



Ben and Katy Ray

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Location: Tanzania



What we do: Working with people with disabilities, providing training so they can earn a living



Empowering people pushed to the edges of life to reach their God-given potential

Dear friends,

Delicious developments

"Too much salt."
"Not enough cumin."
"Maybe a bit too sharp?"

Such are the musings of a mission partner fine-tuning the menu for a new deaf-run cafe in northern Tanzania. As design director at SAFI Tanzania, Katy wears many creative hats: interior designer, artist, product developer and recipe creator. Together, we've been project-managing the physical transformation of the site. It's been both exhilarating and, at times, exasperating. Almost every possible setback seems to have found us – especially when it comes to our water supply. Please pray for spiritual protection over our utilities!

Wherever we could, we've relied on SAFI's in-house carpenters and tailors to make all the furniture and upholstery by hand. Please pray that we're able to train a wonderful team of deaf cooks and waiters, and that this new venture helps us to create sustainable livelihoods for up to 84 people with disabilities over the next 18 months.

There's already a growing buzz in the community around the long-awaited cafe and crafts shop and we hope it will finally open its doors this September. We pray it offers not just a great cup of coffee, but becomes a place where people encounter God's love and creativity working through our inspiring participants.

High hopes

We may soon need your prayers for a new accountant. Our current accountant, Jema Mdegella, is currently on the campaign trail to become a member of parliament. She has her eyes set on being elected to a "special seat" for supporting the minister for disability in Tanzania. She is fairly confident of winning this year after narrowly missing out in the last elections. Please pray for God's wisdom, strength and protection as she travels the country. We'd love to see Jema succeed and make an even bigger impact on the lives of people with disabilities across Tanzania!

CMS-Africa visit

In June, we were delighted to host the CMS-Africa team at the SAFI Centre. After a brief tour, we explored how our NGO might collaborate more closely with CMS-Africa as they focus on Tanzania's coastal regions. Unexpectedly, Ben and SAFI chairman Rev Dr Duncan Ndimbo were whisked off with the team for an



Katy and Ben trialling recipes

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



overnight visit to Zanzibar to meet church leaders. It was a powerful time of vision sharing, marked by unity across the denominations to communicate the gospel in this challenging context. We were especially encouraged by the enthusiasm to include the deaf and disabled community as part of this mission.

Elinaja's story

Elinaja was an able-bodied man in his early 30s with a job, a wife and four children. One day as he was returning from work, his motorbike was hit by a bus as it veered off the road. His right leg was severely injured. After six painful weeks without improvement, the doctors advised amputation.

The months that followed were some of the hardest of Elinaja's life. Unable to work, he stayed at home, struggling to move and to support his family. He helped care for their youngest daughter, but as time passed, his hope faded. With no income and no way to afford the £900 needed for a prosthetic leg, despair crept in.

Three years passed before Elinaja found a sponsor who helped him get a prosthesis fitted at the Usa River Rehabilitation Centre. He had already been in contact with SAFI Tanzania in search of training opportunities. On the day he received his new leg, he visited the SAFI office to show how he could now stand and walk with a single stick instead of heavy crutches.

At the time, SAFI was looking for a new trainee to join the Sawawa group (one of 12 micro- enterprises that SAFI is setting up over the coming 18 months). Sawawa produces handcrafted wooden homewares. A week later, Elinaja returned to begin his training with Doris, a skilled deaf carpenter, who had trained with SAFI just six months previously. He initially trained on the large standing lathe and seemed to have a natural talent for woodturning. Unfortunately, standing all day on his prosthetic leg was painful for Elinaja, and so he waited at home until a suitable solution could be found.

SAFI reached out to Tools For Solidarity, an organisation that supplies refurbished tools. By chance, they had just received a compact table-top lathe – ideal for Elinaja. He was soon called in and measured up for the new lathe so it could be set to the perfect height. Two months into his training, Elinaja is now producing his own range of wooden items – bowls, pots, honey dippers and light fittings.

Elinaja is so pleased to be part of a purposeful, friendly community at the centre and to have found work that not only supports him and his family, but also gives him a great deal of satisfaction as he uses a newly discovered talent. Please pray for Elinaja and the carpentry team as we look to raise funds to build a more spacious workshop further from the cafe.

Family time

We won't be visiting the UK this summer, but hope to come back June to August 2026. The three Ray children, Zaki (11), Alessia (9) and Julia (6), are all flourishing at school here. They shared two academic prizes and a sporting prize between them this year. Zaki's Year 6 checkpoints went particularly well for him. It's rare to see Alessia without knitting needles these days – somehow she's picked up a love of crafts. The best sixth birthday present for Julia last month was discovering five baby bunnies in the rabbit cage!

Wishing you a refreshing summertime,

Ben and Katy X



Photos from top to bottom: Adolph develops a soup for the deaf-run cafe; Elinaja at his lathe; Sawawa wood crafts team; SAFI's growing team



Empowering people pushed to the edges of life

It builds our faith when we hear stories from other CMS partners working with people pushed to the edges of life. We hope that you're inspired as you read about indigenous women training for ministry in Argentina, and about children receiving trauma support in DR Congo. You can read their stories, and others, at churchmissionsociety.org/empower

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