

DOWN to EARTH

Emmanuel International UK News
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SEPTEMBER 2023

Chris Manktelow visited Tanzania



I'm Chris Manktelow and I am currently working as a ministry trainee at Union Baptist Church in High Wycombe. I have spent the last year doing youth and children's work, supporting people who

take part in a Christians Against Poverty job club, attending a ministry training course and having lots of fun!

The associate pastor of my church, Andrew Wingfield, along with his wife Miriam and their three children Ben, Sam, and Bethany, used to live in Iringa in Tanzania. I wanted to learn about cross-cultural mission and to see what God is doing in other countries. I also studied geography at university, so I was also keen to learn about what EI was doing to protect the environment. Andrew suggested that I should go to visit the EI teams in Iringa and Tanga.

On the 18th of July, I travelled out to Tanzania with Andy Sharpe, who used to serve with EI as a Water and Sanitation engineer in Iringa. It was amazing to get off the plane to see all the street sellers, tropical fruits, and trucks that didn't seem to obey any traffic rules! We arrived

Wingfield family



The Wingfields send greetings from High Wycombe! Andrew is now Interim Lead Pastor at Union Baptist Church while Miriam is doing a return to nursing course so she can go back to working as a Health Visitor. Ben (16) Sam (14) and Bethany (11) are busy enjoying school, music and sports.



Andy Sharpe

Andy and Angela returned from Tanzania in December 2015. Andy is on the EIUK Board of Trustees.

safely in Iringa the next day after a 10-hour drive and the EI team kindly baked us a cake that said, 'Welcome Andy and Chris!'



The first week Andy and I visited the Imarika projects around Iringa. It was encouraging to see how farmers like Josephat were putting into practice what they had learnt about conservation agriculture from Jesca and Ibrahim who both work for EI. I also learnt about the generosity of the IMARIKA group members, who would use some of the money they had saved to feed orphans, pay for sick people to go to hospital, and to repair school buildings.



Josephat (middle) is a farmer in Utengele and a member of the IMARIKA group run by Jesca Mgimba (right). His wife is on the left.

We also visited the site for a new bridge in Mafuluto that will be built in October. At the moment people have to travel a long way on rough roads to travel to the hospital or market in Iringa. People have also drowned trying to cross the river during the wet season. So, it was encouraging to see how local churches, EI and the villagers were coming together to build a bridge and improve the lives of people living in Mafuluto.



The Ruaha river in the rainy season at the point between Mafuluto and Luganga, where people often try to cross the river at great danger to themselves

After Andy went back to the UK, I stayed for a second week in Iringa. I visited some rainwater harvesting projects and latrine blocks that EI has built at schools and pharmacies around Iringa. It was encouraging to do a post-project survey with Ajery at a school in Mangawe where EI had done hygiene training with the children. Almost all the children now wash their hands after using the toilet and hardly any of them reported having diarrhoea.

After two and half weeks in Iringa, I spent two days on buses travelling with Ibrahim to Tanga region to meet Joshua, Edward,

and Peter. Tanga is EI's newest office in Tanzania. It is also a poorer region of Tanzania than Iringa. Everyone travels on motorbikes because it is cheaper than travelling by car and because there are not many paved roads.



Chris (pillion on left) with Edward, Joshua and Peter

I found living in Tanga region challenging to start with because I was the only foreigner in a place that does not get many visitors. It meant that I sometimes attracted unwanted attention and it made it harder to communicate with local people. However, God soon showed me that most people are kind and welcoming. God had also given me an opportunity to encourage the EI team in Tanga and to be blessed by them too.

I soon became friends with Joshua, Edward, and Peter. I was invited to stay with two pastors and to preach at their churches. Both pastors are very supportive of EI's work and are involved in running VICOBA groups. The VICOBA groups are growing and are already helping local people lift themselves out of poverty, even though the groups are only a couple of years old.

Another highlight was meeting a government VICOBA group for Maasai that Edward is involved in running. I was deeply moved by their generosity and hospitality, which goes far beyond what you would ever experience in the UK. They gave me a *rungu* and told me that it was a gift from God and not the devil because they were born-again Christians.



Chris receiving a gift of a *rungu* (a wooden throwing club or baton bearing special symbolism and significance)

Throughout my time in Tanzania, I was struck by how similar human beings are. This was especially true when I met other Christians. Christians might speak a different language or wear different clothes, but we worship the same saviour and share in the same Holy Spirit. It has inspired me to know that there are brothers and sisters in Christ across the world who love Jesus and want to serve the communities where they live.



Members of a TAG church in Kilindi

I have also learnt many things from the church in Tanzania. Tanzanian Christians worship God with such joy and perhaps pray more than in the UK, even though they often own fewer material possessions. It can be tempting when you live in a wealthier country to protect yourself with material things, rather than trusting that God cares for you and knows you better than you know yourself!

I am so grateful for the opportunity that EI gave me to visit Tanzania. I am currently applying for youth ministry jobs, but also looking out for cross-cultural mission opportunities too. Whatever happens next, I will continue to support and pray for EI's work in Tanzania, and I'm sure that I will return to visit the friends that I have made there.



Emmanuel International UK Conference & AGM

10:30am-4pm Saturday, 2 March 2024

ST JOHN'S CHURCH, SOUTHBOURNE

We are celebrating 40 years of serving God in mission next year! We'd love to celebrate together with as many of you as possible! Please book your place!

We look forward to hearing in person...

- **Fred Silva**, EI Country Representative in Brazil
- **Paul and Helen Jones**, International Director
- **Richard and Pam McGowan**, EI Canada Director

...and on Zoom...

Thanks to technology, we'll be able to hear personal updates from our project countries and staff. Watch the media for news updates on who will be joining us!

Our **2024 Annual General Meeting** will also take place during the day.

Cost **£20 per person**, to include lunch and tea/coffee.

RSVP by Friday **16 February 2024**

The Conference brochure and booking form can be found on our website on www.eiuk.org.uk/eiuk-conf-agm-2024 or scan the QR code on your smartphone.

