BHEARD

Borlaug Higher Education for Agricultural Research and Development

Profile

Country of Study:	South Africa
University:	University of Pretoria
Department:	Plant Production and Soil Science
Student Position:	Graduate Research Assistant — MSc
Home Country:	Malawi
Home Institution:	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
Home Position:	Research Scientist
Mentored By:	Dr. Eyob Tesmafariam, Prof Paxie Chirwa, and Dr. Wilkson Makumba

2014 BHEARD Scholar
Pacsu Simwaka

Research Area: Crop and Soil Science

BHEARD PROGRAM START DATE: January 2015

HOMETOWN: Blantyre, Malawi

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION: Mzuzu University, Water Resources Management and Development

RESEARCH INTERESTS: Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM); Evaluation of the effects of doubled-up legume-maize rotation under conservation agriculture on soil quality and crop production in Malawi

Malawi relies on maize as a staple food crop and, for decades, its production has relied on the use of inorganic fertilizer. The government has introduced the targeted Farm Input Subsidy Program (FISP) which has resulted in positive impacts. Farmers are able to harvest more, however, this initiative relies on donor funds and with the current global financial crisis, the sustainability of this program is uncertain. Hence there is a need to generate low cost technologies that will improve farmers yields. One of those options is the generation of ISFM technologies, which improves soil quality status such as conservation agriculture, manure application, legume intercropping, and rotations. With ISFM it is envisioned that with time the farmers' fields' fertility levels will improve, and with modest application of inorganic fertilizers farmers will be able to harvest enough yields.

PERSONAL STATEMENT:
Pacsu hopes to earn his Ph.D. and release doubled-up legume under conservation agriculture technology in Malawi by his mid-thirties.   In his spare time, Pacsu enjoys playing and watching soccer, reading books, surfing the internet, and chatting with friends.