



February 2022

Left Behind - but can they catch up?

Elisha, 3000 years ago, was ploughing a straight furrow with twelve pair of oxen, yet most farmers on our SHAREAfrica Zambia (SAZ) program still use hand implements like those used by ancient civilisations.

SAZ Farming Survey

The preliminary findings from a recent study show that the improvements in farmers' earnings are directly related to the SAZ support programme. Nevertheless by any standard these people are incredibly poor. They have no electricity, no sanitation, poor access to medical care, no running water, and many remain semi-literate. They consider themselves 'well off' if they have one good meal a day, a watertight roof, a mattress to sleep on, and they can afford to send their children to school.

That said, their simple faith in Christ and their daily dependence upon God reveals a contentment which outsiders find difficult to understand. Perhaps as one brother put it 'that is the only life they have known'.

But there is still much to do before our conscience is satisfied that we have done all we can.

There is also a direct correlation between the strength of the assemblies and the well-being of the people. Church gatherings are joyful and well attended, their prayers seem simple

and sincere, their evangelism is energetic, yet some local beliefs remain difficult to understand. Guidance is given when appropriate but support is never withheld if we disapprove of the beliefs and customs held by local elders.



The data from the farmer survey has yet to be analysed before we know the precise affect our work is having on farmer lifestyles. For example, some farmers are on a 'full sponsorship' scheme, some grow seed for SAZ which has a higher market price than grain, some grow groundnuts while others grow soy, some have oxen while others don't, some have large energetic families while others don't...and so on.

However our broad findings show that four things have contributed mainly to the overall improvements:

1. Quality seed produced and distributed by SAZ
2. The introduction of oxen

3. Training farmers to grow seed under SAZ licence
4. SAZ storage facilities which are used to store seed until it is time to sell.

But the greatest potential for growth lies in the development of unused land currently belonging to the farmers. The survey reveals that 80% of the land owned by farmers remains uncultivated. That is because they do not have the tools or manpower to cultivate it.

To do this requires oxen or tractors. The impact of the 41 oxen already supplied has been significant, and adding to this number remains high on our agenda (over 200 farmers have no oxen). The benefits are:

1. Oxen can plough early when the ground is still hard so that when the rains come, farmers can immediately start planting.
2. One pair of oxen can plough 1 acre of land per day. Smallholder farms can then expand their land to 15 to 20 acres.
3. With an oxcart, goods can be transported such as grain, water, and other supplies.

A write-up of the 2021 farming survey will be posted on our web site in the coming weeks.

We are grateful to all who have supported this work.

Food Distribution to Assemblies

SHAREAfrica Zambia continues to deliver food to insecure households in five assemblies, namely, George, Chazanga, Chibolya, and New Kanyama, all situated in the shanty compounds of Lusaka, and Lusitu in the rural part of the Siavonga district.

These five assemblies are not the only assemblies suffering from food insecurity, indeed there are many more, but this is all we can manage with the present resources.

The elders in each assembly identify the most vulnerable, usually, widows, the elderly, the sick and the orphaned children. Because poverty is so widespread and, with some assemblies having congregations of over 300 with 90% living on the bread line, we must limit the numbers to what is manageable.

Below shows the total membership and total beneficiaries per assembly

Assembly	Membership	Benefiting households
George	320	75
Chibolya	200	52
Chizanga	159	58
Lusitu	100	43
N Kanyama	240	20

Below shows categories of the of households in the five assemblies where we currently distribute food.

Assembly	Aged	Sick	Widows	Orphans	Needy
George	19	3	2	5	46
Chibolya	7	1	5	1	44
Chisanga	8	6	2	10	26
Lusitu	3	2	8	8	30
N Kanyama	5	3	N/A	N/A	12

There are many positive stories of how corn soya blend has impacted lives. Mothers of children being happy how their children's weights have improved. The sickly have also testified of how their health has improved from the time they started taking the CSB, not forgetting the elderly and the school going children who said they feel more energetic.

Testimonies of appreciation



Mary Chongo (63) a widow from Kanyama Assembly

Sister Mary Chongo said she used to sell vegetables for a living, but she can't anymore because of her poor eyesight. The corn soya blend she receives has been of great help, sometimes it is the only nutritious food she has in the day. She said, please don't stop helping us!



Charity Ntenke (48) from Chibolya Assembly

Sister Charity Ntenke said from the time her first husband died she has struggled to support her family. As well as her own children, she cares for her late sister's three children, which had added to her responsibilities. She said she moves around selling scones, to earn money to support the family.

But her burden has been eased now that she gets the CSB from SAZ. She

said the children have been so happy that every morning they just want to take the cereal. She said SAZ is doing great work, and may God bless them.



Lusitu Assembly: There has been an increased number of Sunday school children from the time the children started receiving the corn soya blend (as can be seen in the photo above) even the children whose parents don't congregate at Lusitu assembly started coming and are now very committed. The food is not an 'evangelism tool' but simply a compassionate response to those in need.



Left to right- Fostina (7), Gertrude (6), Luyando (6), Susan (5) and Mary (4) from Lusitu Assembly.

The parents of the 5 girls in the picture above, spoke highly of how corn soya blend has changed the lives of the girls. They said the girls look healthier and are full of energy compared to how they were. They said the cereal tastes so well that the children keep asking for it.

Climate Change

The rains started as normal around mid-November, but then followed a prolonged dry spell which lasted until January. This affected crops which were planted early most of which withered in the heat.

SAZ responded by redistributing seed to the farmers who had suffered loss.

The new seed was planted in January when the rains stabilized, and germination seems to be good. The picture below, taken at the beginning of February, shows healthy crops.

We commend the foresight of the SAZ management for keeping seed in reserve for such an eventuality. Without replacement seed some farmers would be facing a barren season.



The need for simple irrigation, as well as more drought resistant seed has become critical as the seasons change. If nothing is done then rain-fed crops will disappear making rural farming unsustainable. This will be devastating

for traditional rural farming as well as for the villages that depend on it.

SAZ is continually developing more drought resistant crops such as early maturing groundnuts and new varieties of maize, but it takes a few years to accumulate the amount of seed needed to support a large farming community.

Simple irrigation systems are more challenging since they require boreholes, reservoir tanks, and solar panels to drive pumps. Thousands of our fellow believers are caught up in this dilemma. We will continue to explore the options.

Threshing Machines

Four new threshing machines have been bought in readiness for the next harvest. Last year a sizable amount of soy, almost 25% in some cases, was lost because the crops could not be harvested in time. Traditional manual threshing is also inefficient due to the time spent beating and winnowing the sheaves.

The 4 new harvesters will be shared with neighbouring farms, but with over 300 farms the need is great.

We may introduce a loan scheme where we provide a harvester in exchange for grain at the end of the season, but with conflicting priorities the choice for a farmer is difficult. For example, a harvester costs slightly more than a pair of oxen, so if the farmer's choice was either one or the other he would probably settle for oxen.

Sharing expensive tools across groups of farms will be the most economic solution.

Motorcycles



SAZ has expanded its support scheme to include believers from other areas. This expansion meant recruiting more lead farmers to monitor the new areas. The lead farmers can only reach the farms by motorbike, therefore 5 new motorbikes were purchased.

Travelling by motorbike can be risky because people think they are carrying cash to buy grain. We have had one incident where a person was injured but we advise them to always travel in daylight. Some of the farms are over 50 kilometers from Chipata.

Boreholes



Last season 4 new boreholes were drilled, but there is need for more. It is one of the first things on the farmers' wish list. A borehole provides clean fresh water for domestic purposes, and also allows vegetables to be grown all year round giving food security in times of drought.

A new Roof for Chibolya



The assembly at Chibolya is in one of the poorer suburbs of Lusaka. It started in 2006 with about 15 believers in fellowship and has since grown to around 120. The premises where they met was a small house (shown with an X in the picture). It was too small for the numbers therefore in 2012 a larger structure was started on the same land. The relative poverty among the believers meant the process was slow. only recently reaching roof level.

The believers approached SAZ for help with the roof, which is normally the costliest part of the building. Although SAZ had promised help for other assemblies, knowing the problem with rain made this a priority. The small hall couldn't accommodate everyone, and the roof was leaking. The people had to sit with umbrellas.

Apart from the porch, the roof is now complete. The believers are grateful for the support and praise God for the provision.

New Hall at Petauke

On Sunday the 10th last October, a group of brethren from Chipata Central assembly visited Petauke assembly which lies about 179 kilometers South-West of Chipata.

The assembly was started in 1995 by a married couple who had relocated from Mwinilunga in North-Western province. The first gatherings were held at the couple's home with an attendance of not more than 10 people. In 1996, the number had grown to about 50 and in 1998 funds were raised to acquire a 58 x 100 meter plot of land close to the central business area.

From 1998 until recently the land lay derelict. Sadly, many believers had moved away for work and the numbers dwindled to about 20.

In 2020, a brother by the name of Sameta who had previously gathered at Petauke, moved back to the area following his retirement. At that time

the assembly met in a rented classroom at Mizu Primary School but following the government's Covid restrictions the meetings had to be suspended.

Br Sameta then enquired about the ownership of the derelict plot and found that it still belonged to the assembly. The believers then erected a temporary structure where they could meet. The structure, which was built with wooden poles and a polythene covering, was used until the government imposed a complete lockdown of all public gatherings.

During that time plans were passed for a small building and work began on the foundations and blockwork. One of the challenges was sourcing water, the nearest place being at the university about half a kilometer away.

When the brethren from SAZ visited in October the outer shell was complete but there was no money for a roof or for the other things needed to

complete the building. SAZ was then approached for help and approval was granted to go ahead with a borehole, the roof, and the other things needed to complete the building.



The interior is just finished, including delivery of the new chairs



A caretaker's house and perimeter fence will be built in the coming months

Bicycle Evangelist

Amos was born on 15th October 1991, he is married to Elizabeth and together they have one 5 year old child.

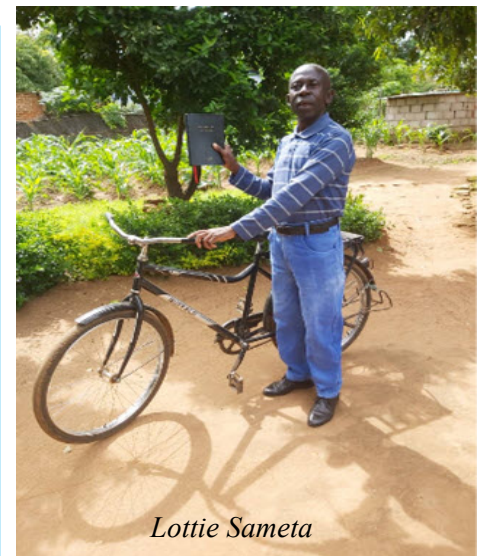


After completing his secondary education in 2012, Amos enrolled at Operation Mobilization which is a faith-based organisation focused on equipping potential missionaries. Since his conversion in 2006, Amos

has always had a passion for evangelism. Amos first met at the Assembly at Chipata Central in 2019 after completing his mission training. The oversight at Chipata Central recognised his gift and have since endeavoured to support his passion for outreach. However, since the church has many financial obligations, Amos was included on the SAZ farmer support programme to grow soybean and groundnuts as a way of supporting his family.

The donation of a bicycle to support his outreach work could not have come at a better time as the bicycle has not only helped with his outreach work but also allows him to travel to his farm.

A further bicycle was donated to Brother Stanley Lottie Sameta, a 72 year old outgoing and full of life elder at Petauke Central Assembly. The bicycle will help him travel as he spreads the Gospel in the Tasara compound, a district close to Petauke.



Lottie Sameta

The Assembly in Petauke have drawn up a schedule where they plan to undertake Gospel outreach three times a month.

The need for bicycles is huge, particularly for assemblies within the villages. With bicycles, the newly established preaching centres can easily be visited and strengthened by elderly believers who are sound in faith and fit to travel.

New staff at Makeni

Many young talented people have completed their college education but remain unemployed. Most live with their family or relatives until they find work, which is a frustrating experience for all concerned. Every week we receive numerous requests from young people seeking employment but we are reluctant to take on people who are qualified in subjects that are unrelated to what we do. In the past we have taken on young people with no qualifications and trained them to become valued machine operators. Recently however we found two young women who have the qualifications we are looking for and have offered them probationary employment. We hope they will be a good addition to the team.

Tafadzwa Amanda Badza

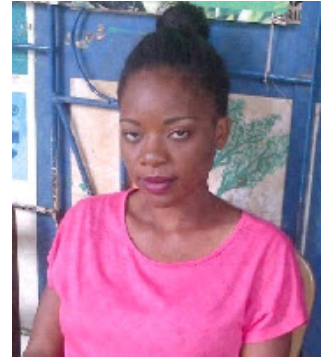
Tafadzwa has been recruited as factory manager at our facility in Makeni. Tafadzwa is a committed Christian as well as being qualified in Food Science, from Chinhoyi



University in Zimbabwe. Tafadzwa has had several temporary jobs within the food industry but does not hold a permanent Zambian work permit. We hope that by employing her on probation that it will strengthen her case to get both a permanent work permit and eventually Zambian residency.

Chomba Tekela, is also a committed Christian. She is a qualified Agricultural Economist but had been unemployed for some time. Her immediate responsibility is to help with the food that is being distributed to the assemblies, as well

as managing the seed agents who sell seed from the SAZ Farms. Chomba is married with two girls and is expecting her third child in February. Although her husband is a qualified lawyer, he has had difficulty finding a suitable job and has decided to stay at home to care for the children so Chomba can return to work. Later this year we will expand the number of seed agents in the Lusaka district and provide literature on how to maximise yields from SAZ seed. Chomba will be great help in this regard.



Internships

Viligeli Phiri is a graduate from Copperbelt university. She completed her degree course in biotechnology, a course which majors in food processing and climate change. She will be a useful asset once we set up a testing laboratory to test both raw material and finished produce. Viligeli is a daughter to late chief Mafuta who granted SAZ the two farm plots in Chapata. Sadly, Chief Mafuta died last year after contracting Covid.



Bwalya Mulenga is a grade 12 girl from Chawama community. She has finished school and wants to earn income to support her family. She works in the factory helping with the production of the CSB food we make for the orphans.



Factory Update

Food safety management program

The factory has embarked on food safety management program (FSMP) that will lead to HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) certification. This certification is required for food sold to both local and export markets.

Corn Soya Blend

The main product is CSB used for the Orphan Programme and for assembly food support. About 10 ton is produced every month. Modifications to CSB to provide different flavours as well as modifying it for baby food is a process now being tested.

Breakdown

A critical control unit on one of our ovens failed due to mainline power surges. A replacement part had to be flown from China which affected production for three weeks. Everything is now up and running. Installing a surge protector is now a priority.



Orphan Update

The families of the 212 children on the Orphan programme continue to be supplied with 25kg of CSB every month. When balancing the needs of the children, we felt food was a priority since many were going to school on empty stomachs. Although the distribution has caused more work, the feedback from the guardians has been most positive, and the children appear to be much healthier.

Support is also given for school fees, clothing and other needs depending on the age and location of the child. Each child is visited at school once every four months to check on their attendance and progress. A visit report, with photos, is then entered in the Orphan System.

Due to the large number of accounting transactions in the SAZ accounting system we are redesigning the Orphan System software to hold details of the food distributed and the gifts given to each child. This change will ease the clerical workload but still retain the detail of what is given to each child.

Extract from Recent Visits



Garden Assembly is situated in Garden township, one of the heavily populated areas of Lusaka. Most families are deep in poverty and diseases like malaria, HIV/AIDS, and diarrheal diseases are common in this shanty township.



Kanyama West Assembly in Lusaka has 13 children on the Orphan System. All children attend Sunday school at the assembly



Anna and Grace Kupanda live in Ngombe township with their mother, Betty Chikunda. Life for the family is hard and full of challenges. Their guardian works as a domestic helper and sustains her family on scanty income.

Ways to Support

- 1. BY DEBIT/CREDIT CARD/DIRECT DEBIT** using our website www.shareafrica.com and selecting 'Donations' from the main menu bar.
- 2. BY ELECTRONIC BANK TRANSFER** using either online banking or by instructing your local bank branch to make an electronic transfer. The SHAREAfrica banking details are as follows
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- 4. BY STANDING ORDER** Standing Order Mandates are available as downloads from our website or you can contact us by email, post or telephone and we will send out a mandate for completion.

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