

tearfund



GREETINGS TO YOU FROM  
ST. JAMES' PARISH MATONGORO!

MARCH 2017

## WHAT WE ARE WORKING TOWARDS

St. James' Parish Matongoro and St. Stephen's Church have partnered together through the Connected Church programme to bring about transformation through Church and Community Mobilisation (CCMP). We began this partnership in June 2014, and since that time we have been working to build the capacity of local church facilitators, so they can effectively mobilise local churches and communities towards integral mission.

Our goal is to train and equip 30 facilitators in CCMP, so that we can see the local church awakened to a new understanding of mission; responding to the needs in their local community, as much as is feasible from their own resources.

We have observed that the living standard of the Christians is increasing. The church is now awake to their potential and getting ready to go into the community with their new knowledge.

**“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”**

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Matthew 5:14-16 (NIV)

With Integral Mission sitting at the heart of the project, St James and St Stephen's are enabling each of the facilitators to provide their communities with opportunities to learn new skills, identify locally available resources, and come together for ongoing discussions that will bring security for the long term. They are helping to nurture an environment which seeks to empower the whole community and bring effective change in a sustainable way.

## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?

It was a blessing for the Parish to be visited by Tearfund staff from the UK in January 2017 to help train and encourage the church about the work that they have been enabling through CCMP. During this time we were able to visit some of the projects that have been emerging. But more importantly, we were able to spend some really valuable time praying together for the work and for all those involved.

This last quarter has seen the planting season within Tanzania so many have been busy on their farms. However, due to drought, the season started late this year. Farmers were expecting rain as far back as November but this year rain did not arrive until February.

**This delay caused many farmers to lose crops. Fearing the rains now will not last, many have lost confidence in planting again.**

The CCMP facilitators are continuing their work providing critical support in response to the needs of their communities. Early in February agricultural training was given to both facilitators and farmers. This was then followed up with training about agricultural 'best practice', which, during this time of drought, has become especially critical.

**The facilitators are encouraging small support groups to gather and help one another to mobilise resources.** As part of their meetings, the groups are also engaging with agricultural best practice as a means of ensuring food security. The activities of group members are usually wide ranging, impacting the economy through activities like farming, animal keeping and small business.



The small support groups meeting in January 2017

Kongwa District, like many other rural areas, depends on 'rain-fed' small scale agriculture. For most, access to agricultural technologies are limited. The prolonged drought was therefore a great shock for many farmers.

The impact of a changing climate, coupled with unpredictable rain, creates shocks and stresses to food and livelihoods security - especially amongst poor, rural households.

The most vulnerable are those who are both poor and marginalised; whose capacity to cope and recover from such stresses and shocks is amongst the issues that need to be addressed within the CCM process. This suffering will continue unless farmers and those in rural areas are given the opportunity to learn more about conservation and irrigation, enabling them greater food security.

To address the situation a three day training workshop focusing on agricultural best practice was run for 40 participants from three villages; Matongoro, Mkoka and Norin.

The participants' training centred around conservation and irrigation, learning skills that would enable them to harvest rainwater and irrigate crops in new ways.



A group discuss ways to help mobilise resources

# CHANGES WITHIN THE CHURCH

**Despite the rain arriving later people have been saying how important the techniques they've been learning through the CCM process (which is made possible by this project) have been for them.** For many it has meant they will not reach a crisis point, despite having to wait four months longer for food as a result of planting later.

The savings groups, who meet once a week, have also been identified as places that community members are finding real support. Here, small businesses and farmers who require additional input have been able to take loans. A confidence is growing amongst members of the group as they find they are able to meet the needs of a number of households, covering food, education and health costs.

The church are also celebrating the following changes:-

- Prayer groups - meetings have increased from one session a week to three as people take the role of prayer more seriously.
- Bible study - with more people showing an interest in joining to journey through the Bible together, many groups have begun to meet in people's homes as well as the church.
- Offerings - have increased from an average of 20 USD to 70 USD per week.
- The church - has had an increase in membership from 35 to 80!

# PLEASE CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR US

As it is well known that prayers remain a cornerstone within any church we kindly ask your ongoing prayers:

- For those learning new ways of farming through techniques like Conservation Agriculture. Pray that this will help provide sustainable development for the church and community.
- For rain. Pray that the rains which have started in the region will continue so that it can support the many new crops which has been planted.

# A STORY OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Living during a time of drought is very hard. For Talitha, a widow living in the village of Nolini, this is made even tougher as she tries to raise enough produce to ensure a good life for herself and her children.

Before the drought Talitha was working very hard to provide for her family. She had very little money for food, and finding enough to cover the costs of school fees, uniforms and learning materials on top of this was even harder.

So when the opportunity to take part in one of the Church and Community mobilisation meetings came up, Talitha joined. Sharing this now, she explains how this was a turning point in her life.

Within the group she learnt new farming techniques that would help her to irrigate the land and she felt her confidence grow. These new skills were a resource she could use to bring a real and positive change to her life.

Using her newly learnt horticultural skills Talitha invested in new crops. After just three days of farming she noticed one very big change - how little water was needed. Talitha explains that this method will probably mean two significant changes; an increase to her harvests, and, a reduction to the costs of production.

The tomatoes Talitha has planted are already growing well. From selling her produce she has raised enough money to buy food for her family and put money aside too. She is very happy.



Talitha's tomato farm

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*Following Jesus where the need is greatest*

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