

EXECUTIVE BRIEFING

October 2023

From The Desk of the President:



Meaningful Relationships Always Lead to Meaningful Ministry!

Global Connection International has purposefully operated under the banner “**CONNECTING PEOPLE WHO CARE WITH THE WORLD’S GREATEST NEEDS**” for over 23 years. With the volunteer manpower and faithful, financial partnership of so many of you; we have raised millions of dollars for humanitarian needs, engaged in a creative, human trafficking awareness & prevention campaign, and provided significant assistance to local, churches across cultural boundaries in Southeast Asia, Central America, the Caribbean, and Africa. All this networking has been greatly enhanced by way of repeated, return trips to provide accountability and to strengthen the meaningful relationships that have been established over the past 23 years. The stories of what the Lord accomplished as we joined Him in what He was doing are truly astonishing, and we couldn’t have done it without a concerted Team effort! **Thank you for your commitment and faithfulness in a job well done!**

Opportunities to Share our Human Trafficking Awareness & Prevention Message in Schools and Churches Continue to Come Our Way from both Colorado and our new home state of Nebraska. With strong support from the **Rotary Club of Cambridge, Nebraska**, we recently made presentations to over 700 Jr. and Sr. High School students in four different school districts along with a well-attended community-wide gathering of parents and business leaders. We are also looking forward to presenting our Power Point presentation to members of the **Summit of Peace Lutheran Church in Thornton, Colorado** on Friday, November 17th. With an estimated 750,000 predators constantly stalking our young people and other vulnerable human beings around the clock via social media, this is still a critical warning that needs to be presented regularly to every-day American young people and their families whenever and wherever we can.

In the meantime, we want to point your attention to a cutting-Edge ministry partner in this edition of our Executive Briefing, that we have known and worked with in Tanzania ever since he was a Jr. High School student!

Threats to Overlooked and Underserved People in Tanzania Prompt a New Focus and Response From GCI:

While GCI has engaged in 23 years of cutting-edge ministry in a dozen different countries around the globe, probably none of them have received any more attention, time, and resources than the African nation of Tanzania. Projects have included the purchase of land, building a church, school facilities, and a clinic. The clinic was furnished with a container load of medical equipment in partnership with Project Cure, and a brand-new Massey Ferguson tractor was supplied by farmers in Eastern Colorado and Central Nebraska. We've provided funds and on-site assistance for numerous, youth conferences, pastor's conferences, education for local pastor's children, and regular feeding programs for widows and orphans.

“PROJECT HOPE AND A FUTURE – TANZANIA”

It is with a great deal of joy and thanksgiving that we are able to bring this up-date to you as we enter into the 4th quarter of 2023, since the story line is a direct result of how the Lord has intertwined the life of Alex Samwel with several of GCI's past projects and substantial grants that have helped “Prime Ministry Pumps” in the nation of Tanzania over the past two decades.



We first met Alex when he was involved in the youth group at Voice of Victory in Moshi, Tanzania as a teenager; and watched him grow into various leadership roles as GCI returned numerous times to conduct church leadership conferences and oversee several projects including the building and equipping of a church, school, medical clinic, and an agricultural project in Tanzania. Somehow, the unusual entrepreneurial talents and work ethic of this young man always seemed to stand out whenever we saw him, along with an uncanny ability to relate to the community at large outside of the church as well.

Blessed with a grant from the Concordia Lutheran Ministry Foundation in 2017, Global Connection International engaged in a very creative and productive partnership with Get HOPE Global - to host “Train the Trainer” business seminars in Cambodia, Ghana, and

Tanzania.

At this juncture, it was Alex – now in his early 20s - who brought his professor from the local university to “tag-team” with him in translating every session of that three-day conference in Tanzania with an extremely high level of competency. Alex went on to oversee all of the follow-up, 20-week training programs in Tanzania for the impoverished women who joined in a program to start up their own businesses, receive a small micro-loan, and get it paid back. Under his committed leadership, it has proven to be a very successful, sustainable program that has resulted in hundreds of new businesses over the last 7 years that continue to support

numerous families to this day. Get HOPE Global has been so impressed with Alex that they have engaged him as their director for GHG, Tanzania. As the Lord has continued to lead this young man on his Kingdom Building Journey, Alex has been driven by his concern for the needs of children and youth who are overlooked and grossly underserved in Eastern Tanzania. Believing that the Scriptures have much to say about the role of local churches in healthy, community development; GCI is committing to do everything we can to assist Alex in meeting the deep-seated needs and lack of training that keep about 60 African pastors from providing the kind of pastoral care their respective church families so desperately need. This brings us to the specifics of our most recent, collaborative initiative in East Africa we're calling **"Project Hope and a Future – Tanzania."**

Operating out of Mwanza, the second largest city in Tanzania, Alex and his wife Rehema are focusing their attention on a remote fishing community living on an island located in Lake Victoria – the largest lake in Africa. The acute isolation of nearly 70,000 residents on Kome Island combined with the overt presence of witchcraft, substance abuse, HIV/Aids, teen pregnancies, lack of education, medical help and proper nutrition; all contribute to dysfunctional families and broken lives. Human trafficking of children for both sex and slave labor is driven by acute poverty and an absence of basic moral values in the community at large.

Alex and his team make the very challenging, week-long trip out to the island on an average of twice a month, depending on very undependable, public transportation including two



ferryboat rides each way. The trip will usually take up most of a day both going and coming, in order to cover the 70 miles between Mwanza and their ministry destination.

A good education and at least one nutritional meal a day is the goal for the first 60, early childhood students that are already involved in this initiative. **"Project Hope and a Future – Kome Island"** is calculating that it will take \$38 per month, per child to provide them with the personal care and meals that it takes to keep them healthy, safe, and attentive in the classroom! The goal is to start the program by teaching the 8 churches on the island how to serve their own people and encourage them to be responsible for 20% of the children's meal costs for the first year. Then we will be working towards the goal of the local

month, per child to provide them with the personal care and meals that it takes to keep them healthy, safe, and attentive in the classroom! The goal is to start the program by teaching the 8 churches on the island how to serve their own people and encourage them to be responsible for 20% of the children's meal costs for the first year. Then we will be working towards the goal of the local churches participating with 50% of the meal costs during the second year, 80% during the third year, and ultimately taking the program over. Alex and the team are also working on a plan to host classes for parents in order to educate them on the basics of necessary provision, nurturing and safety of their children.

If you missed **"Rehema's Story"** in our report last month, we have attached a copy to the end of this newsletter for you to access a **compelling account of God's matchless love, mercy and grace that brought Alex and his wife together for such a time as this.** I promise you will be blessed and encouraged!



- **Other Funding Sources:** Alex recently completed a comprehensive, Business As Mission (BAM) course under the direction of Robert Busch at IBEC Ventures. He has presented his business plan to a group of investors who, in turn, have approved a business loan of \$10,000 to help him launch a natural, liquid soap and lotion company. Once the business start-up loan is paid off, proceeds from this business venture are committed to help pay for this ministry initiative. Alex is currently well on his way to paying the loan off early!

Alex also receives a \$300/month stipend for overseeing the ongoing Get HOPE Global initiative which continues to provide impoverished women with extended training and a micro-loan for the start-up of new businesses of their own. **Be encouraged to know that many of you partnered with us and GHG in launching this creative project overseas six years ago – resulting in a sustainable "Hand-up" as well as New Life in Christ for hundreds of families around the world! Thank You!**

Cross-cultural Missions at its Very Best! - All too often, the best plans and intentions of those involved in cross-cultural ministry projects get diluted, misdirected or lost due to distance, misunderstandings, language constraints and a serious

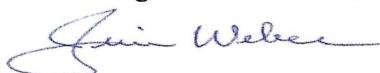


lack of adequate accountability measures. Thus, when we see a story line spanning nearly two decades with a talented, highly motivated, spiritually mature, and faithful ministry partner half-way around the world; it gives us a every reason to "Keep on Keeping On" together! It's often been said that we all can't do everything, but everyone can certainly do something! I hope you will consider joining us in this practical initiative to **"Bring Hope and a Future to Tanzania" while we still have the chance.**

A World of Marginalized People Need the Attention and Care and Will Stay Focused on Things That Matter Most!

- Ever since I signed on with Global Connection International back in 2012, I have often signed my letters under the Closing, **“For Things That Matter Most.”** Let me ask **“what matters most to you?”** JoAnn and I would like for nothing more than to have that discussion with you, and if there is anything we can possibly do to help you and your family, church, civic group, or community at large address that question and process some ways to do something about it, please let us know. It’s amazing what a team can accomplish together when nobody cares who gets the credit!

For Things That Matter Most,



Jim Weber
President

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"Once Upon a Time...." - Rehema's Story



MY CHILDHOOD - I am the first born of two siblings from my mother's womb. My mother is HIV+ for years now. She was divorced when I was five years old. She is currently living with another man. After my parents' divorce, I lived with my blood father and stepmother for nine years while my young sister went to live with our grandparents. After my primary education, my father was not willing to support me further and he left me at home.

It really hurt me when I saw that my stepmother's children were getting an opportunity for education while I, who was a good student, lacked the opportunity to continue with studies. Due to hate words from my father, I decided to run away and return to my grandparents who insulted me but nevertheless, they allowed me to live in their home.

I had missed secondary school. My grandfather enrolled me and provided me with school supplies. I faced difficulties in my school life and at home. I remember there were times when we missed even dinner at home. Despite walking long distances to school, I never knew tea in the morning. It pained me to see my classmates changing their school shoes while I continued to wear the same shoes every year. I wished I could find a parent or guardian who could help my family even slightly.

When I finished Form Four, I passed my studies but due to lack of enough classrooms, I was not selected to a government school. My grandfather could not send me to private schools due to lack of school fees. By this time, he was retired. His main occupation was peasant. Undeterred, I went to apply at a technical college where I studied hotel management and hospitality courses.

AFTER COLLEGE - After college, I got a job at a hotel in Dar es Salaam. I thanked God and began to care for my grandfather's family and their needs. Unfortunately, after six months, the contract expired and I had to return home. Life with my grandparents was not easy because they often pushed me to go and search for a good life because I have energy. There was a time when my grandmother scolded me for not having enough flour to eat that day.

I had to return to Dar es Salaam to search for a job and I got one in the Chinese-built building. At home they kept accusing me of not sending money to them, even though I was being paid very low wages. One day my grandmother called me to ask for money. I didn't have any so I decided to tell my supervisor. My supervisor told me that they did not have enough money in the office, but promised to give me some later in the evening after work. He called me that evening to a place where they preferred to drink beer. When I arrived, he told me to order a drink and food. Trusting him, I ordered chicken, chips and Coca cola. After eating, we continued drinking. Then I did not understand what happened. I found myself waking up with him in the

Lodge room, very tired and with a headache. I asked my friends and we suspected there was usage of sleeping pills. Two months later, I found out I was pregnant. My supervisor did not want to understand about the pregnancy. He kept telling me, "It is impossible for me to have sex with you and you get pregnant right away. And if you keep saying this, I will lose you completely in this world. First you have to quit your job and get completely lost in this city." I was fired.

BACK HOME - I returned home quietly without saying anything because if my grandmother had known, she would not have allowed me to send her that shame. That was another difficult time. I was rejected and bullied by people. No one was on my side. Even my grandparents who were eating my money before, also turned on me. I looked like an ugly, cursed and naughty girl. It really hurt me because it wasn't my plan to get pregnant at this age without marriage.

Life was hard. I gave birth and continued to raise my child without a father or a close relative. I was confused and actually lost my focus on life. Several times I cut off my hair in order to at least look like men. I wondered why I would not be born a boy. For why don't boys get pregnant? See, the supervisor goes on with life, but I'm spinning here. I just agreed; let the past go, and raise my daughter Angel because I have no other choice.

HOPE - One day while I was fetching water from a tap, a sister friend of mine told me about HOPE's training at a church. She said that there were white people from the USA who want to help vulnerable women. I really wanted to join them, but I was afraid that I might not be the right person for them. I felt I could not be accepted, but she encouraged me to go and try my luck. On Saturday, I prepared myself and I was the first woman to arrive at the church. I found two people who introduced themselves to me as Alex and Laurence. They welcomed me warmly and explained that it was the right place for me to stay. I felt good to find friends who saw that I fit to stay with them. After a while other people came, then the pastors came and together we launched our HOPE group. As the weeks went by, I was deeply motivated by the lessons and *Sara's Story* and decided in my heart that I, too, should be Sara of Lgoma (the place I live.) After receiving a HOPE loan, I opened a cosmetic shop. Later I turned to duck breeding.

HELPING OTHERS - In our studies, we learned a lot about volunteering to help others. For me, this grew beyond the HOPE class. I started volunteering to help my leaders with various tasks. One day a mother participating in the HOPE program was beaten by her drunkard husband and robbed of all her sales money. I felt very bad and wondered if we could have a better system to safely collect money from the group members. I told Alex about this idea and that I was ready to help him by collecting the repayments in the middle of the week. He was very excited and told me I have a very good heart for the growth of the HOPE Program. I am also grateful for the stipend I got from Get HOPE Global that time as it gave me the morale to be more dedicated

TOGETHER - From then on, my relationship with Alex changed dramatically and he came to love me and my work. He trusted me and enjoyed having me in the office. He gave me the idea he thought of, establishing an organization that

would serve the community regardless of their denominations, race or tribalism. Laurence and I were the first people to contribute towards the establishment of the *Opportunity for All* organization. Alex and I continued working as our relationship continued day by day until last quarter 2020 when he told me he wanted to get married with me.

GOD (AND ALEX) SEE MY HEART - Alex shared this news with some people but they completely disagreed with him to marry me because of the baby. It hurt me even more to see his parents disagree with their son's decisions. Even some church people went on disagreeing over the issue. Some wondered at Alex why he wanted to marry a woman with a child and without life plans. Many considered me as an adulterous woman and that I should not marry an educated and dreamy man like Alex.

I am so thankful to God for Alex's heart. He always seems to be consistent and believing what he wants to do in life. Even though he listened to everyone's opinions, he would call me and tell me, "God forgives and forgets man's history and he sees a person's heart." These words really encouraged and gave me to set Alex's place in my heart. Alex repeated these words, "Rehema, there is something in you that Satan wanted to steal. God has given me to see it. I will make sure it produces fruits for his glory. Many people see your history, but God has given me to see what is in you."

I was amazed at the favor I received from Alex. I remembered how working with him has greatly expanded my imagination, especially in serving the community. Alex has helped me in

realizing my purpose and potential to serve

the community, especially children and young people. I have a vision to pass encouragement on to others with various challenges, abuse, violence, isolation, and poverty.

I thank God for all those who dedicated for me in one way or another. I am ready to start a new life with my beloved Alex. I believe all the challenges have enriched us and given us a new perspective. I will help my husband serve the community while recognizing the great burden of service he has.

May God bless you as you move with us through prayers, encouragement and kind support.

Rehema Andrew Kisiki

HOPE Program Leader - Mwanza, Tanzania



Alex & Rehema were married on June 26,2021