

Just a Drop in the Ocean



Mother Teresa wrote: "We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop." Our trips to Uganda fill us with stories and pictures and memories which touch our lives, our hearts and our minds. In our day to day lives in New Zealand it's easy to be insulated from poverty and avoid seeing the forms of poverty and need that are right under our noses here. It's more difficult to avoid seeing this on our trips to Uganda.

When we met with 60 year old Justina in Mbale, Uganda we were touched by her story. Life had once been good for her. She had been married to a lawyer and they had had a good life together. Justina explained that her son had died about 18 months before and this was followed soon after by the death of her son's wife. Justina and her husband had taken the son's four children into their home to care for them. However, soon after this, her husband became sick and died. After her husband's funeral his family came and took away everything her and her husband had owned as, in their tradition, her husband's possessions belonged to his family. Justina was left with very little except the care of the children. She tried to get legal assistance but the family was able to bribe the court and she has had to simply start to build her life again. When we met her it was clear she was suffering not only from grief but also from lack of financial resources and security.

Obviously, we were shocked by the injustice of it all and even more shocked to realise that this is a relatively normal occurrence in this community. We often encounter situations where poverty is caused or exacerbated by greed, dishonesty or injustice which seems entrenched and institutional. One of our responses is to feel extremely helpless in the face of this. Yet these are the stories of many of those we at Bright Hope World and our partners try to assist and serve.

And Justina's story continues. Through networks she has come into the loan programme in Mbale. Despite her age and the huge changes she has had to face, and despite having the care and responsibilities of her grandchildren and a mountain of grief, she has proven herself adept at raising chickens. She raises 100 at a time in a shed at the back of her rented property and a local hotel buys them as they mature. Justina is steadily getting back on her feet financially. She speaks of her chicken business with a sense of pride. She also speaks of the women from the loan group who have been helping her practically and who have encouraged her through some very difficult days.

What impresses us is that our partners can't solve all the problems, but they can and do reach out to individual people, which has the ability to impact on families and communities. To quote Mother Teresa again 'Never worry about numbers, help one person...'

Matt and Judy O'Byrne
Partnership Facilitators - Uganda

Bright Hope News

The Bright Hope World team is growing in unusual ways!

We are delighted to announce the arrival of Georgia Nicola Rees-Thomas, born on September 1 to our India Partnership Facilitators, James and Nicky Rees-Thomas.

Mother and baby (and Dad) are reportedly doing well, and we are all very pleased for them and itching to meet their new addition.

In other news, Bright Hope World's Executive Director Fraser Scott recently returned from a trip to Jordan to visit our partner there.

Fraser reports that Jordan is now almost overwhelmed with Syrian and Iraqi refugees, many of whom are Christians that have been chased out of their homes by ISIS.

The situation for these people is very difficult as they are not allowed to work or run businesses at the risk of being sent back to Iraq by the UN. Instead a huge group of often well qualified and professional people will face a wait of two years or more before they will be permanently resettled. While they wait, they must rely on Christian charities for support.

Their stories are harrowing and sad, but our partner in Jordan is working hard to provide support and relief.

Life Change Story – Nguluni School in Kenya



Mercy is 19 years old and this is her last year at secondary school. She is a confident girl with a big smile.

Mercy's parents separated when she was about two years old and she stayed with her father. He then abandoned her and her two older brothers when she was just three.

'Uncle' Robert and 'Mama' Rose Gitau heard about her situation and brought the children to their home. They have cared for and educated them all. Her two older brothers now have jobs and one is married.

Mercy sometimes visits her married brother during the holidays and he gives her some pocket money to help with her personal expenses. She has not seen her mother since her parents' separation. Occasionally her father visits but only stays for a short time. This is very disappointing for Mercy as she looks forward to seeing him, but the short time he stays continues to make her feel like she has been abandoned. Her father simply doesn't know how to show her any love.

Instead Mercy calls Uncle Robert her real Dad. And Mama Rose was like her real Mum. She misses Mama Rose a lot since she died in May. Mercy is now in Form 4 and sits national exams in October in eight subjects. Her favourite subjects are biology and business. It takes five months to receive the exam results. Mercy wants to study medicine and graduate as a pathologist. She is interested in the body and the effects of death. This will take seven years of study and Mercy is hoping to get a scholarship to assist with course fees. While she is waiting for her results she wants to try and get her driver's licence and will need driving lessons with an instructor. She also wants to do computer studies.

Mercy became a Christian this year and was also baptised. Before this she struggled with being very sad. She felt alone and thought the teachers and students were unkind to her. Psalm 116 is one of her favourite chapters in the Bible to read. Knowing that God loves her, and hears her cry and supplies her needs is very comforting and encourages her a lot. When she feels sad she reads her Bible and prays and this gives her reassurance of God's love and his peace and she trusts him.

Mercy also talked about having a new mindset as a follower of Jesus and this is the answer to all of her life. Mercy is a mature young woman and thinks about how Kenya as a nation needs a mindset change to address poverty and corruption.

For more information on the Nguluni School see <http://www.brighthopeworld.com/partnerships.asp?pid=54>

Prayer and Praise

1. Pray for Justina and all the widows in the micro-loan programme in Mbale.
2. Pray for Mercy and the other children being cared for in Nguluni. And for Robert as he continues to adjust to life without Rose.
3. Pray for John Vlaming, BHW's Agricultural Director, who left last week to visit Zambia, Burundi and Ethiopia doing Foundations for Farming training.
4. Pray for Kevin Honore, BHW Field Director, as he leaves on 20th October for 3 weeks in Burundi, Ethiopia and India.



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