

THE NEED FOR WISDOM AND DISCERNMENT



It would be a bit rich to complain about the burdens of decision-making at Bright Hope World, particularly when compared to the difficulties faced by our partners in often hostile and uncertain environments.

You would rightly raise an eyebrow or two if I bemoaned having to wrestle with balancing the pros and cons of supporting a microloans programme or a water project. So much more so when the stakes are very much higher for those who face the reality of not having access to fresh water, or the funds to launch a business that might support a family or a community.

And yet, here we are.

Because making these decisions might be the most difficult thing our Executive leadership team does. Usually every two weeks, our

team meets in Christchurch – some in the room – and a couple via the Internet, and we pray and talk through budget increase requests, proposals for new partnerships, and personal requests from our partners. We receive amazing and encouraging and heartbreaking requests that represent – collectively – a funding value many times greater than the funds we have available to give.

We read the stories, calculate the returns on proposed businesses, try and get a sense of the potential Kingdom impact of new initiatives, and consider how what is being put in front of us aligns with Bright Hope World's values and principles, alongside those we have embraced from such luminous works as *When Helping Hurts* (by Brian Fikkert and Steve Corbett) and *Toxic Charity* (by Robert D. Lupton). We endeavour to discern where and through whom God is working, and how his *Missio Dei* is being enacted in the particular village or town a work is focused.

And we pray. I think all of us sense the awesome responsibility of determining which works we will and will not support. We consider the huge trust put in us by generous donors, the hard work and love shown by our Partnership Facilitators in the field, and the incredible entrepreneurial skill and sacrifice shown by our partners. We ask God for wisdom and discernment every time we meet.

And then we have to make a decision. It is always a mix of faith and analysis. The leading of the Spirit and the numbers on the page. The heart and the mind.

It can be frustrating for our Partnership Facilitators and our partners. Sometimes extremely good works cannot be funded for a variety of reasons. We have to balance how and where we are investing the funds we have and – again – endeavour to discern where God is working so that we can invest wisely. I must say though, that it does encourage me when I receive a *slightly* grumpy email from one of our Partnership Facilitators in response to a 'no'. When they advocate for their partners, I am reminded of the passion and care of our team.

The toughest requests we receive – in my opinion – are the very real 'life needs' of our partners. These are the ones where a mother-in-law needs surgery, or an outstanding debt needs to be paid, or someone's crops have failed. We know these people, and we know their requests and needs are absolutely genuine, but we often have to say 'no' here, for a couple of reasons.

We take care, as a ministry, not to elevate our partners above the norm in their community. To some of you this will seem odd and harsh, but we tend not to step in and meet the needs of our partners where they are typical of those in their community. We do not, as a principle, pay personal support for our partners, but are always keen to help them set up self-sustaining businesses that support their ministries. We are careful to make sure we don't fund our partners to the point where they are financially above their community as a result of 'Western money', as this tends to have a strongly negative impact on their ministry and increases dependence.

But what would you do?

You have funds that have been donated for strategic ministry – funds that are focused on alleviating community poverty and bringing the light of Christ to dark places. And then someone breaks a leg in a car accident. Or someone needs some extra funds to graduate from high school. Or a couple of refugees have turned up on someone's doorstep and need funds to support themselves. These are issues faced not by strangers, mind you, but by people you have partnered with for years, or maybe decades.

It is a deep challenge that does not get easier. I am so grateful that we have a team of experienced and spiritually mature leaders that are willing – on their own time – to sit and debate around a table two or three times a month and earnestly seek God in prayer to figure out what to do.

If you are the prayerful type, please do pray for our Executive team. For wisdom and discernment. We need it!

Fraser Scott

Executive Director

BRIGHT HOPE WORLD NEWS

About this time of the year, we start thinking strategy!

This is, of course, not everyone's cup of tea but we as an organisation are always looking for ways to do what we do better and to build our team and our supporter base so that we can do what we care about most: 'developing and resourcing partnerships with indigenous people who have a vision to reach their community' so that we can see 'the poorest of the poor become spiritually and physically self-sustaining'. That's our vision and mission, by the way.

We are currently working to make sure that we have the team members in place to come alongside our partners and support them in the work we do, and that we look after our team well. We are wrestling with the challenges of visiting some of our partners. DR Congo is proving difficult to visit, and we recently had team members refused entry to India for the first time. Very concerning indeed!

We are also placing an emphasis on prayer, because there are many things to pray for! There has, for example, been bad flooding in Bangkok where we have a number of partners. We have just heard that Ebola, which has impacted partners in the DR Congo, has now reached Kenya. We are also praying for quite a few of our team members that are travelling or are about to.

Please do join us in keeping prayer at the forefront of mission – it is impossible to do much without it!

LIFE CHANGE STORY – TABAN SCHOLARSHIP FUND, UGANDA



The Taban Scholarship Fund gives young people the opportunity to be trained so they can become self-sustaining and gain good employment. They want young people to escape the bondage of poverty and become able to thrive and raise stable families.

Benitah grew up in the Wakiso district in Uganda in a very poor family. Her parents got in trouble with "loan sharks" when she was 15 and left the family in the night for safety to avoid prison or punishment by the lenders. She was left at home with her five siblings to care for themselves. Her eldest sister had already married and left home, and she therefore moved to Njeru with her siblings to be cared for by her sister. It was in Njeru that Benitah encountered Bright Hope World partners Thomas and Joyce Lubari, and she started attending the church they had founded in

the slum area. She was supported and cared for by Thomas and Joyce, who she respects and cares for tremendously.

As a result of this relationship, Benitah was chosen to be a beneficiary of the vocational training programme that Joyce started, and she is now in her second-year training to become an Ophthalmic Clinical Officer. This is a three-year course, followed by a one-year internship and exam, before seeking employment. She lives onsite at the training institute but is still responsible for her two younger siblings who currently live with their eldest sister in Njeru. Benitah is excited that she will be able to financially support them and care for them when she has gained employment.

This opportunity "means everything" to Benitah and one she will "always value". It has given her a plan and purpose; she will be able to care for her siblings and is eager to "give back" to her community. It is a dream she never thought she would fulfil. Benitah is the first person in her family to study at a higher level. Her older brother has also been a beneficiary of the programme and achieved a Certificate of Construction. He is now working in the western part of Kampala. Benitah is immensely grateful to God, Bright Hope World, and Thomas and Joyce.

For more information, visit: <https://www.brighthopeworld.com/partnerships.asp?pid=243>

BRIGHT HOPE WORLD PRAYER AND PRAISE

1. Please pray for our Executive leadership team as they make decisions about which activities and initiatives to support and how to balance the needs of our partners and their communities. Please pray for wisdom and discernment.
2. Pray for Benitah and all the other students being given hope for the future via the Taban Scholarship Fund, along with Thomas and Joyce who oversee the students.
3. Pray that Ebola would not continue to spread. Pray also for those impacted by flooding in Bangkok.
4. Pray for BHW team members who will be visiting India, Indonesia and the USA in the next couple of months.

Bright Hope World, PO Box 8928, Christchurch 8440, New Zealand

Phone: (03) 341 0933 | Fax: (03) 341 3363

brighthopeworld.com | facebook.com/brighthopeworld | lamai.co.nz | facebook.com/lamaicoffeenz