets for their products. They requested more cone gardens, fencing, a water pump and continued training.

WHY THIS MATTERED

This meeting was an important example of two-way learning. CSAWE was not only transferring knowledge to the group; the group already had experience that could contribute to the wider TILTH learning network.



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

FIELD NOTE

CSAWE met with Ten Ladies Women Group in Lwanda Village, Kasgunga, at the home of Janet Mirego Seko. The meeting brought together 24 participants as well as stakeholders including a representative from the farmers' SACCO, representatives from Seedpro Africa Ltd., and an officer from the Ministry of Agriculture's Crops Department.

Seedpro Africa delivered a practical session on soil health and approaches to managing saline water for irrigation. A cone garden was presented, installed and planted with kale, and the discussion generated strong interest among participants.

The meeting also provided one of the clearest signs of local adoption so far. The host farmer purchased an additional cone garden with her own resources beyond the one provided by CSAWE. A member of Erokamano Women Group had also purchased two cone gardens. In addition, a local youth group attended and asked to be considered for future CSAWE activities.

Participants discussed challenges including bird damage to millet, hippos damaging crops, Striga weed, flooding, insufficient rainfall, limited access to certified seeds, saline water and limited knowledge of vegetable production. They requested support with cone gardens, seedlings, training and water.

WHY THIS MATTERED

This meeting showed TILTH beginning to move from project-supported demonstration toward self-directed adoption. Farmers choosing to purchase additional cone gardens with their own resources is an encouraging signal that they see enough value in the approach to invest in it themselves.

The presence of agricultural stakeholders and an interested youth group also showed the potential for TILTH to connect farmer learning with a wider local network of knowledge, services and future participants.



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

Phase 4 completed the first major onboarding cycle of TILTH. Across the four onboarding phases, CSAWE has now onboarded 20 lead farmers, creating the local network on which the next stage of the project can be built.

The final visits also showed an important shift in the way farmers are engaging with cone gardening. Some participants want gardens at household level, experienced groups are already teaching others, and farmers have begun purchasing additional cone gardens with their own resources. These are early signs of local ownership and replication, rather than impact claims in themselves, and they will be important to follow over time.

At the same time, the field reports make clear that adoption depends on practical conditions. Water access, fencing, seedlings, certified seeds, farm inputs, pests and diseases, Striga weed, saline water, market access and transport remain real constraints across different communities.

Phase 4 therefore closes one stage of TILTH while opening another. CSAWE now has a network of lead farmers with different experiences, challenges and knowledge that can contribute to a shared learning process.

With the onboarding of all 20 lead farmers completed, CSAWE is ready to move from establishing the network to building a shared place for deeper practical learning.

The next step is to begin developing the CSAWE Demonstration Plot together with the lead farmers. The plot will become the foundation for a practical training center where farmers can meet, test climate-smart practices, compare results, strengthen their skills and share knowledge across the five wards.

Rather than replacing the learning already happening in farmers' homes and group gardens, the demonstration plot will connect these experiences. It will give the lead farmers and CSAWE a common field classroom from which the next stage of TILTH can grow.