

## IT'S TOUGH OUT THERE

## BRIGHT HOPE NEWS



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It's not uncommon these days to hear people say something like, "the world's gone crazy," or "life is pretty hard right now." For sure, a lot of people are feeling pretty much out of control right now all over the world.

Over the last three weeks I've been overwhelmed by the hard stories coming in from our partners. And, I have to say, life here in the West is pretty sheltered and, dare I say it, inane, by comparison.

A couple of days ago I was in dialogue with a partner from the Democratic Republic of Congo. He had sent through the photo of the body of a mother who had been raped and killed. Her baby was still suckling her dead mother's breast. He was lamenting the state of his beloved motherland and said "the DRC has been discarded, thrown in the rubbish both by her national leaders and the international community". He raged at the brutality and injustice.

A partner from Pakistan related the story that the beautiful sister of one of the girls in the scholarship programme had gone missing. Two days later her raped body was found tossed into a drain. He was livid that people could do this and get away with it.

Currently I'm in touch with a partner in Mozambique where rebel militia groups are terrorising whole towns and communities. He writes: "a baby was picked up by this Mwani woman, a mother of two children, who was running for her life in the bush. She found the baby boy wallowing in a pool of blood which was flowing from his dead mother. She has taken the child as her own even when she herself is a refugee." He feared for the life of his friends and family and wondered if anyone really cared.

I sit here in my comfortable place so far removed from it all feeling their pain, sensing their frustration but unable to do anything much. What's the solution? The politicians can't solve it; in fact, they are actually a major part of the problem. Even international solutions now seem to exacerbate the issues rather than solve them. The answer is not external, organisational or political. Religion doesn't seem to help either. It seems to produce more extreme and radical responses.

The poor have so few choices available to them. The only way we can see real change happening is when local people with good motives make themselves available to step in and become the agent of change. It's tough, it's hard and it's risky. It's a lifestyle not a job. It requires faith in a God who loves and empowers, combined with steely determination.

Kevin Honore  
*New Partnerships Facilitator*

It is now April, and Bright Hope World has just concluded one of the most challenging and uncertain financial years in its history.

While we like to think of ourselves as people of faith who trust God, at least some of us were a little concerned as to how COVID would impact our financial position and, hence, our ability to continue to support our partners around the world, who need this support more than ever!

What a wonder it is, and a testament both to God's provision and to the loyalty and generosity of our donors, that we have seen no downturn in donations at all during this time. As people have faced job insecurity and churches have seen income drop, the people who have invested in our partners have simply continued to do so and, in many cases, increased giving to support those most in need.

As many of those people will be the people reading this, let us say thank you, on our behalf and on behalf of the people that have badly needed help and have been able to access it because of your sacrifice.

As the main article from Kevin notes, this is a tough time. We are so grateful that we are able to continue to support our partners through it all.



The Village of Peace’s new community base is now completely occupied and offers single women, their children and orphaned children a safe place to live.

One of the women (26 years old) tells her story.

“I was thirteen years old and was forced by my father to marry a 55-year-old man. Together we had three children. After several years of marriage my husband became ill and died. I was left with the children - without a job, with no income, and with only the support of people who occasionally gave me food. Sometimes rich men offered me money or food in exchange for sex. My father tried to marry me off to another man who was 47 years old. He already had a wife and eight children so I didn't want that as they will not treat me and my children kindly or take care of me. They want me to join in for sex.”

“When I heard about the Village of Peace community, I sent a letter of request to the government. Then the governor introduced me to you. Without this community my life would be very different.”

Three other boys aged between 5 and 10 had been abandoned by their father who was heavily addicted and separated from his wife. Their mother had been married off again and could no longer take care of the children. To make matters worse, the father had stolen everything the three boys had gathered to enable them to continue living in their shack. The two oldest boys had been raped by some drug addicted friends. Contracts with the government have now been signed and the three boys have been admitted to VOP’s community home.

Read more at <https://www.brighthopeworld.com/partnerships.asp?pid=412>.

1. Please pray for our partners in tough places who are facing extreme circumstances even on top of COVID. Pray particularly for the Democratic Republic of Congo, Pakistan and Mozambique, which are experiencing increasing violence and political instability.
2. Pray also for our partners in Myanmar as the situation there seems to be going backwards day by day. Pray that the peace and order that Myanmar has experienced in recent years would return.
3. Pray for our partner (Village of Peace) in Afghanistan. This is a very difficult place to do ministry, and they are often in danger. Pray also for the women and children living in the Village of Peace community homes.
4. Praise for the continued support and generosity of our donors, even in tough times.