

# NEXUS

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*Ordinary people can make an extraordinary difference*

## STORIES FROM TANZANIA



*It's often the interest and involvement of just a few people that bring a part of the world into the sphere of ROHFC. In Tanzania it started with one person, Norm Duerr of Humboldt, Saskatchewan. His connections in the tiny village of Ussongo in an out of the way part of that country have expanded to the city of Tabora a couple of hours away.*

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## Here is Norm's story:

As a retired teacher and administrator in the Humboldt area of Saskatchewan, I became involved in social justice issues following several trips to northeastern Brazil in the 1990's. There, in the state of Piaui and the Catholic Archdiocese of Teresina I encountered a church and bishop dedicated to helping the poor. One result of that experience, aside from some financial assistance, was my "Toys for Teresina" campaign, which saw 300 kg of toys shipped there. Then a few years later, in 2001, I heard the heartbeat of Africa in Ghana, where I served with Global Volunteers in a tiny fishing village on the former Gold Coast.

After that the call to go back to Africa was strong and in March of 2007 I returned, this time to Tanzania on the East Coast. This was 3 months after hip surgery the previous November and a rather severe viral infection in January, which had left me weakened and depressed. In those dark days I came across a notice in an Oblate newsletter from Vancouver regarding mission travel organized by a corporate lawyer in that city. On impulse I contacted her and she invited me to join her and a few relatives and friends travelling to Tanzania, where she had previously taught for three months. She gave me one week to decide. I was torn between family and friends who said, "You can't go! It's too soon after your surgery."

Though I had secret concerns regarding my physical readiness, my instinctive response was "Just watch me!" Then, at the next Sunday's church service, a reading from Luke spoke of casting one's net upon the waters and I heard the words "Be not afraid!" It was, I believe, a call from God, and I knew I had to go.

From the white cold bleakness of a prairie winter I came to the sun, the warmth and vivid colours of East Africa. Just outside the small primitive village of Ussongo in north-central Tanzania I was greeted at a private boys and girls secondary school by the imposing figure of its founder and general manager Fr. Francis Chuwa, and at a small medical clinic under the auspices of the Daughters of Mary, an African order of nuns. A primary school, in Ussongo village, stood nearby. Most impressive of all were the people, polite, kind, welcoming, hospitable,

friendly, poor by our standards of economic success, but rich in many of the qualities and virtues we in the Western World are in danger of losing or have already abandoned.

Two comments by individuals I encountered in the first two years there may highlight the above. Before my first departure, I thanked the headmaster of the secondary school where I did some teaching, complimenting him on aspects of the school such as student attentiveness and behaviour. My prediction at the time was that given the opportunities, together with necessary social, political and economic circumstances, Africa would one day outshine our Western World, because I had seen in her people qualities of strength, of endurance, acceptance, and discipline, together with willingness to learn, that put our self-indulgent societies to shame. He replied, "We are also a gentle people." I have personally seen evidence of that, despite contradictory perceptions (and media reporting).

The second remark came from Sister Maura, then superior of the Ussongo nuns. Upon my arrival and following a visit to their convent as she accompanied me to the gate of their property, she said with a gentle poke

to my shoulder, "You are always welcome here.

Remember, Ussongo is your home!

Tanzania is your country!" I was both impressed and humbled.

Tanzania is one of the poorest countries in the world. Development there has been slow and education levels are poor. The pupil teacher ratio in Tanzania is 59/1! According to Africaid (<https://africaid.org/tanzanias-school-system-an-overview/>), 80 % of both girls and boys attend primary schools but girls start to drop out at age 12. In Tanzania, more girls are married by the age of 18 than are in school. In addition to low levels of education the quality of that education is often poor because of low education levels in the teachers. Recently school fees have been eliminated in primary and the first years of secondary school but there are still uniforms to purchase and the costs of transportation to school.

Beyond the call to duty, the urgent need for assistance in that small part of the world would lead as the years went by to my joining in a partnership with former Saskatchewan MLA Arlene Jule, and increasing



Norm with a student from St. Thomas Aquinas Secondary School at Ussongo

involvement in aid and development work. Eventually I turned for help to ROHFC. I had known George Bunz, then president, who invited me to do a presentation at a directors' meeting in Wainwright, resulting in a school in that



town raising nine thousand to help ROHFC build four classrooms at the primary school in Ussongo village. A few years later ROHFC built two classrooms to enable the Daughters of Mary to educate 30 orphans and other preschoolers in the area. They also developed a program of literacy and life skills for adolescent girls who were unable to attend secondary school.

*ROHFC and some of Norm and Arlene Jule's independent fundraising have helped build a number of classrooms in the Ussongo area. They have also helped with building and equipping a medical center. In Tabora we have worked to help the Tabora School for the Deaf and now we are fundraising for Ipuli School.*

One other motivation became perhaps uppermost in my ten years and twelve trips there. This was my meeting with the two children left fatherless and in need of both financial and emotional support and love. These were the

two Tanzanian children I eventually brought to Canada to become my children and my family. Their story and my story are further detailed in my book *TO FIND THE LOST GARDEN*. As one reader remarked, "With them I think you found "the lost garden." In truth, they were "my muse that would not let the dream die!"



Norm's book is available through McNally Robinson book store in Saskatoon or through their online ordering on their website.

*One of Norm's young friends in Tanzania is a young priest who he first met as a student at the secondary school in Ussongo.*

### Fr. Isdory's Story:

I am Isdory Francis Mhagallah a priest of the Catholic Archdiocese of Tabora. I work at the Holy Family Parish where we started The Holy Family English Medium Primary School. I was born and grew up at Nyandekwa-Ussongo in Igunga district Tabora, Tanzania and am now 35 years old.



I come from a family of six children (5 boys and a girl). Both my dad and mom were primary school teachers and small scale farmers (they had to farm because of the low wage earned by primary teachers). We lived a normal village life at Nyandekwa and Ussongo. I am from the Sukuma and Nyamwezi people for whom educating children has not been the priority. The priority is that boys take care of cows (something I did intensively for one year until I demanded

in tears to go to school). Girls are married at a very tender age and live in a small-scale farming family. The poor learning environment in which my parents worked is always something I am concerned about. In my primary school, for instance, there were 33 pupils in class but only 3 of us were selected to join secondary education. The rest had to get married. The passion of my parents to ensure that they educate their kids has remained strong in me.

I did my primary education at Nyandekwa from 1994 to 2000. In 1996 I met Fr. Francis Chuwa who had come to be the parish priest of Ussongo Parish. I was selected as one of two pupils to be sponsored by some Canadians (including Norm Duerr) to go to St. Thomas Secondary School in Ussongo. Since I wished to become a priest I had to turn that down to go to the seminary in Tabora area. Fr. Chuwa encouraged my parents to support me in that long journey.

I did my ordinary and secondary education (2001-2007). In October 2007-2010 I studied philosophy at Kibosho Seminary in Moshi and from 2010-2013 I studied theology at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi, Kenya. There also I did a one-year course in Peer Counselling. I was ordained a priest in 2014 and I was appointed an assistant parish priest at Holy Family Parish Ipuli in Tabora.

In this parish there was a kindergarten school and then the kids had to join a different primary school. Due to the rapidly increasing population of the area, we saw a pressing need to establish an English Medium school. This type of school in Tanzania is composed of the middle grades of primary school. This would accommodate the kids who already have a foundation in English. In 2019,

while I was doing my online Masters in Marriage and Family Studies from Holy Apostles College and Seminary in the U.S.A, (I graduated August 2021) I met with Connie Gerwing, Charlie, Norman, Joe and George of Rainbow of Hope who were visiting Ussongo and Tabora School for the Deaf.

That is when I saw another opportunity. I am now appealing for help, not for me but for the kids from the Ipuli area. We need more classrooms for the many students in the area. I always try to help those who can't access school because of a poor family background. For example, the past two years, I had to help a boy to go for

advanced level secondary school because he was living with his grandfather who was not able to support him. There is also a girl who is studying for a diploma in pharmacy. Last April she was almost denied the opportunity to write her semester exam because she had no school fees. I thank God I had some little money and I paid for her and she was able to do the exam. In collaboration with the local Sisters, I have been helping the girls who haven't managed to get into secondary education to get a tailoring trainer. Thereafter, if we get some funds, we can buy them sewing machines so they can earn a living.

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## Monica's Story ~ by Fr. Isdory

*Tanzania is full of children and they all want and need an education. Government schools are overcrowded so many organizations and even individuals set up their own schools like Ipuli which teaches in English. An oddity of the Tanzanian education system is that primary school is in Kiswahili, the national language, with English taught as a single subject. Secondary schools are taught in English with Kiswahili as a single subject. Post-secondary schooling is also in English. Considering that most people also speak a traditional or tribal language, these transitions can be difficult for many students.*

*In Ipuli, the children from able families pay fees for the running of the school but those who are poor are admitted without paying. So far, there are seven pupils who don't pay. They access education freely from the school. Three are orphans and four come from very poor single mother parents. The school provides food and school supplies as well.*

*One very poor, single parent mother is Monica Emmanuel who is now 21 years old, who has a son in Class 1. Monica was born in the year 2000. When she brought her son to our school in January, 2021, she was already a single mother and 21 years old. She told us her story:*

*"I completed primary education in 2013. I joined in Form 1 (Grade 9) in 2014 after passing the National Primary School Examination. I had an aspiration of studying so hard that I could have had a broad mind. I had a dream to complete school, go to Advanced level, go to college, graduate and work as an engineer or doctor but everything ended up in vain".*

*"I was an adolescent girl of fourteen years old. I wanted to study as much as I could. The school was very far from home. I had to travel for more than one hour to get to school every day" Most of the time I was going on*

*foot. I became very tired by the time I got to school. I started arriving at school late all the time. Most of the time, I was to be punished."*

*"I was to wake up very early in the morning in order to arrive in school on time. It was very dangerous for a young girl to walk alone at day break for the purpose of getting to school at least at quarter past seven in the morning".*

*Monica's plans changed when she attained the age of fifteen, the time when she was in form two. (Grade 10) She was sexually abused by the driver of a motor bike taxi, known as a boda boda in East Africa. The driver was not a trust worthy person. He would offer a ride to Monica, frequently soliciting a sexual act in return. He ended up getting it by force. When Monica discovered she was pregnant, she informed the driver who denied his involvement and then disappeared for fear of being jailed! Monica had to be discontinued from school. That became the end of Monica's dreams.*

*Monica's parents were furious and chased her from home. She went to live with her grandmother who was old and had no one to care for her. Monica gave birth to a healthy baby boy. After a good recovery, Monica started to engage herself in sexual relations with many people to earn money, not only for herself but also for her baby and her grandmother. After some years that she found herself affected by Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and now she goes to the hospital for health care.*

*From such a situation, and many other difficult situations, the Holy Family School both girls and boys who are getting day schooling. When the school gets stable financially we will advance to both day and boarding school so that we can accommodate even those from who are from Tabora municipality which is some distance away.*

*We have many cases of children who really need our support.*

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## Sad News from Kenya

We have received sad news from our Kinyambu Rural Education and Community Development (KRECD) chairperson in Kenya, Simon Ngumbi:

It is regrettable that we have lost Felix Muli to the cruel hand of sickness and death. He had distinguished himself through an impressive way of interacting with people irrespective of their age. He was a brother and a friend to all.

Felix was an active and committed KRECD committee member. He knew that what was worth doing was worth doing well for the interest of the KRECD, the community, his family and business.

He helped us to purchase food that KRECD distributed to the community. He served all people with a smile including the team from ROHFC who often went for cold water and snacks at his shop while monitoring projects in Kinyambu.



Felix is in the center of this photo with Simon on the right at a KRECD meeting. On left is Julius Mwanzia, parent of a child in the poultry project currently underway in Kinyambu.

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**Giving Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2021**

**A gift of your money or your time and energy will help to make the world a better place.**



The pandemic still rages in many parts of the world and our project partners have all been affected in some way. We have several COVID 19 support projects underway or recently completed to support the communities and our project partners.

**Nepal:** Our Arukharka Health Center project is nearing completion. COVID is slowing down from the peak a few months ago but it is still a big problem. Some progress in vaccinations are being made with about 26% of the population having had at least one vaccine.

**Kenya:** less than 5% of the population has received at least one dose of vaccine. ROHFC has had several projects with our partner there in the Kinyambu area, 200 km east of Nairobi. These projects have helped purchase masks for school children, basic food and seeds for planting a new crop. We have also supported the local health center with sanitation supplies including water. Our poultry raising project is going well with children in three local schools participating along with their families. The first year of this project is nearing completion.



**Tanzania:** Under 1% of the population is vaccinated. They were late to even acknowledge that COVID was a problem and have not counted many cases. Anecdotally they have had a number of cases and some deaths just within our project area. We have one project at the fundraising stage there.

**Ghana:** They are slowing down from the third wave to hit this West African country. Just under 5% of their population is vaccinated so far. ROHFC continues to support the biogas project at Pambe. The Bantambaari classroom project was completed ahead of schedule thanks to great involvement by the local community there and Phase 2 will begin soon.

**Peru:** Cases have come down from the peak, which was a couple of months ago. They have vaccinated 52% of their population.

**Brazil:** COVID was rampant there with several peaks over the past year and a half. Currently, case numbers are going down and 64% of the population is vaccinated. We completed a COVID support project with Grota de Alegria and are considering another project with them. This is an organization that we have been involved with for almost 20 years. We also have projects with Ambrosina Young Women's Program and the School of Family Agriculture.

**El Salvador:** They are currently at the peak number of cases of COVID 19 since the start of the pandemic. This is in spite of having about 65% of the population vaccinated. We are currently continuing our support for our partner, CIS, to provide scholarships for students.

**Jamaica:** The ROHFC board approved a new project in September with the Mount Moriah School in Jamaica. This project will raise funds to provide upgrades to the school such as roof repairs, fencing and computers. We will partner with the school board and the principal will be the project manager. Fundraising for \$15,000 is underway.



## President's Message Fall 2021

*Are we there yet...??* As the year 2021 passes gradually towards fall and winter, we keep waiting and wondering, anxiously hoping for leadership to say: The Covid affliction is finally over, you can go about your normal daily routine. But, alas, it is not so. We, in Canada, have reached some level of prevention with the vaccination program, but just about the time one sits back and takes a relaxing breath another Covid wave seems to latch on in another part of the country. It just won't quit!

Most, if not all of the countries we have projects in, are suffering from Covid with a whole lot less going for them than what is here in Canada. We have provided some, albeit small, measures of aid to our friends in these countries, but Covid is not giving up there either. We really have no idea of the safety and security we live in. It is just so common for us to expect a 'cure' and the pestilence will stop.

We are here! And we are continuing our efforts to raise funds to support our partner countries to help them manage Covid-19 along with health and food supply problems. We do see a spot of light at the end of the tunnel. It might be just a reflection for now, but our hope and faith in human kind and the will to survive is strong. We **will** see an end to this affliction, and when looking back at it from the future will ask: Why did it take so long to overcome? The best answers are always in retrospect.

We are certainly looking forward to your assistance in helping others. Please consider this when you are thinking of making your annual giving pledges. We do appreciate your support of our efforts to help others much less able.

Thank you,  
Charlie Matt



## INSIDE RAINBOW OF HOPE FOR CHILDREN

### RAINBOW OF HOPE FOR CHILDREN SOCIETY

#### Statement of Revenues and Expenditures

Year Ended March 31, 2021

(Unaudited - See Notice To Reader)

	2021	2020
<b>Revenue</b>		
Donations	\$ 260,494	\$ 141,372
Non-profit organization contributions	32,874	82,857
	<b>293,368</b>	<b>224,229</b>
<b>Transfers</b>		
Transfers from prior deferred contributions	11,185	77,285
Transfer to deferred contributions	(47,169)	(98,299)
	<b>(35,984)</b>	<b>(21,014)</b>
Income after deferred transfer	<b>257,384</b>	<b>203,215</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>		
<b>Operations</b> (Note 3)		
Nepal	117,859	56,157
Ghana	46,735	11,985
El Salvador	44,511	54,390
Kenya	16,883	277
Tanzania	11,414	14,647
Brazil	11,254	26,523
Indonesia	5,086	68
Peru	2,474	3,538
Philippines	-	2
Project Monitoring	3,696	3,992
	<b>259,912</b>	<b>171,579</b>
<b>Advertising and promotion</b>		
Accounting fees	6,326	4,715
Public engagement and advertising	5,309	3,339
Supplies	4,922	2,089
Insurance	2,495	2,266
Interest and bank charges	644	370
	<b>19,696</b>	<b>12,779</b>
	<b>279,608</b>	<b>184,358</b>
<b>Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures from operations</b>	<b>(22,224)</b>	<b>18,857</b>
Other income		
Interest	3,114	5,993
<b>Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures for the year</b>	<b>\$ (19,110)</b>	<b>\$ 24,850</b>

The Rainbow of Hope For Children Society (ROHFC) attempts to maintain as low as possible operational costs. The Society allocates 6% of revenue towards those costs. All ROHFC Board members are unpaid volunteers who donate their time and expertise towards these projects. There is no paid staff. ROHFC directors and volunteers donated \$20,519 towards the 2020-2021 overhead expenses.

## PROGRAMS OF THE RAINBOW OF HOPE FOR CHILDREN SOCIETY

Your support is requested and appreciated for the following projects:

Program Description	Funding Goals	Program Description	Funding Goals
Covid-19 Emergency Relief	\$50,000	Bantambaari Rural School, Ghana	\$65,000
School of Family Agriculture, Bahia, Brazil	12,500	PAMBE Health, Nutrition, & Sanitation, Ghana	7,500
Classrooms and Health Centre Projects, Nepal	100,000	Grota da Alegria Education, Brazil	38,000
Eye Health Care, Reducing Avoidable Blindness, Indonesia	10,000	Kinyambu & Area- Classrooms, Kenya	60,000
Ipuli School Classroom Additions, Tanzania	20,000	Mt. Moriah School, Jamaica	10,000
CIS Scholarships, El Salvador	40,500	Paso Puente Dignified Housing, El Salvador	10,000
Ambrosina Young Women Education, Brazil	20,500	Disaster Relief Fund	10,000

### Projects Waiting in the Wings

We are accepting Donations towards the following projects that we plan to implement in the near future

PREDA, Protecting Children, Philippines	\$10,000	Hospital, Itasy, Madagascar	\$26,500
PAMBE Future Projects, Ghana	30,000	Tabora School for the Deaf - Beds; Sewing and Carpentry Training Equipment, Tanzania	16,000
CIS Student Housing, El Salvador	11,000	CIS Dignified Housing, El Salvador	14,000

### RAINBOW OF HOPE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT OF ALL OUR DONORS, and

- Several Rotary Clubs, the Knights of Columbus, the Edmonton Community Foundation, the Holy Family Columbus Club, and the Al Gerwing Charitable Foundation.
- George and Louise Bunz and Jessie Verrier, Grade 7 student, for processing the Nexus mailout.
- The Peter Van Winssen Professional Corporation, Wainwright, Alta. for donating the cost of the NEXUS mail-out.

We thank you for offering a gift to any one of these projects and we are pleased to acknowledged your donation with an income tax deductible receipt. Kindly send your donation to:

Rainbow of Hope for Children Society  
P.O. Box 2883  
Wainwright, AB T9W 1S7

Registered Charity No: 889160172-RR0001  
[www.rainbowofhopeforchildren.ca](http://www.rainbowofhopeforchildren.ca)

#### • Please make cheques payable to the full name of the organization: Rainbow of Hope for Children Society

- When making a donation using a credit card be sure to include the 3-digit security code on the back of your card. That number is required by the credit card companies.
- Donations of securities have a significant tax advantage. To donate shares please contact our Treasurer at [rohfc2018@outlook.com](mailto:rohfc2018@outlook.com) or 780-968-3952

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