

JANUARY 2015

Spot the difference!

A Conservation Agricultural Project in Mwanza



For Amon Suge, last year there was no harvest.

Amon and his wife and daughter, live in Kayenze, a village 35km from Mwanza on Lake Victoria, where he pastors a church. Last year he planted maize and beans on his one acre plot. A usual yield for an acre of maize should be over 150kg but the family only got 10kg. And only 5kg of beans. This is supposed to feed the family for the whole year.

Over 80% of Tanzanians farm and depend on their crops to live. But conditions are harsh here; rainfall is low, deforestation and failure to care

for and manage the soil has led to bad soil conditions causing consistently poor yields and Mwanza region is now reported as being unable to feed itself.

To help Pastor Amon and other farmers in rural areas in the Mwanza region, we have started a Conservation Agricultural Project and have employed two young Tanzanian graduates, Peter and Esther, to work with us. By training local farmers to farm using new techniques (Foundations for Farming), we aim to see, over the course of three years, farmers vastly increase their annual crop yield. Farmers can then harvest not just enough food for their family to eat, but

also to sell. These farmers can teach all they learn to their children and their neighbours. With the extra capital, they can start other businesses, pay school fees for their children, improve their homes, build toilets. The knock-on effect can be huge!

In September, we invited eight subsistence farmers from three surrounding villages to work with us. Our goal was to work with them for a year, with the condition that they then teach others the next year all that they learn. We began with two days of "classroom" teaching, laying out the theological basis of what we are doing and outlining the practical steps. This was followed by practical work on the individual farms, preparing mulch and compost ready for the planting season.



Amisadai, mulching the fields

In October we started planting. Another pastor we are working with is Baraka in Kisesa. He and his family live at a Church Planting School and the crops they care for there will serve as a "demonstration farm." Our hope is that many trainee pastors from across the region will be able to observe and learn about the farming techniques while they complete their four month intensive

studies and then put it all into practice in their villages as they also train and help their neighbours.

In November, it was encouraging to see the progress. It was initially very hard to convince farmers to cover the soil with dried grasses after planting the seeds. They doubted the shoots would make it through the mulch! It was also hard to convince farmers to invest time in making compost. But the benefit of the retained moisture and the composted soil was evident in the healthy plants, visibly better in comparison with the other half of the field planted in the usual way.

Now in January, harvesting has begun! Amon was thrilled with the 10kg result from the less than ½kg of seeds planted using the new methods. He had planted more seeds himself, but doubting the new methods, he did it in his usual way.



See the difference between the old method (front) and the new method (back)!



Lousia showing off the height of the maize

He lost all of it. The maize planted with compost and mulch is now tall and green and yielding good fruit, ready to harvest in a few weeks. But the maize Amon planted without us is shorter, browner and with much smaller fruit. No longer doubtful, Amon is thankful for the harvest and convinced about using the new conservation agriculture techniques!

It is not without problems and challenges. Not all the farmers have continued with us, birds and other pests have been a nuisance and the longtime misuse of the land will take years to rectify but we are excited to be working with these farmers



Amon. on the left, with Tim



Baraka, on the right

and seeing them catch the vision of how they can help their communities. In the next phase of the project we will be training 10-15 farmers in both Kayenze and Kisesa with the help of Amon and Baraka. We will be seeking to include other components like bee-keeping and tree-planting and we pray that these farmers as they care for creation and



The maize ready for harvesting!

enjoy the fruit of their labour, will also be able to bring transformation to their communities!

Please also read Psalm 65.

Tim, Rachel, Amisadai and Louisa Monger are working with Emmanuel International in the Mwanza region of Tanzania.

Membership!

Please renew your membership for the year 2014-15! We really appreciate your involvement in the work of EIUK.

Just complete a form and return with a cheque to the office (obtainable from the website or from the the office).

Emmanuel Mgimba



We welcome Emmanuel, born to Jesca and Frank Mgimba on 19 November 2014 into the EI family. Jesca is the Stoves Project Officer in Iringa, Tanzania.

New style EIUK Conference and AGM

The Conference brochure is included with this Down to Earth. Please complete and return to the office as soon as possible. We need to confirm numbers with City Temple on **6 February 2015**.

Come and hear **Andrew, Miriam, Ben, Sam and Bethany Wingfield** speak about their work in Tanzania.



Mark Simmons will also be speaking.



Come and meet up with other members of the Emmanuel International family. Spend some time together worshipping and praying. We will also enjoy a great lunch.

We hope to see you there!