

December 2016

Dear friends,

I am now juggling my time each week between volunteering at a children's charity hospital pharmacy, doing some YWAM admin and farming.



The journey to my farm has been made easier by a bridge being constructed (photo opposite) across a stream that I used to have to wade through when it got too deep. It used to be very hard to transport anything there as the only method was to manually carry things or hire an oxcart. Now I can even carry bags of manure to the farm on top of the car!



I seem to spend a lot of time 'encouraging' Mwila, the caretaker on the farm, to dig lots of holes, 15cm deep. This may not sound too much to ask, but the ground was rock hard before it rained. According to the Foundations for Farming course that I attended in August, these planting holes must be dug before it rains, in order to maximize on the planting season (once a year in Zambia). Mwila is planting a plot of maize that will feed his family and also to sell in order to send his daughter (Marvelous) to school. I am planning to plant peanuts on another section of the farm. I am hoping that all this effort will not only help to feed one family, but will also inspire others in



the local community to use conservation farming methods. My neighbor asked if I knew anyone who he could sell an acre of his land to, as he needed money to buy fertilizer (to grow maize). I tried to encourage him that he could also try conservation farming, and use cow manure instead of buying expensive fertilizer. Sadly many people here just want to make instant money rather than thinking of the long term implications of selling off all their land.



I have just bought a number of tree seedlings that I hope will get established during this rainy season. However I realise they may not all survive as so many of my previously planted trees have either been trampled on by cows, eaten by goats, burnt with fires or just dried up through lack of water. All these factors continue to be risk as the cows have broken through the fence several times and the goats simply go underneath the barbed wire!

I still have my garden at the YWAM base where I live and much of it had dried up in the long dry season as we had a water shortage on the base. However as soon as it rained, much has come back to life and I now have the job of weeding. Since I last wrote, we have started keeping chickens at the YWAM base. In Costa Rica I learnt that so many things regarded as 'rubbish or 'waste' can actually

be of great use. For example chicken manure is a great fertilizer and chickens love being fed kitchen scraps and weeds, so very little needs to be thrown away. I am constantly looking out for containers to use for planting seedlings such as these 'Moringa tree' seedlings which I hope to plant all over the place (the Moringa is rich in all sorts of nutrients).



In October I travelled to Zimbabwe for a leaders meeting followed by my annual visit to a YWAM community development project there. I always love seeing and learning from the YWAM team as they are involved in training local community farmers in 'Farming God's way'. It was exciting to see how poor farmers in a very dry area of Zimbabwe are being taught how to grow enough maize to feed their families. I visited one widow who lives in a dry rocky area with hardly any trees or bushes so she struggles to find firewood for cooking. I showed her how to make a rocket stove which uses twigs (much easier to find than bigger pieces of firewood).



At the children's hospital I have been asked to help organize the Pharmacy better and try to come up with a formulary of the most needed medicines. This has been a huge learning experience for me as

pharmacy is very different in Zambia. The pharmaceutical supplies mostly come from India and are sometimes of dubious quality. The hospital has received various medical donations over the years and much of this is now expired leaving the pharmacy inundated with boxes of useless products. I have spent weeks looking into the process of how to get rid of expired drugs and have had to contact various regulatory and environmental agencies in order to go through the correct channels. It is my prayer that we can get rid of all these boxes (in the photo and much more) before the end of the year. We also have a large amount of expired surgical materials but Geoffrey, the pharmacy technician, seems reluctant to get rid of these, just in case they might be needed one day. I have to admit there is now a tension between us as I want the pharmacy to be well organized and clean, whereas he is afraid of throwing anything away and he organizes things differently but often for a good reason (such as keeping expensive medicines hidden from prying eyes!). His job is far more challenging and complex than I anticipated on all levels and I still have a huge amount to learn about the running a Pharmacy here.



Thank you for your prayers regarding the legal paperwork for my land documents – this is still in process so I would value your continued prayers. Thank you too for praying for the elections in August which went ahead and we now have the same party in power as before. I would particularly request your prayers for wisdom in how to manage the farm project and pray that the crops and trees will get well established during this rainy season. I also need prayers for a lot of wisdom in knowing how to work with Geoffrey in the hospital pharmacy and that I would be able to learn and understand the complexities of the system here, and be of help.

Thank you once again so much for all your support . I do hope you have a great Christmas and may the Lord bless you in the coming year.

Kate