



ency which can be difficult to stop. Ideally people need jobs so they can earn enough to feed themselves; but in the meantime, we must respond as best we can.

The Most Vulnerable

The problem of malnutrition among children in poor societies is that it affects their development in later life causing diminished intellectual capacity, behavioural problems, low work capacity, and poor immune systems that often results in reduced life expectancy. The elders in the assemblies are aware of such and would therefore include mothers with young children among those in need of food.



In Lusaka we continue to deliver food to an orphanage run by the Kamwala assembly. The children come from very poor backgrounds, some having been removed from community schools for various reasons and others are street children with complex backgrounds. A few live on site while the others travel daily. The food we provide is likely to be the most nutritious meal they have all day and probably the reason why they want to attend school.

Food for the needy

Food banks in the UK have served as a lifeline for those who find it difficult to make ends meet, particularly single mothers and the elderly who depend solely on a state pension to pay their rent and heating bills. Thankfully there are relatively few in the UK who depend on food handouts, and in the assemblies, it is probably unknown for our fellow believers to go hungry. But this is not the case for the poor in the assemblies in Zambia where poverty is everywhere and there is no help with either state benefits or food banks. What is so disheartening is that the people are not lazy, even the elderly are willing to work, but there are no jobs, so people end up street-selling odds and ends to earn a little to feed themselves.

Earlier this year SAZ took the initiative to produce more of the Corn Soya Blend they make for children on the Orphan Program to be distributed to people in the assemblies where widows and elderly were in urgent need of food. The response was overwhelming, to the point we couldn't meet the demand so had to spread the resource we had

—over just 6 different assemblies each month.

The problem was compounded last month by a shortage of maize meal, one of the ingredients we use in the precooked porridge. To counter this we purchased two machines, a hammer mill and dehuller, which will allow us to produce more food at less cost, (from £10 to £8 per 25kg bag). The constraint is now a filling machine to measure and fills bags by weight. This would allow us to sell small bags of the same porridge to the commercial market to help increase the volume we make for the assemblies.

You must actively help the hungry and feed the oppressed. Then your light will dispel the darkness, and your darkness will be transformed into noonday.
Is 58:10

One of the pictures shows food being distributed to children in the Eastern Province where we have the farms. They felt they were being left out since the orphan program hasn't gone that far and they were in as much need as the people in Lusaka. The up-take has also been overwhelming.

It is hard to know if giving handouts is the right thing to do since it creates a depend-

Operations in Zambia

What we do and why

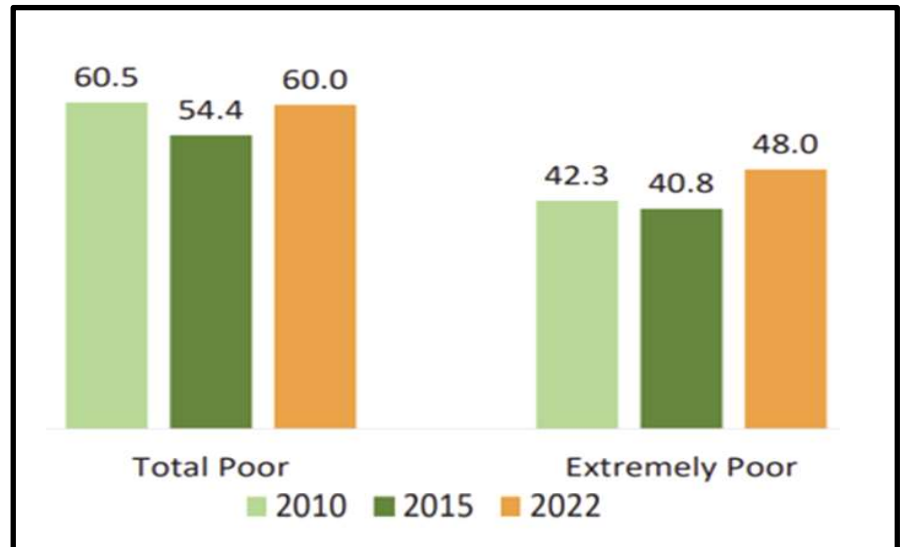
Why Zambia?

Share Africa Zambia (SAZ) was registered as a not-for-profit organisation in Zambia in 2006 to help relieve some of the acute poverty experienced by many of our fellow believers. Today SAZ is widely recognised for its contribution – a contribution tiny in relation to the growing poverty in most provinces. Lusaka, the capital, has an abundance of posh malls and expensive cars but is also awash with beggars, street traders and marketeers fighting for a few Kwacha to buy their next meal.

Rising inflation, a declining currency, and high unemployment are part of the problem but not all. Zambia, in the opinion of many, has become a class society with little opportunity for the less privileged – without ‘connections’ it is unlikely you will ‘make it’. Even if you are fortunate to find a job, your wage is unlikely to be enough to afford the rent of a two-room house in a run-down suburb.

This disparity is also evident among the assemblies. There are a few English and vernacular speaking assemblies that are reasonably well off, but by far the majority of the 62 assemblies in Lusaka are poor. It would be true to say that very few are in full-time employment, and most will struggle to provide a healthy meal for their families. With such widespread poverty it is the vulnerable like widows and orphans who suffer most. It was because of this that SAZ began providing food for those in most need.

The same conditions are true in all rural areas, and while farmers can live off the land, their income is not enough to provide the basic support required for their families. For example, no electricity, no running water, no access to medical care, no transport other than perhaps a bicycle, no



secondary education, many living in grass thatched houses, children sleeping on mats....and so on. The assembly halls where they meet also reflect poverty with weak structures, and little income to pay for repairs. Having said that there is a contentment and joy that is not so apparent in the city – you can’t envy something you don’t know.

Rising Poverty

Poverty statistics published by the Zambian Statistics Agency this year shows an increase in extreme poverty from 40.8% to 48% between 2015 and 2023. This means about 8 million people in Zambia are extremely poor.

Statistics published this year showed that 95% of the Zambian population declared themselves Christian – this is the highest of countries surveyed. **Zambia also has a high concentration of assemblies per head of population with over 1500, Government registered CMM (Brethren) assemblies.** (all churches in Zambia must be registered).

From these statistics it is obvious that many assembly believers live in extremely poor conditions. This is why we are in Zam-

bia. Having seen the poverty, we cannot turn a blind eye, or leave it to others to solve.

Gal 6:9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

With the Lords help we have made progress, and we will continue to do all we can to ease the burden of our fellow believers

How we operate

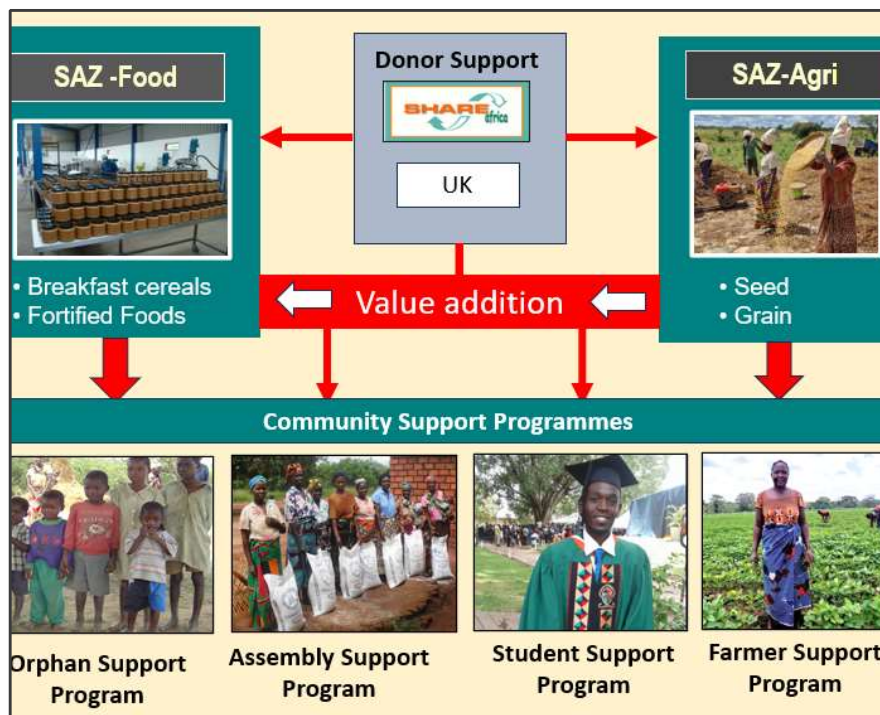
SAZ is structured to support four areas of need: **Orphan Support, Church Support, Farmer Support**, and to a lesser extent **Student Support**. The funding for these comes from donations from believers in the UK. Supplementary income and material support comes from two commercial activities. Our aim is to become self-funding within Zambia so that should external aid cease, then SAZ will continue to operate.

The commercial activities are linked to each other as well as to the activities they support. For example, the seed division grows seed which is given to the farmers with the surplus being sold to

sustain the operation. The farmers then produce grain which is shipped to the food factory where food is made for the orphans and the vulnerable in the assemblies. Additional food is sold to the supermarkets to cover the cost of the food factory.

This model embeds work disciplines which may be lacking in Zambian culture and perhaps it is one of the reasons why Zambia is still relatively poor. But it is not that people are lazy rather that they lack the opportunity to be trained, educated, and invested in so they can work and provide for their families.

Having said that we will always value the support of believers in the UK and elsewhere. It is with their support that we have been able to develop the model we have. The more the Lord provides the more people will be blessed through the Church Support, Orphan Support, Farmer and Student Support programs we operate. And we do it so that the Lord alone will be praised.



The entire operation is 'non-profit' and is registered in Zambia as a 'public benefit' company. Our name SHARE (equity) is precisely what we aim to be.

That there might be an equality (equity) among you'
2 Cor 8:14

Orphan Program

Baptisms at Kafue Road Bridge

The Kafue Road Bridge Assembly is about half a kilometer from the Kafue River. There are about one hundred in fellowship all of whom depend mainly on selling fish from the Kafue River to meet their everyday needs.



The assembly has ten children on Share Africa Orphan Program, six of whom are in fellowship. On the 29th of October, ten new converts were baptized including three girls from the Orphan Program - Beatrice Mwamba, Mercy Chishala and Fridah Kapya.

Paul Wandi, our representative from SAZ (Share Africa Zambia), attended the baptisms and sent this brief report.

Beatrice Mwanba: Beatrice is doing well at school, but homelife is difficult. Her guardian sells fish at the local market but struggles to earn enough to cover the family meals. Beatrice is the youngest child in a family of six - four brothers and one sister. She trusted the Lord on the 12th of March 2023 and since then has been an active member of the Road Bridge Youth Group.

Mercy Chishala: Mercy is the youngest in the family of four, three boys and one girl. She is 14 and is currently in Grade 8. The home where she lives is 3 kilometers from school which means she walks this distance each day. This is not uncommon for children who regard their education as important if they are to escape the poverty that they are presently experiencing.

Thankfully Mercy's sights are set higher. She trusted the Lord 21st of May 2023 and has now decided to publicly witness her faith by being baptized.

Fridah Kapya: Fridah is 14 years old and the youngest in a family of three girls. Her school performance is average, which may be due to the poor circumstances at home. Her guardian sells fish by the bridge, but her earnings are not enough to sustain the family. Such levels of poverty make it difficult for Fredah and other children in the family to succeed in their education. Nevertheless, Fredah

is determined to do well in school despite the challenges she faces at home.

The big change in her life was when she trusted the Lord on the 18th July 2023, and now that she is baptized she will become part of an active youth group in the assembly. This aspect of Christian fellowship brings joy and purpose to an otherwise aimless life.



Summary

In recent months households have been challenged by rising costs, the shortage of maize meal, and high unemployment - even the street traders are finding it difficult. The monthly allowance of Corn Soya Blend we provide as part of the program is seen as a great blessing. It is probably the most nutritious food the family eats all month.

Another matter that concerns teenage girls is the availability of hygiene packs. These are not provided by schools, and because many girls can't afford them, they miss school for several days each month. Beginning in December, SAZ will provide hygiene packs to all girls as part of the program allowance.

Currently we have 220 children on the program, 130 girls and 90 boys. A further 14 are waiting to be sponsored. If you would like to sponsor a child, please get in touch either by email or call - contact details are on the back page of the newsletter. The program is having a positive impact on many children's lives

Travelling Evangelists

The *bicycle evangelists* are a group of believers from various assemblies who volunteer to travel out to towns and villages to preach and distribute Gospel tracts. They go to areas where there are no assemblies, or where the assembly is weak and in need of support. They have the blessing of their local elders, but their work is all self-funded. Hiring a small truck, they load up their bicycles, a loudspeaker system, and some supplies then head out to a central location where they set up camp. From there, they use their bicycles to deliver tracts to the surrounding villages. They already have an adequate supply of tracts but have asked SAZ to provide tents for sleeping, a new loudspeaker system, Bibles and a small marquee.

The Lord is greatly blessing their work among these villages. On a recent visit to an area just outside of Lusaka, sixteen people professed faith in the Lord. In another area called Matero, another thirty-nine people gave their lives to Christ. Along with these new converts sixty-nine new believers were baptised at the Matero assembly.

Recently, we had the pleasure of meeting with a small group of representatives to hear their story. It began some years back when a few brothers, compelled by the Lord's command to 'Go out into all the world and preach the Gospel,' had a passion to take the Gospel to their local community. They went by bicycle from village to village, door to door conversing with and saw many people profess faith in Christ. Others from neighbouring assemblies joined

the group which now amounts to about forty people. Over time they became more organized and now have a chairman, secretary, treasurer, and a coordinator who organises the calendar. They plan their trips when they have enough volunteers and enough funds to cover their expenses. Their group consists of a diverse group of men, women, young and old, but all share the same passion for the Gospel.

In a land still fertile for planting the good seed of the Gospel, we pray that this zeal will not diminish and that others will be encouraged to do the same. We know that many of the sixty plus assemblies in Lusaka have been planted by local outreach, some even by youth groups. The power of local testimony is the same today as it has always been.



What it means to have a roof over your head.

Many assemblies ask for help with buildings that are either incomplete or have suffered damage. The most common request is for a roof which is an expensive structure often beyond the means of many assemblies. They have people with skills to do the foundations and build the blockwork, but a roof requires some engineering and steelwork which comes at a cost.

There are three believers in Lusaka who have small construction companies and who are pleased to take on any assembly work we give them. SAZ costs the project then a Civil Engineer checks the drawings before handing the job over for construction. All work so far has been done professionally and at minimum cost.

We visited three assemblies where the roofs had recently been completed - Soweto, John Laing, and Munsudu. The saints are delighted that this year they will be able to meet in dry conditions instead of under polythene or makeshift covers.

Soweto: Is a large structure with a wide span. So far, the work completed has been done well, but a steel support is required in the middle of the building to prevent the roof from sagging. This will be done soon. You will see from the pictures that the floor is still grass and the windows and doors have yet to be fitted. They agreed to take on this responsibility if SAZ supplied the roof. It is good to see them take a personal stake in their building.

John Laing: Is also in the suburbs of Lusaka. We reported the problem in our last newsletter showing a brother knee deep in water during the last rain season. The roof is now finished, and the saints are delighted. Like Soweto the doors and windows have yet to be done, and the floor is still hard clay.

Munsudu: Is in Ndola, one of twenty-six assemblies in the town. Assembly halls are built close to where the people live since there is no transport and walking a distance is difficult. Again, the roof is finished but with a wooden sub frame, with the next job being plastering both interior and external walls.

It was touching to see how appreciative the people were for the little help we have provided.

All these assemblies have between seventy and two hundred in fellowship. They are poor by any standard. You will see from the pictures that they don't have chairs as we do, yet they are happy to sit for 2 to 3 hours every Lord's Day. They have taught us that happiness doesn't necessarily relate to comfort...or money.



Farmer Support Preparing for 2024

Preparation for the 2024 season starts when the first rains come which is usually at the end of November early December when the ground is soft and easier to cultivate. The introduction of oxen has made cultivation easier, though many farmers still use hoes, a laborious task often done by women. Using oxen allows farmers to expand their fields which is necessary to improve earnings and move them from 'subsistence farming' to farming cash crops. Since the SAZ Farmer Support Program began farmer earnings have improved year on year due to increased field size

and the new varieties of seed developed by SAZ.

This year we have distributed soybean, groundnut, sunflower, and a small quantity of maize seed to 51 farmers sponsored by UK donors and to a further 149 farmers sponsored by SAZ. Farmers are also trained to grow new varieties of seed so that in future years there are more options for crop rotation. SAZ covers the cost of salaries and overheads by growing additional seed to sell on the open market.

The benefits across the community have been well recognised, especially the employment offered to women. For six months during the season, we employ over 150 women to shell, sort, and bag the grain. There are

always more women looking for work than the number we need.

Please pray that there might be unity in the assemblies despite the many personal challenges these families face..



Student Support Program

Supporting students who have come through the orphan program and have done well at school is a worthy cause. Most children who finish school with good grades cannot proceed to further education because they cannot afford the fees. The government does offer a bursary allowance for orphans with exceptional grades who come from a poor background, but the scheme is very limited. Even with a bursary, most cannot afford to pay for living accommodation, food, and other essentials, a cost which will continue for at least four years.

ShareAfrica has sponsored a number of students in the past and it has been encouraging to see them achieve their degrees and go on to good careers. We have recently started sponsoring two new students for their university courses.

Christine Siambulo



Christine was accepted in March 2023, at Chalimbana University to study for a Bachelor of Food Science and Nutrition. Following this acceptance, she applied to SHARE for financial assistance as her grandmother and guardian, a poor sickly widow, could not afford the fees. At the same time, she applied to the Higher Education Loans and Scholarship board and was fortunate to obtain 100% bursary to cover the college fees. However, she still remained with some needs such as a food allowance, a laptop, and other living expenses. SHARE is now sponsoring her with these costs. Christine started college in September and has settled in well.

Christine was supported by SHARE from 2010 when she was in grade 2 until 2020 when she completed grade 12 at Siavonga secondary school. She came from a very poor village but when tracking her progress throughout very trying conditions, we realised she must be exceptionally talented to succeed in such an environment. When she completes her degree there may be an opportunity for her to work with us in the SAZ Food factory.



Margaret Kalombo – Mulungushi University

Margaret was on the orphan Program from grade 6 to grade 12. She entered Mulungushi University last year to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Nursing Sciences, but then switched to do a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Engineering.

Margaret was being sponsored by her brother, but a change in circumstance meant he was unable to continue, which meant she ran into arrears which she couldn't pay and was subsequently suspended from college.

On hearing her story SHARE appealed for a sponsor and someone stepped in to pay for Margaret to complete her studies.

Many talented children come through our orphan program and then are left with little chance of worthwhile employment. This happens at a time when they are at their most vulnerable, having lost school friends and are now burdened with caring for siblings along with other domestic duties. Some find low paid jobs in shops or hotels, and others revert to street trading. This is a time when 'church' becomes important. It is encouraging to see the energy in the youth groups – they become a new family who are extremely influential in evangelism and in the growth of the church. We applaud the church leaders who teach and support them.

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