

## Fighting Poverty

The type of malnutrition that is most serious is when people suffer from hunger.

Malnourished children suffer from stunted growth and are more susceptible to disease. They also face greater challenges in their ability to learn. Their compromised opportunities for healthy development usually mean the cycle of poverty continues.

Poverty and malnutrition can create a cycle where there is never enough security or stability to sustain a healthy population or stimulate economic development.

Presently the world produces enough food to feed everyone, but experts predict that global warming and population growth will soon threaten millions of people across the world.

One problem is that many have neither the capability or capacity to grow or purchase enough nutritious food to maintain a healthy diet.

SHAREAfrica in conjunction with SHAREAfrica Zambia (SAZ) is tackling the challenge with ongoing projects within Zambia. These include introducing new crops, increasing productivity and improving the value chain so that people are fairly rewarded for their efforts.

Our objectives and activities are guided and driven by biblical principles. A verse from Deuteronomy underlines our responsibility both to those who serve and to those for whom we serve:

*"If there is a poor man with you, one of your brothers, in any of your towns in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand from your poor brother; but you shall freely open your hand to him, and shall generously lend him sufficient for his need in whatever he lacks. (Deut 15:7-8)*

## "Give them to Eat"

As a result of drought and disease which affected last year's crops many households have run out of food. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of February a brother from Zumwanda sent the following message *"Hunger is now a great danger to the people. They have nothing to eat except pumpkin leaves. Please quickly help us – Phiri Ezekiel"*

From December last year we have been distributing bags of maize meal to the people most affected. The last delivery on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019 was hindered by heavy rains which made the roads impassable. The supplies were offloaded to a storage shed in the Mgawa region and people had to walk many kilometres to collect their rations. Priority was given to 10 assemblies which had not benefited from the earlier distribution. The remaining bags were then allocated to the most vulnerable.

The situation has really deteriorated and many households have run out of staple food. Sadly there are those who are exploiting the poor by bringing maize to the villages and selling it at exorbitant prices which people can't afford, some having no option but to sell the few possessions they have.

The situation will only improve somewhere around March when they begin to harvest fresh maize from their new crops.

In the meantime we will continue to do what we can. As we write further loads are being prepared. However, prices are high and supplies are scarce We are getting our supplies specially milled in order to get the quantities we need. Many roads are still flooded therefore deliveries will be offloaded to various storage points for people to collect.



Believers collecting from the storage shed at Mgawa

## Simple Solutions deliver Significant Benefit

It may seem incredible that the use of 'draft power', animal drawn ploughs, which changed subsistence farming into commercial farming thousands of years ago still isn't used in many parts of the world. In Tim Harford's book, 'Fifty Things That Made the Modern Economy', he cites the ox and plough as the one thing that turned nomadic hunters into commercial farmers, and which ultimately made our modern economy possible.

In the area of Zambia where we have our farming projects, most farms still use hand hoes; a backbreaking tedious task carried out by all family members. With such limited manpower it is only possible to produce food for self consumption as well as raise a little money for the basic essentials.

Giving a farmer an ox and plough to see how it might improve productivity has had remarkable results.

### Oxen and Plough Trial

Jonas and Mashowo Phiri live together with their 6 children, 5 boys and 1 girl, Jonathan, Felix, Malizani, Pepulani and twins, plus two of Jonas' siblings, Lazarus and Charity.



Despite owning 60 acres, their limited resources meant they could only cultivate 5 acres. A further 20 acres had been cleared but not cultivated and a further 35 acres remained bush land.

In October 2018 (the beginning of the 2018/19 season), SAZ gave Jonas two oxen and a plough as a trial to see how much additional land could be cultivated. In a recent check to see how he was faring we were pleased to learn that he had doubled his cultivated area from 7.5 acres to 15 acres. We were also pleased that all his crops were looking well-nourished.

Based on the healthy condition of the crops we have compared his previous years yield to what his estimated yield will be this year.

2018		
Groundnuts	3 acres	32x50 kg bags
Soybeans	2 acres	26x50 kg bags
Maize	2.5 acres	70x50 kg bags
<b>Earnings £1,166</b>		

2019		
Groundnuts	3 acres	40x50 kg bags
Soybeans	6 acres	100x60 kg bags
Maize	6 acres	200x50 kg bags
<b>Earnings £2,566</b>		

#### Benefit of Animal Draft Power

1. Land preparation can be conducted prior the onset of the rain season
2. Planting is done on time which in turn increases yield
3. More land can be cultivated
4. Labour costs are greatly reduced.

While there are extra costs for vaccinations and storage pens, the benefits seem to far outweigh the £1200 cost. The challenge now is:

1. Raising the capital to buy oxen for the many farmers who could benefit
2. Finding enough trained animals in the area

#### Beneficiaries Obligation

Like most our projects, we expect to see a measurable return from the investment. Humanitarian situations can be an exception but giving people something for nothing removes responsibility and encourages dependency. If we are to expand this project, then the numbers show that an oxen and plough could be repaid from one year's harvest. If we set a two year repayment period then we are sure most farmers would 'sign up' for the offer. By doing this the expansion of the scheme becomes self-funding – every pair of oxen repaid buys another pair for someone else.



# Feature Story - Felicia Banda



Felicia Banda is a believer in fellowship Mgawa Bethany assembly. She was born on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1988 and was married to Lazarus Zulu. Together had 3 children, Patrick, Mary and Tamara.

Her marriage failed due to extreme abuse from her non-believing husband, as well as his failure to provide food for the family. Despite several attempts by the elders at Chitandika assembly to repair the marriage, she was ultimately forced to leave home with her three children to live with her widowed mother in Mgawa.

Upon learning of her predicament and knowing her capability, SAZ decided to employ her as temporary Farm supervisor when in November, Mussa, the Farm manager, was seriously injured in an accident with his motorbike.

During the five months that she has worked at SAZ farm, Felicia has proved to be hard working, loyal, a quick learner and possessing the supervisory skills needed to manage the farm workers. From her income as SAZ farm supervisor Felicia has been able to support her children's education by providing clothes and paying for school fees. She has also now managed to rent a 10 acre field, within the village, from the income she earned working for SAZ and has since grown 4 acres of groundnuts, 3 acres of Soybeans and 3 acres of Maize.

Felicia has been using her failed marriage to teach young ladies within the assembly to learn from her bad example and not to marry nonbelievers. She now appreciates the importance of marrying 'in the Lord'. She is also determined to ensure that her children, particularly her two girls obtain a better education so they can extricate themselves from bad vices.

Early marriage, by girls sometimes as young as 14, is not uncommon in villages especially girls who are pursuing a formal education. Having a husband to care for them and children to rear seems an attractive alternative to attending school.



## Distributing Bibles and Hymnbooks

Chi-Chewa Bibles and hymn books were bought from the Bible Society in Malawi to distribute to two new assemblies in the Eastern Province, namely Kamlaza and Chizukwe.

Believers supported by the SAZ Outgrowers scheme are also given a Bible and Hymnbook. By combining a Bible with the SAZ seed pack we seek to provide the spiritual and natural seed that through prayer will reap a blessing. Bibles are also being stocked at the SAZ Agro shop in Chipata at 50% discount. Assembly believers wishing to buy for their assemblies are encouraged to sign up with SAZ Agro shop to get the appropriate discounts.

SAZ personnel have now established direct contact with the Bible Society of Malawi, which means Bibles and hymn books may be bought and transported without having to cross into Malawi to collect them. In view of the poor literacy levels among believers in the rural areas, which in some assemblies is more than 50%, we are careful not to deliver Bibles and literature to people who can't read. Bibles are only given to people in homes with reasonable literary skills. We encourage those who can read to read the Word publicly wherever they have an opportunity.

# Orphan Programme - a Day in the Field

It was Wednesday 13th February and the day started around 6:00am when Paul Wandji, Chabala Seketi and Patricia Chinonge set off for Serenje District in central Zambia, some 400 kilometres from Lusaka. It was the start of three days of school visits to monitor our children and administer school fees. Many schools have their own bank accounts thus enabling us to pay fees electronically, but others have to be paid manually. This is the team's report.

## Kabwe Secondary School

The first stop was at Kabwe Secondary School to visit Sondashi Chanshi doing grade 11. After dealing with fees, Sondashi came to see us. He was in jovial mood and said school was going on well. He added that he is determined to reach university and study engineering. He was visibly happy that we visited him.

## Kapiri Modern School

We proceeded to Kapiri Modern School to visit Esnart Banda doing grade 7. Her school fees were paid, after which we met her. She was happy and reported that school was going on well. She shyly smiled when asked what she would like to be when she completes school and replied, "I want to be a nurse."

## Mulilima Primary and Secondary School

We headed for Mulilima Primary and Secondary Schools. We were well received by the headmaster of the Primary School. We settled our account with them but could not see any of our children there because, by the time we arrived, most children had finished school for the day. At the secondary school it was a similar situation. Mulilima Primary and Secondary School are near each other. We proceeded to the Mulilima assembly. There we found a gathering of church elders, parents and the children. Among others we met Loveness Kunda, doing grade 8, who is in good health and says school is okay. We were welcomed with a song and prayer. They expressed their gratitude for the work that



Share Africa Zambia is doing. Paul introduced Patricia to the gathering as the new Orphan Program Administrator.

It was now getting late and dark. We posed outside for some pictures.



The church elders made some requests. One of their members, Mulenga Comos (male), now in his fifties, is skilled in sewing and they requested a sewing machine with which they proposed to make school uniforms for the children on the orphan programme. They also brought a number of additional children and requested that they be added to the programme. The female guardians complained of hunger and said that it is more serious at this time, before May when they harvest their maize. They were asking if we could provide food for the families in which we have children on the programme so that they can eat well and concentrate on school. We were touched by one of the pupils, Berry Mwape Mukosha doing grade 9. When asked what he wants to do when he grows up, he said, "I want to look after orphans just like you are doing."

## Fitebo Primary School

The next day we first visited Fitebo Primary School. The welcome by the headmaster was good and our children were then called to meet us. They are Ronald Banda doing grade 5 and Jinienless Banda doing grade 5. The two are siblings. They were visibly poor. Ronald had no shoes on his feet. The pair of trousers he was wearing were torn around the knees. His T-shirt was



# A Day in the Field cont'd

very faded and worn out. Jinienless had plastic shoes on her feet and she wore a faded uniform. She wore another top over the uniform shirt because it was torn. We were truly saddened by their situation, more so because we weren't able to provide immediate assistance. At the same school we met Efford Musonda doing grade 9. At least Efford was in a decent uniform. The teachers said he is very intelligent though playful sometimes. We spoke to him and he promised to concentrate on his school.



## Mimbulu Community School

We proceeded to Mimbulu Community School. Fees were paid for Abram Kalunga doing grade 3 and Hoscar Chibuye, also in grade 3. We only met Abram as Hoscar was not present that day. Abram was poorly dressed, a situation which will be checked out. We also met Casius Kunda who called to see us to request assistance to move to Mulilima to further his schooling there.



From Mimbulu Community School we went to the nearby Luombwa assembly. We found some church members and church elders waiting to meet us. The church members were thankful for the agricultural support and training they had received.

## Kabombe Primary School



We proceeded to Kabombe Primary school where we met Blessings Mumba in grade 8. She was okay in uniform and she said school was going on well. She wants to be a nurse when she finishes school.

## Serenje Boma Secondary School

The following day we visited Serenje Boma Secondary School. At that school we have Chibale Subukanya and Allex Kwesha Mwansa, both in grade 10. They were happy to see us. We collected the receipts as money was earlier remitted electronically.

## Kamwala Primary School

At Kamwala Primary we met Faith Mwansa Mwila doing grade 5. After paying her school fees we met Faith and her guardian. Faith was happy but her guardian told us that Faith has had to repeat grade 5 because she did not do very well last year.

## Malcolm Moffat College of Education

We then went to Malcolm Moffat College of Education to meet Iness Kabanje. She was happy to meet us and it was good to meet her too. Iness is in the second year, studying education. We called her the 'trophy of the programme' considering she began at the humble Mimbulu Community School.



Presently there are 189 children on the programme. As well as providing school fees, school allowances, food packs and gift packs, each child is visited at least 3 times a year. Discussions with the guardians, the school teachers and children provide useful information about the child's wellbeing. As you will see in the report some situations can be challenging as well as encouraging.

Patricia's experience professionally, as well as being a believer, helps her identify problems that can be followed up either by a Social Carer or by the local elders. Many teenage girls benefit from counselling and encouragement, especially since most have lost their mother.

It is a privilege for us to serve in this way. We thank everyone who sponsors a child. We also encourage others to join - there are many children waiting in the queue. If you are interested, go to our web site where you can sponsor a child on line. If you need more information give us a call

## Patricia Chinonge joins SAZ



Patricia came to Lusaka from Swaziland in 2007. She was raised by a believing grandmother and became a believer in 1990 when she was in grade 12. She is now in fellowship at Makeni Gospel Hall which is adjacent to our premises. She is married and is a mother of four children.

Patricia has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology and Public Administration which she obtained from the University of Swaziland in 2001. In 2018 she obtained a diploma from Mulungushi University in Programme Planning and Monitoring and Evaluation. She is currently studying for a Masters in Sociology at Zambia Open University.

She has worked in various capacities with different institutions. She has also worked in prisons both in Swaziland and in Zambia, counselling inmates. More recently she was a researcher with Child Frontiers on behalf of UNICEF finding out about community perceptions on child wellbeing.

In her role at SAZ Patricia will be responsible for the administration and development of the Orphan Programme.

## Seed Inspection Visit

As planned, the Seed Inspector managed to undertake a field inspection at SAZ Farm. He was pleased to learn that SAZ farm has been a shining example in Eastern Province in the production of legume seed.

The inspector has since advised that the company should consider writing to the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture of its activities in the Eastern province and how the company wishes to participate in supplying quality legume seed through the Government Farmer Input support programme (FISP)



We thank everyone who has supported the various aspects of the work in Zambia. Tackling the acute poverty experienced by many of our fellow believers is a considerable challenge, nevertheless significant progress is being made. We look to the Lord for wisdom as we continue to serve His people.

If you would like to support the work of SHAREAfrica by making a donation you can do this in a number of ways.

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**SHAREAfrica, PO Box 401,  
Harrogate, HG2 9WZ**

**Telephone: 01423879280 or 07889433979**

**[www.shareafrica.com](http://www.shareafrica.com)**

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