



Students becoming teachers “We are also realizing that we are leaders... we wouldn’t be happy if we had enough to eat but our neighbours didn’t.” Those are the words of Kenyan farmer Gerald Ndumpa, as he recounts how he and wife Susan Karea have transformed their own lives through conservation agriculture (CA) – and are now also transforming the lives of their neighbours in Tharaka Nithi and beyond. Gerald first heard about CA in 2016, when he participated in a training initiative on conservation agriculture. This was implemented by the National Council of Churches Kenya, supported by our member The United Church of Canada. *“At that time, the biggest challenge was having enough food in our family,”* says Gerald. Before using CA, they would plant an acre of maize and harvest 90 kg. However, using CA principles,

they could harvest 83 kg on just a 20x20 metre square plot (400 m², i.e. 1/10th acre) - even with insufficient rainfall. That season, nothing came from the rest of their land, which was utilizing their previous methods of farming. *“At first I was feeling like the work is too much for us, but then I realized the production was increasing and we could do what we couldn’t do before,”* says Susan. *“We no longer go to shops to buy food. We are very happy about that because we can think about other household needs like school fees.”* Seven years later, the couple is still committed to CA and are proud to be sharing the lessons they’ve learnt with their community. Farmers now travel from within their county, and other areas of Kenya, to learn from them. *“We are happy taking the lead, so that we can also help our neighbours,”* says Gerald. With no income aside from their CA farming, Gerald and Susan feel proud of what they have been able to achieve for their family, including high-quality education for their three children. Gerald is also a service provider for CA practices including ripping and spraying, trained by NCKK with support from Foodgrains Bank agriculture & livelihoods technical officers. Having completed his participation in the CA program, NCKK has continued to engage Gerald as a model CA farmer and a service provider, and he has been a great encouragement to other farmers. v This project was supported by Global Affairs Canada, alongside an ongoing three-year agriculture and livelihoods project, in response to the effects of COVID-19 on food security in regions of Kenya.