



Heather Johnstone

Link Letter no. 28 | September 2024

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Location: Tanzania



What I do: Helping to empower the most disadvantaged women and children in Mara through the Rehema Project.

Dear friends,

Tumshukuru Mungu! Praise the Lord! My work and residence permits have been approved for a further two-year period. The authorities have indicated that this is my final grant. The decision can however be appealed six months before the expiry date, so I already have an action point in my diary for 23 December 2026.

Recently we had the privilege of catering for the VIPs attending two big diocesan events. Firstly, in June, Mothers' Union in Mara diocese hosted 1,300 delegates from the dioceses of Mara, Rorya and Tarime. The conference was a time of vibrant fellowship and encouragement among the Mothers' Unions in these dioceses.

Rehema Café was tasked with catering for approximately 100 VIP guests, and the team worked tirelessly over three days to prepare delicious food for breakfast, lunch and dinner, catering for the bishops, their wives, the Mothers' Union leadership team, as well as special guests, including a member of parliament and her entourage. Most of the Rehema team slept at work as transport was difficult – they had to get up at 3am to prepare for breakfast and often didn't finish until around midnight, which made for an exhausting day.



The Rehema team praying together before catering service

The second big event, in July, was a fundraiser (harambee) to contribute to the purchase of a car for the Diocese of Mara. The deputy minister of constitution and law, Hon. Jumanne Abdallah Sagini, attended along with his entourage as well as many esteemed guests from the Diocese of Mara. The team managed to comfortably cater for the more than 100 guests and served them efficiently and cheerfully.

Praise/prayer point: Give thanks that the Rehema team performed so brilliantly as evidenced by the many satisfied delegates, and the praise received from the diocesan management team for a job well done at these successful events.

It was also a pleasure to host the teams from UK Christian charity Go MAD (Go Make a Difference in Tanzania gomakeadifference.co.uk) again this year. They visited Musoma over a seven-week period from the end of June until the end of August. The Go MAD teams ate at Rehema four times a week and our onsite craft shop saw the benefit of having a lot of visitors. Many of the volunteers also had items of clothing made by our seamstresses, which is part of the volunteers' Tanzanian experience and a real blessing for our seamstresses and to the project.

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churchmissionsociety.org/johnstone

**With Jesus
With each other
To the edges**



Praise/prayer point: Give thanks for the busy season and the positive energy it has brought. Pray for more visitors during our “quiet” season.

One of the Go MAD volunteers ran an origami workshop for the Rehema ladies, which was great fun and very well received. The team learned how to make, among other things, a box and a bird of paradise. The lesson culminated in a very competitive paper aeroplane race. As a thank you, the ladies sang songs and danced with their teachers and taught them to sing *Hakuna Mungu kama wewe* (there is no God like you).

Praise/prayer point: Give thanks for the origami lesson and the great joy it brought the teachers and the students.

Through our assistance programme we recently were able to help a very impoverished lady by the name of Nyambuli. I overheard her telling one of our seamstresses about the problems she was having at home as she was getting rained on inside her house and needed to fix her roof but didn't have the wherewithal to do so. I went to visit her at home and was shocked to see that her house was literally falling down around her. The tin roof was completely rusted through and provided no protection against the elements, the house had also been very shoddily constructed and bricks were falling out of the wall. Her young teenage son was sleeping in the lounge as it was too dangerous to sleep in his room. We replaced the roof and rebuilt most of the walls above lintel height. While doing this we realised she had no toilet facilities, and as her health is not great, by the grace of God we were also able to build toilet facilities.

Praise point: We thank God for his great provision and for the generosity of supporters in the UK.

A dozen or so of the Rehema ladies have started a new social tradition. Each month one of the women will host a get-together at their home. They will provide food and sodas and all the attendees will contribute an agreed sum of money which will cover their host's costs as well as a financial contribution enabling them to buy something they need or would like. It is a bit of a savings scheme with a social slant. As their “mama” I am fortunate enough to have attended all the celebrations. We pray, sing, and dance together. There is a bit of pantomime, a bit of banter and a lot of fun, love and respect.

Last year (Link Letter 25) I wrote about Sweet Beth who had tragically lost her baby in childbirth. Today, I have great news – thanks be to God, in the early hours of this morning Sweet Beth gave birth to a healthy 4kg baby boy.

Praise/prayer point:

Please pray for good health for this latest addition to the Rehema family.

Mungu akuwabariki.

May God bless you all.



Photos from top to bottom: Origami workshop: Rehema and Modesta with their teacher, Chiharu; Nyambuli in front of her repaired house; the Rehema team at a social gathering; Sweet Beth's son, just 12 hours old



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Jesus never gives up. Neither should we. We live in a fractured, hurting world. It can be tempting to give up: on hope, on people, on the idea that things can ever change. Yet, Jesus invites us to follow him on a journey to the edges. Find out more at churchmissionsociety.org/jesus-never-gives-up

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