



The Power of a Seed



All life begins with a seed, natural as well as spiritual. Our 'daily bread' and all we consume begins with a seed.

2020

Our farming programme in 2020 was successful due mainly to the quality of the seed we grow at our seed farms. It can take 2 to 3 years to multiply parent stock to build the quantities needed for general distribution. At the beginning of the 2020 season, we distributed Soybean seed and two varieties of Groundnut seed to over 250 farmers.

Due to early season drought plus rosette disease that affected some farmers, the groundnut harvest last year was down by about 20%. However, the soya harvest was up by 40% and, because farmers were growing more soya than groundnuts, the overall harvest was better than forecast. The composite income for the farmers was better than 2019 therefore continuing our year on year growth. Not only are the farmers on the scheme delighted with the support, the Chief and the Ministry of

Agriculture are pleased with the improvements we have brought to the area.

2021

This year we have over 400 farmers on the programme. That includes grain farmers, seed farmers and contract farmers. 45 are supported by donors and the rest are supported by SAZ selling surplus seed to other distributors.

A second seed farm has been cultivated from virgin bush land. It took 18 months to clear and get it ready for this years planting. You will see in the picture the early results of the hard labour.

The grain we are growing is mainly soya and groundnuts, but the seed being developed for next season includes four new varieties of groundnuts, five varieties of beans and a new variety of maize. God willing this seed will greatly benefit the farmers in coming years.

There are 25 assemblies across the villages where we are working. Assemblies further north in the Lundazi area are pleading for help due to poor harvests that have plagued them for many years. All smallholder farms are around 20-30 acres, so the logistics of support is a real challenge.

We thank everyone who has supported us in buying oxen (we now have 45 pairs) building sheds, sinking boreholes, and so on. We hope to buy a better tractor and trailer to help carry grain from the farms to central storage sheds – many farms can't be reached by our truck and transport by oxcart can be very slow.

This programme is greatly benefiting the Lord's people in this remote area. There is so much more we can do to help including more oxen, boreholes, and material for assembly buildings.

We pray that this season will have good rainfall, and that the land will be saved from locusts and army worms.



Mr and Mrs Davison Thewo weeding their field and smiling at the potential for a good harvest
The Lord is blessing – see following article about Kapena Tonga

Mr. Kapena Tonga a Farmer and Outreach Worker



Mr Kapena Tonga was born on July 29, 1970. He and his wife Margaret have six children, four boys and two girls, plus another three dependents who live in the same household.

They have a small farm in Mgoma about 65 kilometers from Chipata in the Eastern Province, the same region where SAZ has been helping farmers since 2012. Mgoma is a typical rural village where most households eke out a living growing staple crops in land allocated to them by the chief.

Kapena joined the farmer support scheme in 2012 and has successfully improved his farm outputs year on year. In 2017 he was made a lead farmer responsible for another 10 farmers. Due to his success as a farmer, he was trained to grow seed crops which has further improved his income.

As a lead farmer he is required to travel a considerable distance to visit the farms he supports. When visiting them he spends time encouraging the believers and witnessing his faith to others in the villages.

During these visits he has established small groups of infant churches which we pray will grow into established fellowships.

Combining his outreach work with his responsibilities as a farmer, he has enabled SAZ to expand the support programme to farmers in areas that were difficult to reach.

Currently he travels by foot or by bicycle, but will soon be given a motor bike that will make his journeys less laborious. It will also allow him to take Bibles, hymnbooks, and other literature to distribute to those who can read.

Brother Kapena is an example of how God can work in the most challenging of environments.

How he has benefited from the Out-growers Scheme

In a period of 6 years, he has risen from being a farmer barely able to feed his family to one who earns enough to provide food, clothes, education, and a comfortable shelter for all his dependents.

For example:

- He built a decent house from the revenue he realized from groundnuts and soybeans.
- He built a grain storage large enough to store 10 tons of groundnuts and soybeans.
- He plans to rent the grain store to SAZ at the time when SAZ needs

temporary storage for fertilizers and herbicides.

- He has bought a ripper for his pair of oxen so he can expand his field to increase his output.
- He is now able to pay for his children's education, with his eldest daughter Elizabeth, successfully completing her secondary education and who now wants to go on to further education with a view to becoming a nurse. Norman is in grade 12 at Chiziye secondary school, while Alice is in grade 9 at Chadiza boarding school. James, Morgan, and Moses are still in Primary school.

We hope that some of his children will follow in their father's footsteps. Many children want to move to the towns and cities where they believe they will have better opportunities but sadly many fall by the wayside. Jobs are scarce and, even with a higher education, it is difficult to find employment without family contacts. It would be better if they stayed in their village to develop the local economy. Rural villages will only survive if there are enough capable young visionaries willing to stay and work.



New Storage Shed

Covid and Recent Flooding

Image removed

The pandemic has had a devastating impact on the living conditions of the population. Before the crisis, 58 per cent of the population was living below the poverty line (i.e.

on an income below US\$ 1.90 per day). This is expected to increase as the crisis is taking a significant toll on jobs. With the emergence of the pandemic, most businesses have experienced severe disruptions due to the reduction

in the number of person-to-person interactions that characterise the informal trading sector.

While the infection rates and deaths related to Covid are relatively low with only 627 deaths in total reported at 23rd January, there are fears that the new South African variant of the virus will spread to Zambia. According to the Ministry of Health a vaccine will be available in February.

Recent heavy rains have flooded parts of Lusaka damaging property in densely populated suburbs where most rely on street trading. Without financial help from the government, people are now struggling to pay rents and put food on the table. (These are tough times).

Chanyanya Assembly Follow up

By Eddie Kasongo

In June 2020, SAZ delivered a boat to the assembly at Chanyanya (by Kafue river) about 60 kilometres from Lusaka.

The boat and engine were donated to be used for fishing during weekdays, and to ferry people from a nearby island at weekends. It was to provide jobs for 3 young men as well as to raise money to support various church needs.

Most men in Chanyanya are fishermen who came with their families from the north when fishing stocks there were depleted. Life is tough for these people, yet they remain positive as they try to make a living risking their lives fishing in small canoes in a vast fast flowing river.

When we revisited them in January, the fishing season had closed (it closes from 1st December to 31st March), but we were encouraged by what we found.

- The boat and engine were being stored safely and were in good condition.

- The income from the boat has been used to buy electrical fittings and to bring electricity into the Chanyanya Hall.
- The income also paid the power utility company for the connection to the main grid.

When we visited Chanyanya in late 2019 the church elders asked if we could help them pay to get electricity into the building. By providing a boat not only have they got their electricity, but they have an asset that will benefit them for years to come. All at Chanyanya are grateful for the support and pray that God will bless the hand that provided.



The Family Feeding Programme Greatly Appreciated

In our last Newsletter we said we had started distributing 25kg bags of Corn Soya Blend (CSB) to the families of the children on the Orphan Programme.

Presently we are delivering 200 bags (5 ton) per month and hope to double this once we reorganise the factory. Storage space is a problem but we are thankful that this will be resolved with the arrival of a new shed that we will begin erecting as soon as the heavy rains relax.

Delivery to some locations is a challenge since our converted minibus is not suited to some of the terrains, nevertheless we will find a solution.

The feedback from the families has been overwhelmingly positive. Most said there is no hunger in their homes since they started receiving the blend. Some added that they feel healthier and the children are putting on weight. They plead with us to continue delivering the food.

We do hope we can give more food to assemblies where many elderly and sick need help. Since we began the programme, requests have been pouring in. This was expected knowing the conditions among the poorer assemblies both in Lusaka and elsewhere. It is difficult to prioritise some over others, often being accused

of favouritism, but it is impossible to meet the needs of all. We will do what we can as the Lord enables.



Extracts from Visit Reports by Patricia Chinonge

Kanyama Compound

In Kanyama compound, the Orphan Program team was met by two children on the program namely Henry Banda and Gladys Zulu, two ladies and a grandfather/guardian to Henry. They were very happy to receive the team because they knew it was time for them to receive the CSB. Although the children were shy, their smiles could not hide their happiness. They timidly said 'thank you, the CSB is nice'. Henry's grandfather communicated openly saying 'Henry is a double orphan and is just one of the five dependents I care for. I am currently unemployed but do jobs here and there. Lately these jobs are rare and that has made life very difficult. I feel relieved that Henry is on the program. I will do whatever I can to assist him play his role well as a pupil. This is a rare opportunity that has to be utilised well. Thank you, and thank you to the sponsors. The CSB is helping us a lot. It has come at a time of great need. It is good food for the entire household, the children and the adults. It takes care of our immediate hunger so that we can now think of what to do next. I say thank you very much to the sponsors of this program. May God bless them with a long life and more resources so that they can continue to help others'.



Chipata Compound

In Chipata Compound, the team visited the family of the Chanshi's. In this family we have three children on the program namely, Sondashi Chanshi (completing school this year), Frank Chanshi and Gershom. Sondashi lives in Kabwe with the aunt as he goes to school there. Frank and Gershom live with their mother. They lost their father who used to be an evangelist some years back. Their mother sells small quantities of charcoal to make a living. Lately, even this has been hard for her as she has been sickly. Her health has been negatively affected by High Blood Pressure. The family, as usual, welcomed the orphan program team. 'I thank God very much that there is this SHAREAfrica Zambia organisation. I do not know how I would have managed with my children after my husband died. This organisation helps with the school requirements of my children and that gives me a lot of hope that my

children will be educated. I am thankful. As for the CSB I am thankful too. With my little money, I often have to make extremely hard choices between buying medicine for my health, food for the family, or some charcoal for resale. At least when we have CSB I know hunger is taken care of and the burden is made lighter. CSB is tasty and it is filling. It is good for the entire household' said Mrs Chashi



Garden Compound

We proceeded to visit Margaret Ilunga who takes care of her grandchildren. Margaret has lost four of her daughters; all who have left orphans behind, four of whom are on the program. Margaret lives with her remaining daughter who works as a maid doing domestic chores while she (Margaret) takes care of the children at home. They live in a tiny house. She was found at home with three of the children. Here is what Margaret said about the CSB. 'I thank God for you people, you people who actually deliver CSB to us. May God bless you with long life. I thank God for the sponsors and the organisers. May God bless them with long life. How would I in my state take care of these children? This CSB has really improved our lives. Children no longer complain of hunger and it even tastes nice. I am thankful for everything the organisation has done for this family in the past, what they are doing now, and what they continue to do'.



Widows in Need

The following information came from various sources within Zambia

A survey in 2019 revealed that Zambia's females outnumber males by about 10%. This disparity grows with age as women normally outlive men. Why this is so is debatable, but most likely due to lifestyles, accidents, and the reluctance to attend clinics. Also, in Zambia, women are much younger than men when they marry, increasing the possibility of widowhood at a comparatively young age.

Women in Church

Women outnumber men in the assemblies, not just because it is proportionate to the wider population, but because the assemblies have an older age profile due to their conservative lifestyle.

Widows as guardians

In Zambia, women bear the brunt of orphan care. Female headed households are twice as likely to be caring for orphans as households headed by men.

When a husband or father dies, the little property they own is confiscated by relatives in what is known as 'property grabbing'. The prevalence of property grabbing is caused by poor documentation, such as wills, and title deeds. The underlying poverty makes relatives of the deceased husband fight for any assets they can get. Sadly, the widows are left destitute and often depend on their own relatives to take care of their children – in Zambia there is no government pension or social support schemes for widows.

If a woman loses her husband, she does not usually remarry as the trauma of widowhood can be so devastating. It is also the case that men will not marry women who have children; caring for someone else's children is thought to be an unaffordable burden.

The difficulties for extended families to care for orphaned children are increased when grandparents are also

suffering from the physical challenges of old age.

Although grandparenting has always been part of Zambian culture, the burden placed on the elderly is unfair. They question why their lives are being spared when their children are dying, and they are left with the responsibilities of parenting again while physically unable to work.

The SAZ Orphan Programme provides financial help for children to attend school, and the Feeding Programme has brought some relief to many homes, but more must be done to address the wider challenges facing these dear people.

Can their assembly take responsibility?

In an assembly of say 100 people the weekly contribution (equivalent in UK money) may be slightly over £10 with a few members contributing 10p each and the majority nothing. This is the picture for some bigger assemblies in Lusaka while in smaller assemblies like Kafue River Bridge, the weekly contribution can be as low as £1. This money is usually used to buy cleaning detergents to maintain the hall, and to buy the emblems for the Sunday morning.

Most believers in these assemblies have no formal employment, earning their living from street trading, selling second-hand clothes, vegetables, repackaged sugar and so on. Every penny they earn is needed to provide the basics for their own families.

Although the elders have a real burden for their widows and orphans, they do not have the means to care for them. Food, rent, electricity, charcoal, health care, are everyday necessities.

Supporting widows from an assembly budget is impossible - there has to be another way.

It comes down to socioeconomics. If the majority of people have no formal employment then the Government is not generating the tax to pay for social care. If people are not earning a reasonable wage then there is no disposable income available to help

others. And, if interest on Credit facilities is too high, sometimes 40%, then people cannot afford to borrow money to start street trading. It seems like a poverty trap with no escape.

Micro Finance

Many could engage in street trading which, with sufficient stock, would earn them enough to tide them through. But they need capital and good advice to help to get started.

SAZ, therefore, is looking to set up a small interest free Micro Loan Fund where people can apply for either a cash loan or an asset. This would be for small groups of women, probably younger widows, to work together to raise money for themselves as well as support others who need help. We have seen this working in one of the assemblies in the Eastern Province, and we have some idea as to how it might work in urban areas - but we need more research. Hopefully we can explain more in our next newsletter.



Alice Nyirenda



Emelia Mvula



Agnes Mulugwa

Delivering Gifts

(Extract from a report from Patricia)

Occasionally we receive personal gifts for named individuals. Here is the response that Patricia got when visiting some of the people just before Christmas.

GARDEN COMPOUND

When delivering a gift to Dickson Chengo, we found he was not at home but met with his brother and disabled grandfather outside their house. They were happy to see us. They thankfully received the money. Here is what his grandfather said - *"This money is so timely. We will have a decent meal for Christmas, and I will also buy for Dickson some nice clothes so that on Christmas day when reciting scriptures in church he can look nice and be confident"*. Dickson's grandfather has lost both legs in an accident. He said that the gift, as well as the Corn Soya Blend, has relieved him from worrying about feeding the children.



CHIPATA COMPOUND

Eunice Joyce Chanshi has been sickly since 2020 March when she suffered a partial stroke, and although she has recovered to some extent, she feels heaviness in one arm and leg. Eunice is a widow with 4 children, 3 of whom are on the orphan program. She used to sell small quantities of charcoal, but her business failed when she became ill. Here is what she said, *"God sees. It is very difficult for me to survive in my condition. Business is hard. Receiving this money is a very good thing for me. May God bless your feet you people who have brought this money. May the same God bless every member of this organisation and the sender of this money"*.



Assembly Support

Kamlaza: The new hall at Kamlaza is progressing well. The roof is on and plastering should start soon. They expect to open the building late February or early March.

Lusitu: Progress is slow, however, water engineers have been on site and identified various problems. The well is dry and the pump is damaged. We may have to re-drill. The water tank is also damaged because it has been left empty for too long. The necessary parts will be ordered and hopefully repairs will be done soon so that work can recommence on the building.

Litetu: Local language Bibles have been delivered to a small assembly at Litetu in the Chibombo district. Most believers there are poor and many didn't have a Bible.

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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Account Number: 10592935
Sort Code: 20-29-23
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Harrogate, HG2 9WZ
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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**SHAREAfrica, PO Box 401,
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