

Connecting Lives



Welcome to Connecting Lives!

Malawi's President declared a State of Disaster in all 28 districts in November 2025. Drought and economic pressures meant seven million people have gone hungry.

Malawians only have one rainy season to grow their crops. It just is not working for the 85% of people, dependent on what they can grow.

Eagles' Church and Community Mobilisation (CCM) process tackles the root causes of hunger. But families need to irrigate so they can reduce their reliance on one rainy season. This issue shows you how Eagles is helping them do this.

Inspired to Irrigate

Lainet (photo above), a mother of three in Mwase village, Central Malawi, is one of many people struggling to feed their family:

◀◀ *For a long time, my family has lived in poverty. In some months of the year, we depended on handouts from family members and friends to have food in the house.* ▶▶

Eagles' CCM training changed her whole mindset. It helped her think differently about the resources in her community and what she could do to address food insecurity. For the first time, she realised that she could use some land her family had in a wetland area. Instead of only maize, she planted potatoes, beans, tomatoes, pumpkins and rape. Now she has both food to feed her family, and also vegetables she can sell to generate income. She can pay the costs needed to send her children to the local school; she can buy basic needs like soap; and she has hope – plans and dreams for the future. (cont. p.2)

Inspired to Irrigate...

Across Malawi, thanks to Eagles' CCM training, people are discovering they can transform their lives.

For years, I never considered irrigation. I simply waited for the rains, season after season. Today I can grow whatever I want, at any time of the year. I'm no longer afraid that my family will go without food again.

Pastor Samson Chisati (photo right) is a trained CCM facilitator. But he has been slow to apply the learning to his own life. After Eagles' refresher training, though, his whole mindset has changed. He has learned that irrigation enables him to plant different crops at different times, so his family has more and better quality food. Now he can also sell the surplus to meet their basic needs.



Evanca (photo left) was on the verge of taking his own life in Chiwoko in Central Malawi. He was overwhelmed by debt and saw no way out. But when he went for help to one of the church leaders trained by Eagles in CCM, he began to learn to reflect differently on what he could do and the opportunities and resources within his reach. For the first time, he understood the potential of a piece of land he owned in the wetlands.

He linked up with a group of farmers trained by Eagles and began growing sweet potatoes, cassava, onions, beans and other crops. He planted trees to protect the crops. And he has now become a CCM facilitator, helping others find worth and hope.

Sandifolo (photo right), from Dedza district, Central Malawi, used to rely on growing maize once a year:

Before CCM, life was so difficult and I had few friends. I could not manage to feed my family all year. I didn't know that my family story could change and we could begin to live happily - just because of producing vegetables!

After Eagles' CCM training, he realised he was not using a large piece of land he owned on nearby wetland by the river. He planted beans, peas and other vegetables and began to sell them. His family's health has improved because they have enough food.



Innovation in Irrigation!

Maximising wetland areas, rivers and existing water sources for simple irrigation fits so well with CCM. The process helps everyone identify and use the resources they already have available. But sometimes it is not enough. People live too far from any source. So they need motorised pumps to help – pumps that are not affordable. In our last newsletter, we shared the challenge this poses in CCM. *How do you meet this need without creating dependency and without waiting till the end of the three-year process?*

Eagles has decided to pilot two different approaches and see which one works best to tackle the urgent need for irrigation caused by climate change, without creating dependency.

Cyclone Freddy in 2023 devastated Mpyupyu community in the eastern district of Zomba. It destroyed crops, homes and hope. Elizabeth described the state in which it left her family:

◀ *I've been affected so badly... We used to have food and a house but all that is now destroyed. My children were going to school and I could pay the fees from the rice that I grew. It's so hard now to even think what to do – you can't imagine how hard it is.* ▶

Church and Community Mobilisation in Mpyupyu

Eagles has taken Mpyupyu through CCM's three key stages:

1. They equipped churches to understand their mandate to help those who are most vulnerable. Bible studies led to simple acts of love that had them looking outwards.
2. The churches brought together community and other faith leaders to do simple activities that helped them problem-solve, use their resources and plan together.
3. Now the whole community is working together. One of their priorities to address is hunger. So they are tackling root causes, including climate change. They have planted out trees they grew in their community nursery (photo above). They have diversified crops and food sources. But they need irrigation. Even now, in Malawi's one rainy season, crops are drying up because of climate change (photo right).

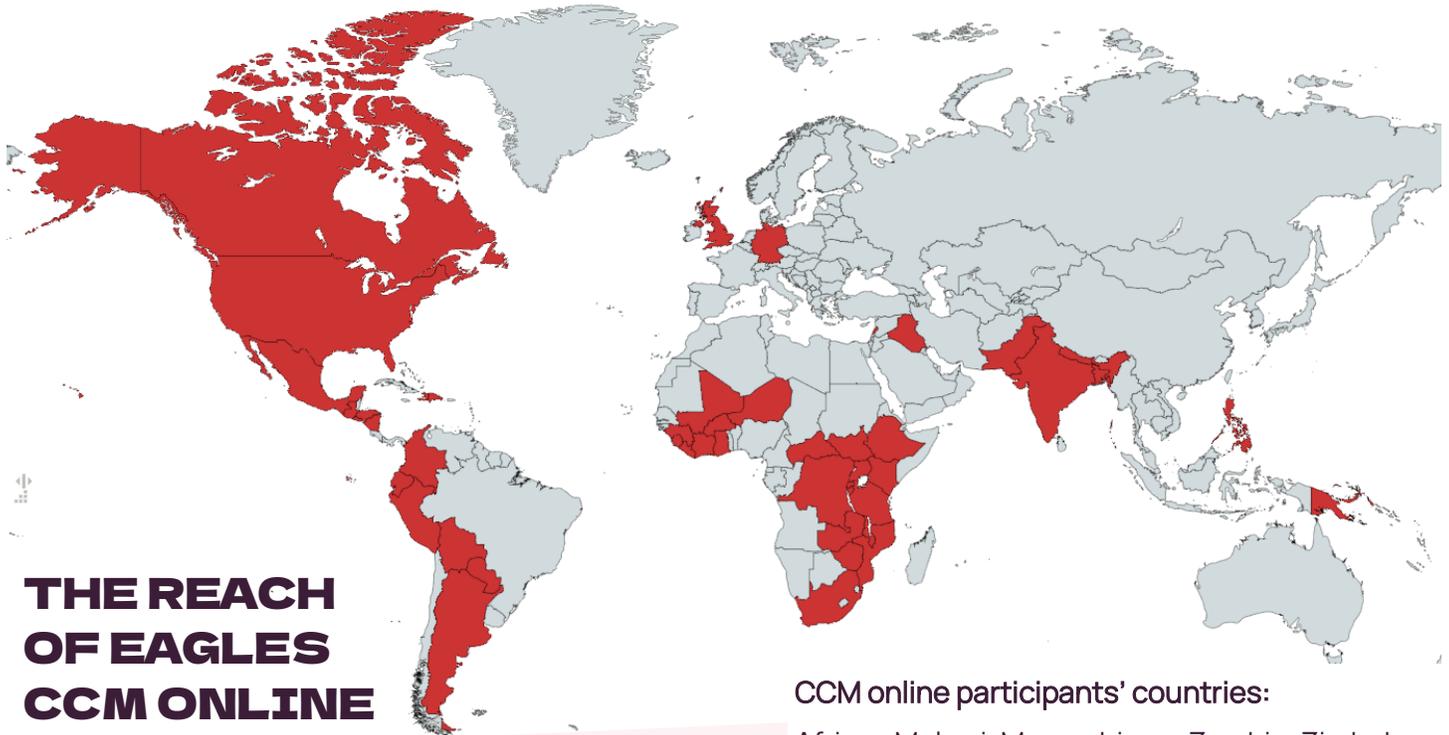


Eagles needs your help to pilot their irrigation approach

Eagles needs £7,300 on top of its existing budget to test two different approaches to helping families have access to motorised irrigation pumps that are too expensive for them to buy or even rent:

Approach 1: Groups of farmers pay a smaller, manageable amount to rent a pump for two years and then it becomes theirs, at a subsidised cost. They still take responsibility and share the load.

Approach 2: Groups of farmers receive an irrigation pump to use – but, with a biblical framing tested in the Philippines, they save enough to pass on that blessing to another group after two years.



THE REACH OF EAGLES CCM ONLINE

CCM online participants' countries:

Peer reviewed published research shows that Eagles' CCM process is 27 times more cost-effective than good development projects – and that it achieves the same results four times more sustainably!

Africa: Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Burundi, Rwanda, Ethiopia, DRC, Central African Republic, South Sudan, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Mali, Niger, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Liberia and Guinea.

In a world of shrinking government aid, its approach becomes even more vital for people's survival. Research published this month in the Lancet medical journal shows that official development assistance across 93 low and middle income countries has saved lives over the last 20 years. It has reduced under five mortality by 39% and deaths from HIV/AIDS by 70%.

Latin America: Chile, Argentina, Peru, Paraguay, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Honduras, Nicaragua and Dominican Republic.

Asia: India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Philippines, Nepal, Lebanon and Iraq.

+ Papua New Guinea, Canada, USA, Germany, UK.

The research forecasts that by 2030, the ongoing reduction in aid will lead to a staggering 22.6 million deaths—including 5.4 million under-five children.

In this bleak context, the impact of Eagles' six-month course is so encouraging. Seven cohorts of participants have taken part in the Eagles' CCM online training since 2021. They have come from organisations as diverse as Tearfund, Mothers' Union, Baptist Missionary Society, Compassion, Christians Against Poverty and All We Can (the Methodist development agency). They have included leaders from denominations across the world. And anyone wanting to learn how to transform their communities. A church leader from Burundi said at the end of the last cohort:



I immediately began teaching the learning from CCM in my church. The changes are visible. I will continue, so that the church and the community are holistically transformed. ... And I will continue to do this in any church to which I am transferred [in the future].

