



Youth empowerment

CCMP helps young people have the courage and skills to start small businesses.

Lack of empowerment has been a major stumbling block to young people in their endeavours to make the most of abundant opportunities in Kagera Diocese.

Led by the Diocese, the Church and Community Mobilisation Process (CCMP) is helping young people change this attitude both for themselves and their communities. Thomas Shavu, Leonard Safari and the CCMP team provide training in better farming methods, but more importantly help to change the dependency mindset, encouraging people to take responsibility for their own future. After the training period, Thomas and the team continue to monitor progress and provide further encouragement and advice.

Across the diocese around 70 self-help groups have been set up combining young people and adults together in savings schemes, so the members can invest in small businesses, as well as providing for their family needs. Most of these groups comprise young people between the ages of 15 and 35 years.

Using such loans, young people have started income-generating projects such as pig and poultry farming and banana cultivation. These can be the most vibrant projects as they have low startup costs and can provide ongoing benefit for the entire community. In Kibirizi parish, Bernard Nobakenga and his group have been able to buy 5 pigs at £20 each. As well as the meat from the pigs, the manure produced will be used for fertilising the banana plantation that the group are also planning to start soon.

By providing employment, particularly for young people, CCMP also addresses social and community problems such as crime, alcohol addiction, and domestic abuse, so that whole communities can begin to find ways to lift themselves out of poverty.



*Asifiwe Gwihangwe,
Diocesan Secretary for Kagera
Diocese, visits Kibirizi Parish to
monitor and check on the progress of
the pig project*



Majaliwa's passion fruit farm

The Kiswahili word 'Pamoja' means 'Together'. It is the name given to the self-help groups which the Church and Community Mobilisation Process (CCMP) coordinator for Kagera Diocese, Thomas Shavu, has been setting up all over the diocese with Leonard Safari his colleague. They are designed as a way to help people help themselves to climb out of poverty by setting up small businesses. Small groups of around 25 people meet together each week and pay a small subscription – maybe 50 pence. When someone needs some money – to buy some seedlings to plant maybe, or some stock for a market stall, or beehives – the group can give them a short term loan. They support each other not just financially but also with help, advice and fellowship. And the Church is at the centre of the group.

Majaliwa and Eveline his wife live in Karagwe District in the north of Kagera. They are members of a Pamoja group in their village of Lukale. When they started it was hard for them to find the 50 pence subscription every week.

Their main source of income came from farming, especially coffee and other seasonal crops such as maize, beans and bananas. It took two hours to walk to the market to sell their goods – time which would be better spent working on the farm. For a long time their family income was less than £1 per day as for other many families in Kagera.

And then they joined the Pamoja group, and after contributing for a few weeks they were able to take out a loan and start a new venture – a passion fruit garden of half an acre. They planted at the end of March 2015, and in September the first harvest came.



Now, every morning Majaliwa collects 2 buckets of passion fruit to take to the market. Each bucket sells for around £12 – that's ten times the income he was getting before. The passion fruit trees will continue to produce fruit for up to three years, so Majaliwa's life, and that of his family, has been transformed. He has been able to buy a motor bike so now he can get to market in 30 minutes – he has much more time to spend on his farm.

But Majaliwa has not kept his success to himself – he is now a trainer and facilitator for CCMP and Pamoja in his district. Following his example, there are 7 Pamoja groups in his village alone, and he is spreading the message around neighbouring parishes.

In Majaliwa's own words "The opportunity for Pamoja comes to every one, but it is only the prepared mind that receives and uses it".



CCMP helps the church to provide holistic ministry to its people

In 2013 Rev. Kalekezi and his wife Selina in Chivu Parish were struggling. As a pastor in Kagera Diocese his only income was from the weekly collections at his church, and as the majority of people in the district live below the poverty line this income can be very small.



Selina works at the cassava field

Then they joined a Church and Community Mobilisation Process (CCMP) self-help group in his parish. This was a small group of 25 people meeting each Sunday for the purpose of saving and discussing social and economic issues affecting them. Members of the group can save up to £2 each week. The group call themselves Upendo (Love).

After six months Rev Kalekesi and Selina qualified to take out a loan from the group, and they started a small business selling soap, rice, matches, sugar, cooking oil, drinks and cereal crops. This business is supervised by Selina and it makes enough profit to support their family. She says : "We are now out of poverty, we don't depend on church offerings only and our three children are all in secondary schools."

Through this process, the family have learned the habit of regular saving and time management, and Rev Kalekezi has been able to bring these skills to bear in his ministry. He wrote : "I'm so thankful for CCMP training that has really opened my eyes. I was such a poor pastor due to lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6)*. I now have enough food for my family, so I can provide holistic ministry to my congregation."

Another wonderful benefit that has come from the formation of saving and loan groups like Upendo is an improvement in community relationships and the breaking down of religious barriers that used to exist – between Muslims and Christians in particular. The CCM process encourages people of all faiths to work together as brothers and sisters. It's no coincidence that the Swahili word often used to refer to the CCM process is Pamoja (together).

Thomas Shavu, CCMP coordinator for Kagera Diocese says "It's very encouraging to see people who seemed so hopeless a year ago now empowered economically and able to stand on their own."

At the church level

Learning from his personal experience, Rev. Kalekezi has mobilized church members and they are now building a new church due to the increase of members each Sunday. Church offerings have significantly increased and people are willing to participate in church activities unlike before mobilisation. They have repaired the parish house so that Rev. Kalekezi can use it with his family. "I thank God for providing this house and make his service much better."

* Hosea 4:6

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.