

Peter Timmerman
Team Leader
Country Consultant,
Malawi

ptimmerman@worldrenew.net
petertimmerman.blogspot.com

Faye Yu
Program Consultant,
Malawi

fayeyu@worldrenew.net

Ruairidh Waddell
Program Consultant,
Zambia

rwaddell@worldrenew.net

Juvêncio Mataria
Program Advisor,
Mozambique

jmataria@crcna.org

World Renew Canada
3475 Mainway
PO Box 5070 STN LCD 1
Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8
1-800-730-3490
Fax: 905-336-8344

World Renew US
1700 28th Street SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49508
1-800-552-7972
Fax: 616-224-8060

worldrenew.net/malawi
worldrenew.net/mozambique
worldrenew.net/zambia
facebook.com/worldrenew
facebook.com/World-Renew
-Southern-Africa-
862579397130736/
 @worldrenew_sa



Southern Africa is a unique field, with only 3 countries. As such, we've chosen to combine the three country fields into one newsletter for your reading enjoyment.

Food Shortages in Southern Africa



By Peter Timmerman
Team Leader
Southern Africa Team

In Southern Africa, the farmers World Renew works with depend on rainfall for their crops to grow. A few locations are able to take advantage of lowland areas that have water tables high enough to allow some farming year around (if they don't flood). But most farmers look to the skies for rainfall to come and bring their seeds to life. Increasingly, due to changes in the global climatic conditions, the rainfall in the region changes and is difficult to predict.

Last year was not a good year for farmers

The usual planting season in Southern Africa is from late November to March. Last year the rains did not come until Christmas in many locations. After this late start, the rains came in torrents in early January, causing localized flooding in many parts of Malawi and Mozambique. Then the rains stopped. Although the late season rains allowed some farmers to salvage a small crop, there were areas who suffered almost total crop failure, while others had reduced harvests.

This situation has led to food shortages in many parts of Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia. There has also been a drastic increase in the cost of maize (the staple food) across the entire region.

This year may be worse

Now we are hearing rumors of the seasonal climatic condition known ironically as El Nino.

Current predictions, from several global meteorology departments, indicate that 2015-16 may experience an El Nino event similar in strength to the 1998-99 season that saw unprecedented storms and droughts in the same year. Those of you in Canada may remember the infamous ice storm which was also attributed to El Nino.

The following quote from Relief Web (www.reliefweb.com) serves as a chilling warning about what may transpire this coming growing season.



"The next rainfall season (October to April 2016) will take place under a full El Nino influence. Based on current rainfall forecasts and evidence from historical data, unfavorable regional crop production is the most likely scenario. If this is realized, these impacts will take place against a situation of low regional stocks, which underwent a significant depletion in order to cope with the previous season's crop production shortfall."

World Renew has been working for several years to reduce people's vulnerability to such an event. Many of our farmers in Eastern Zambia experienced better than average crops last year due to our efforts to improve the soil's water retention through building up organic matter and decreasing tillage. We are also preparing to intervene, if needed, in some of the hardest hit areas with the most vulnerable families. We have already intervened in some hard-hit areas of Zambia. Read the stories below to help you better understand our current work in the region as it impacts the amount of food available and the resilience of rural households.



Imitation is the sincerest form of... behavior change?



Faye Yu
Program Consultant
Malawi Team

I have three nephews all under the age of six. The two oldest (6 and 3) have a play kitchen with pots and pans and fake food. They love playing with it. When I talk to them on skype, they like to feed me food through the screen. While this is not “typical” boy play, and I don’t know many boys that ever requested kitchens for their birthday, this is very normal since my brother is a chef. My brother loves to cook and experiment in the kitchen. Since my nephews could walk, they’ve been helping my brother— stirring, pouring and even chopping (under very close supervision). They imitate him because they see this behavior often. They imitate him because they see this as something fun to do. What behaviors do the kids in your life imitate?

Recently, I visited our nutrition and agriculture projects in Dedza, *Mafuwa A Moto*, an hour and a half away from Lilongwe



we the capital of Malawi. I wanted to see how the families were progressing with their agricultural practices; practices which may help soften the blow of El Nino. We had already heard reports of food shortages and increased

child malnutrition from the local health center. The Government of Malawi is working with the World Food Program, UNICEF, and Non-Governmental Organizations to prepare for what is predicted to be the worst drought and flood season due to El Nino in the last 30+ years.

In Dedza, I visited the vegetable gardens and the liquid manure and compost pits that were started after our trainings. The vegetable garden would supplement some of the family’s food needs, especially when they don’t have money to buy vegetables. Some of vegetable gardens looked good and the families told me that they didn’t have to spend money to buy vegetables because they were growing their own. Others showed me their compost pits and liquid manure, which they plan to use in their gardens as fertilizer. With the poor soil quality and the high price of fertilizer, families need to adopt these practices. In a couple of the villages, households were jointly caring for a tree nursery. They wanted to plant fruit trees so that they can have access to fruits year round. The trees can also be used for firewood and house construction. They realized the rate at which they were cutting down trees; they wouldn’t have any more trees in the future. These were really encouraging stories because these families were planning ahead and using the knowledge they gained to improve their family and community.

However, while these examples were great, what was really encouraging was a *not-so-*



successful vegetable garden; a garden that was started by kids. The kids put up a fence to keep the goats and chickens out. They planted seeds; however, the task of walking 20 minutes daily to get water was too much for them. They failed to water their plants and nothing really grew. While this was not successful, it did show me that these kids were mimicking their parents. They saw what their parents were doing and it looked fun enough to them that they wanted to imitate and “play” gardening. This disclosed to me that the parents were caring for their garden on a regular basis and it has become a family affair. Maybe, when these kids get older, they won’t mind walking 20 minutes to fetch water and they will also be able to start gardens that will feed their family. Maybe, we can change the next generation’s agricultural practices so that everyone will be more food secure.



Global Volunteer Program Disaster Response Services

You can volunteer in Southern Africa!

There is always the possibility for discovery tours and learning groups from supporting churches.

See also: worldrenew.net/globalvolunteerprogram

Volunteer in North America. World Renew Disaster Response Services can use your help to restore homes of disaster survivors. Volunteer for one, two, or three weeks from Alberta to New Jersey to Florida and in between. Groups, individuals, and couples are welcome and there are reconstruction and non-reconstruction opportunities. Visit worldrenew.net/drs to get started.



World Renew Canada
1-800-730-3490
worldrenew.net

World Renew US
1-800-552-7972
worldrenew.net

Mangoes for Breakfast, Lunch, and Supper

Food Insecurity in Mecanhelas (Niassa – Mozambique)



Juvêncio Mataria
Program Advisor
Mozambique Team

Mecanhelas is a District of Niassa Province in Northern Mozambique. It is within the Anglican Church's Diocese of Niassa. World Renew has supported the community development work of the diocese for 10 years; but has just begun work in Mecanhelas district this year. As part of a Canadian government funded program, our partner is working in ten communities in Mecanhelas. They are focusing on both village-based savings and loans groups as well as agriculture and food security programming. The purpose of this work is to increase the communities' resilience to disasters and shocks.

Unfortunately, the community was hit by a climatic disaster in the same year in which our programs were to begin. This district was one of the region's most severely affected areas and experienced floods and drought between January and March of 2015. Fields of crops were swept away and over 1,000 homes were destroyed in our target area. Immediately after the floods, World Renew and the Diocese of Niassa responded with relief items for their homes and with seeds to help them get back on their feet. Unfortunately, after the flood, the rainfall "took a break" and the crops which were left standing wilted under the relentless sun. Many of the newly seeded fields produced a greatly reduced harvest. As a result, farmers lost much of their harvest and even some of their valuable household assets.

Now, many of the communities devastated by the floods and droughts barely have enough food to feed themselves. Some rely on mangoes and the money they can make from working for people in town to survive. Fortunately, mangoes are abounding in this area, at this time of year; but soon their harvesting season will be over. Then, people will have to rely on other work to survive.



World Renew is confident that our conservation agriculture training, coupled with increased access to savings and loans, will eventually increase the capacity of this community to withstand natural disasters such as the floods and drought of 2015. In the meantime, we are working with our partner and communities in Mecanhelas to identify the most vulnerable in the community to determine if we can help them until this year's harvest in March and April.



"Floods and droughts that occurred from January to March 2015 resulted in hunger that has affected the majority. Due to the unpredictable weather, the population is eating mangoes in order to survive."

*Afique Waisson, 35
(Mucororo community)*

Please keep an eye on our Facebook page and Twitter account to get updates of what we are doing in Mecanhalas.

- Please continue to pray for sufficient and evenly spaced rainfall for this growing season.
- Pray for wisdom for our partner staff as they decide how to best help this community to get through this tough year.

Compost: Food for the Soil



By Doreen Mofolo
Constituency Bridger
Malawi Team

Many subsistence farmers in Malawi have been experiencing a decrease in their harvests—the farmers in Kamanzi are no exception. Two of the main reasons for the decrease are poor soils, due to mono-cropping, and changing rainfall patterns.

We are implementing a Church in Community (CnC) program in the Kamanzi area of Central Malawi. This project aims at awakening the church and the community so that they are able to identify

problems and find solutions using the resources in their community.

Through the CnC program, farmers in Kamanzi have realized that low yields are a major problem in their community. The low yields are caused by poor soils and dry periods followed by too much rainfall within the same growing season. In response to this, some of the farmers have started teaching their communities about making compost. They hope that applying compost in their soil would help increase the fertility of the soil. Increasing soil fertility would help their crops grow better and increase their production. The compost is also rich in macro and micro-organisms which move through the soil,

making tunnels, and improving its texture and structure. Healthier soil with good structure acts like a sponge and soaks in rain water—reducing water logging and surface runoff.

A lot of farmers in Kamanzi are now making more compost in preparation for the next growing season. They would like to apply it to their staple fields and vegetable gardens. They hope that doing this will create rich soil for better cultivation.



Zambia's Perfect Storm



Ruairidh Waddell
Program Consultant
Zambia Team

Zambia has faced a tough year with a "perfect storm" of drought, plunging commodity prices, and a rapidly devaluing currency. This has significantly impacted the level of vulnerability of rural and agriculturally dependent communities. World Renew is working with two of our partners to address food security issues in vulnerable rural communities.



The ripper in action at Skuzu school

In Lundazi, CCAP (Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian) has been implementing an integrated livelihoods and food security program. This year their programmatic focus has been on strongly emphasizing drought mitigation techniques. This includes intercropping with cover crops, minimum soil disturbance, and early planting with drought tolerant hybrid seed. We hope that this will help these communities harvest something even if the worst predictions are right.

World Renew has also been working with The United Church of Zambia in the Mwandu District to implement a large Canadian Food Grains Bank (CFGFB) funded drought mitigation program. Kalaluka Kalima is one of our field officers there.

World Renew in Mwandu District, Zambia (by Kalaluka Kalima)

Mwandu District has experienced severe drought in the 2014-2015 season. As a result, many farmers lost the majority of their crop, and in most cases, have experienced a total loss. World Renew, through its Partnership with the Canadian Food Grains Bank and The United Church of Zambia, has attempted to minimize the impact of this severe drought through a Drought Response and Mitigation Program.

This program has addressed the immediate household food deficits by providing relief food to the communities across the Mwandu District. It has also introduced school-feeding in nine community schools that are located in the most affected areas. This has greatly boosted school attendance and maintained child and household nutrition levels during this time of crisis.

The relief program known locally as "Canada" is assisting 2500 households and has 18,453 registered beneficiaries. Since September, each household has been receiving fifty kilograms of maize meal, five kilograms of beans, 2.5 liters of cooking oil and 500 grams of salt every month. This will continue until at least April. In addition to this assistance, each household has received a seed pack containing drought tolerant, hybrid seeds (Maize, Cowpeas, and Groundnuts) and training from the Government Department of Agriculture in conservation agriculture. Families will learn how to intercrop the seeds to get the best out of them during what we expect to be a drier than usual year.

In order to bring an element of sustainability to the school feeding programs, production units have been created at all nine schools where rain fed crops will be grown. In some cases, rice and vegetables will be grown under irrigation. It will use water from the flood plains and boreholes, delivered by treadle pumps. The program is also looking to provide water to these community schools. In some places children are walking up to 15 kilometers a day to fetch water from the last river that has not dried up. Others depend on shallow wells dug out from the sand that are shared with livestock and wild animals. The boreholes that will be sunk will provide these communities with clean, fresh water. They will also allow the schools to irrigate their production units to ensure the school feeding programs can continue into the future.

We have seen both economic and social impact from the program. The food for work programs have brought a sense of social cohesion to the communities and allowed them to achieve some remarkable things. Housing for teachers has been built at some of the community schools. The com-



A shallow well in Mwandu district, currently the only water source for people and animals for several kilometers

munity is building a pre-school at Loanja UCZ Church and all communities have been working on ripping and planting the School production units.

The drought has unfortunately had huge economic consequences for the community. Given the extent of the communities' agricultural losses last season, the program beneficiaries would have had no way of accessing the mealie meal, beans, and cooking oil that they have been receiving. Local prices for foodstuffs have more than quadrupled as a result of the drought and currency devaluation. With the drought bringing reduced purchasing power and much higher prices, the people of Mwandu would be starving without "Canada".

CFGFB Branded food relief commodities

