

SHARE Africa

Galatians 6:10

October 2022



The new assembly hall at Kamimbi



The old structure



The new building



A dugout canoe used for fishing. Some have holes patched with thick plastic. Lake Kariba covers over 2000 square miles and is exposed to turbulent weather conditions.

Finding food is the first law of survival, therefore in certain conditions parental instinct forces some to resort to extreme and often life-threatening measures to feed their family. This was the case when fishermen moved from the Luapula province in Zambia to try their trade in the dangerous waters of Lake Kariba. They thought it would be easy, but when speaking to them during a recent visit we learned that fishing in Kariba was extremely challenging. Many had drowned and catches were small due to their fragile dugout canoes, inadequate nets, and the ever-present threat of hippos and crocs. They said that despite the risks they had little choice because this was their only means of income.

The story of these nomadic families would make interesting reading but just a few lines will give some insight into the lives of believers at the Kamimbi assembly on the shore of lake Kariba.

A small structure of plastic and iron sheets has been their meeting place for many years. Presently about 150 meet there on Sundays some sitting on planks and others on the dirt floor with children packed around the edges. Like all similar assemblies the joyful singing is inspiring, and while teaching and prayers are important, it is understandable to see why singing plays a vital part in their fellowship.

Last year, when Share Africa Zambia (SAZ) visited they asked for help to construct a new building, money was allocated on condition that they would be responsible for the labour. When visiting in September we were pleased to see workers on site finishing the external plastering to a well-constructed building.

Their needs are many; Bibles and hymn books (Tonga), wooden benches for the hall, and fishing nets for the fishermen are their priorities. SAZ will try and fund these but replacing the unsafe fishing canoes is another matter.

SAZ through the Share Africa Orphan programme also sponsors 7 children at Kamimbi. We discovered that these children walk 11 kilometres to school each day, an energy sapping journey. The Corn Soya Blend delivered by SAZ monthly provides the much-needed nutrition and energy for these growing children. As in most villages there are many orphans cared for by assembly believers, but adding new children to the programme depends on people being willing to sponsor them.

Progress at Magoma, with encouraging feedback from farmers



Building the pillars for the roof



Pillars and ring-beam in place



Some of the elders and workers involved in the project



Sisters at Magoma who are also farmers

The assembly hall at Magoma which was partly built by local believers but without foundations strong enough to support a roof, was reported in our last Newsletter. Since then, an engineer and support team have built reinforced concrete pillars around the structure and a steel ring-beam around the entire blockwork. This work is now finished; the next job is to fabricate and install a roof, which will be a formidable undertaking in this remote location.

Provision has been made for the roof but the responsibility for finishing the building including plastering, windows, chairs, painting, and so on will be done by local believers. Their income is small, but their sacrifice may engender an ownership that will encourage them to maintain their building in coming years. May it be a place of worship and witness where God will choose to bless.

While in Magoma we spoke to the farmers supported by the SAZ Outgrowers scheme and were encouraged by their feedback. All said that the SAZ programme had made a great difference to their income, some said they had built a house, others said they could afford to send their children to school, one farmer had bought oxen, and another had opened a shop. This confirmed that our efforts are reaping results and that by developing better seed, providing more automation, and finding better markets would further improve their prospects.

When people are healthy the assembly witness is stronger. They said that after this year's rains over 100 people were baptised in a nearby river. This was a combined service which included believers from neighbouring assemblies; it must have been a joyful occasion.

The elders at Magoma said the new hall would attract more people and they were sure it would be filled to overflowing. We pray for the few elders who have the responsibility to teach and care for this needy flock. It is a culture far removed from 'UK traditions' where spiritism, myths, and village politics, play a significant part in everyday life. Literacy levels are also poor but probably not more so than in the thriving churches of the early centuries.

We are glad that the village headman is a believer in the assembly and actively involved in the Lord's work. But he is also answerable to the chief for the behaviour of the people in the village so we pray that his testimony will be respected, and that his judgements will be wise and gracious. It also helps that he is a seed grower on the SAZ Outgrowers scheme so the SAZ team will be in regular contact throughout the year.

Even once the hall roof is installed it will take time, probably years, for the work to be finished. We will keep you posted on progress. God willing, it would be great to be there when the new hall is filled and to hear God's praise echoing across this remote once tribal land.

Orphan Support Programme

Our Orphan Programme continues to benefit the health and education of over 200 children.

The children are cared for by assembly believers who would otherwise struggle to support these children.

During the food distribution the SAZ team collects information about the well being of the children as well as their school performance.

If you wish to sponsor a child, you can do so via our web site www.shareafrica.com or contact us for more information.

Due to the depreciation in the Pound against the Kwacha the fee for new sponsors is £25

Catherine has five children and is in her second marriage. Her first husband died in 2018 and left her with four children. After the death of her husband, it was difficult for Catherine to pay rent and care for her children. The assembly assisted her with a small house right by the assembly. Last year 2021 Catherine remarried and moved in with her new husband. Her new husband is also an assembly member. They have one child together. Catherine's poverty levels have not been reduced by marriage; she still sells small quantities of vegetables. The husband works as a carpenter at a local market. The neighbourhood where they live is highly crowded and there is no space for the family to grow their own food.



Two of Catherine's children are on the orphan program, Emmanuel and Brenos Katebe, who both attend a government school in their neighbourhood. The school is highly crowded. Share Africa Zambia (SAZ) provides school requirements like books, shoes, and school bags. Catherine has remained a committed Sunday school teacher at the assembly. She started teaching

Sunday School even before her first husband died. She is thankful to SHAREAfrica UK and the sponsors for the help they render to her family. The family benefits from the 'Feed the Child' program. Under this program, each household with a child on the program receives a 25 kg bag of corn soya blend monthly

Manual or Automate ?

Automation undoubtedly improves productivity because less labour is required to cultivate larger fields. Decades of manual cultivation is the reason why smallholder farming has not been commercially viable and why people in rural villages are still trapped in poverty.

Some farms can have up to 50 acres of land but when only a small portion is cultivated the yields are low and cash returns are minimal. In recent years SAZ began distributing oxen for ploughing and this year we have added two new tractors to plough and plant previously dormant land. The tractors are hired out to farmers who pay a small amount at the end of the season depending on the success of their harvest. The benefits are well recognised so much so that the two tractors cannot meet the demand. This service is something that could radically change the prospects of many of our fellow believers.

As rainfall becomes less predictable the large (1000 acre plus) rain fed farms will be forced to invest in expensive irrigation systems which for some crops may not be financially viable. The future of Zambia's agricultural

industry will, therefore, become more reliant on smallholder farming where the risk of drought is reduced due to the dispersed locations of these farms.

One task we have decided to leave as manual is the shelling of groundnuts. While there are machines that can do the job, the community appreciates the employment provided for women during the period from July to October. You might think that this laborious job ought to be done by machines, but it is valued income for the 80+ women who are paid a reasonable hourly rate, so much so that there is always an excess of applicants. However, it is also a sad reminder of the levels of poverty when women must sit on a plastic mat for 7 to 8 hours a day hand shelling and sorting groundnuts when we, unknowingly, are happy to feed the nuts to the birds.



Lusitu Update

Challenges with water seed and other essentials



Sisters outside the hall



The benches



The dry water well

Lusitu, a village in the Southern Province of Zambia, is one of the hottest, driest, and most hostile areas in the whole of Zambia with temperatures in the high 30⁰ C for over 3 months of the year then torrential rains that gouge channels through the hard baked soil and washes away the surface soil that is needed for crops.

About 70 believers have gathered in Lusitu for several years, meeting under a polythene covered structure, sitting on mats, and singing their hearts out. Their homes are mostly mud brick covered with grass or iron sheets and surrounded with small outhouses used as bedrooms for children, or for animals such as chickens or goats. Their staple food is millet which seems to tolerate the dry conditions much better than maize.

Over the past months SAZ has provided a borehole, a water tank with solar panels for the pump, and material for a new building. The building is finished apart from plastering and a cement floor. The seats are planks of wood, as seen in the picture.

When we visited in September the bore hole had run dry forcing them to walk 5 kilometres to the nearest water supply. The nearby river was also dry. Yet despite such hardships they remained positive only asking if we could repair their water well and send them some quality seed for planting next season.

Redrilling the borehole will be a challenge since it will have to be much deeper with wall casing to prevent it from collapsing. However we understand the importance of water and have committed to get the well redrilled as soon as possible.

When the plasterers finish working at the Kamimbi hall they will go to Lusitu to finish the plastering and help lay a cement floor.

On a positive note, the numbers have grown since the new hall was built and although the level of literacy is poor the elders are reasonably well grounded in the scriptures. There is a simplicity and sincerity that exudes a contentment that allows them to overcome the harsh circumstances that have been their lot since birth. They will always be God's children, as well as our brothers and sisters, so we admire their faith, and we will continue to help them in whatever way we can.

Farm Outgrowers Update

The 2022 harvest has ended and most of the grain has been sold. New seed has been packaged and distributed to the farmers in readiness for the next planting season which will start in late November.

Our greatest challenge is having enough cash to buy back produce from the farmers. Without additional cash we cannot expand the scheme beyond the numbers have presently.

Factory Update

Product sales continue to pick up with our products becoming more recognised in some stores; but filling and boxing is a challenge because we don't have the right equipment.

We have had enquiries to sell to DRC and to prisons but the tonnage they are looking for is beyond our present capacity. Once we build cash from sales we may then afford to buy the required equipment.

Feeding Programme in Lusaka

Hunger is a reality in our assemblies, many elderly, widows, and children suffer with food insecurity. They should not have to worry about complicated factors as the poor economy, lack of social care, or finding money to pay for basic medicines, but sadly, the burden of care then falls on family relatives, friends and in particular the church elders to care for these people. In most cases the majority of church members are unemployed and collections are small and therefore it is impossible for the church to support them.

Many assemblies, and there are over 40 in Lusaka, are in areas where there is overcrowding, expensive rents for the smallest of shelters, poor sanitation, and no affordable electricity.

The Share Africa Zambia (SAZ) feeding programme has reached out to five assemblies to provide food for these people. The food is just a small bag of nutritious food that is

delivered each month to those identified by the elders as most needy.

The pictures are from visits this month of people receiving food. When the day of visitation is scheduled, it is guaranteed that everyone will be there before the minibus arrives. They spend time singing which is a delight to hear especially knowing their underlying hardships.

The challenge is that we only go to five assemblies, but others are asking why we can't help them too. It is simply a matter of resources both to make the food, which we believe is the cheapest way to get the quality food they need, and to get it delivered to the locations.

Chomba, the sister who administers the programme, says it is a delight to serve the people in this way. We will continue the programme and try to expand it as resources allow.



Given Mulenga with her two children



Annie Lwando with her children



Distribution at Chibolia

Why a strong Kwacha and weak Pound affects our contribution

The change in the Zambian economy since President Hakainde Hichilema came to power in August last year has been phenomenal, with inflation down from 24% to 9%, growth up from 3.1% to 3.6%, and the Zambian currency the strongest in the world against the US dollar. But although the Zambian economy seems to be trending in the right direction unlike many in Europe and Africa, they still have significant outstanding debt, and the population remains one of the poorest in Africa. A 2022 report from Habitatforhumanity says “ **Over 60% of the population live under the poverty line** Despite Zambia having one of the world's fastest growing economies, it remains one of the world's poorest countries. Currently, close to 64% of Zambians live under \$2 a day and the majority of those who earn more barely make ends-meet” *Habitatforhumamity.org*

A strong Kwacha may be good for controlling inflation by encouraging investment and reducing the cost of imported goods, but the effect on our contribution has been challenging. For example, £1 Pound eighteen months ago is worth just 65p today. This means the Orphan and Outgrower programmes, which are supported by sponsors, are now heavily subsidised. While our aim is to increase the earnings of our farms and food factory to cover these costs, we still have some way to go, therefore we are having to reduce support for other projects to meet our commitments to the Orphan and Farmer programmes.

Other News

Baptisms at Chipata

On 9th October, 2022, baptisms were conducted at Chansolo Lodge. This is because the assembly at Chipata Central does not have a pool in which to Baptize those that are getting saved.

A total of 11 believers from 2 Assemblies, Kamlaza and Chipata, were Baptised and received into fellowship

Of the 11, 7 of them were female (4 from Chipata and 3 from Kamlaza), and 4 were male (3 from Chipata and 1 from Kamlaza).

SAZ is encouraged by the continued growth of the assemblies in the region and wishes to continue supporting the believers for the extension of the Lord's work. (Picture shows the 11 believers who were baptised).



Kamlaza Opening Conference

An opening conference for the new Kamlaza hall will take place on the 22th of October. The local Chief as well as other dignitaries and locals from Chipata and surrounding villages will attend. We pray the occasion will be an opportunity to teach the scriptures as well inform people of the purpose of the church in Kamlaza.

Chipata Office

The new office block in Chapata is in the final stages of completion with occupancy expected in early November. The staff who have been working in cramped conditions without proper toilets or air conditioning, are looking forward to the move.

Bibles and Hymnbooks

SAZ continues to supply English and local language Bibles and Hymnbooks to new assemblies and to those who cannot afford to buy them. Bibles and Hymnbooks are readily available in country at a cost cheaper than it costs to ship them from abroad.

Office Break-in's at Makeni

Despite security cameras and armed guards our office at Makeni has been broken into twice in two months. Computers, printers, and kitchen equipment were stolen as well as the security monitoring equipment. It is suspected that the security guards may have been responsible.

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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SHAREAfrica, PO Box 401,
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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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