



Heather Johnstone

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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 all,

Hallelujah, hallelujah, after many, many months of being in limbo, my work and residence permits have been approved and are valid until May 2024.

Praise point: I feel like I have been asking everyone to pray for resolution to the permit situation FOREVER, and I want to thank you all so much for praying faithfully over such a long period. Praise the Lord, we finally have an answer to those prayers.

The ladies are delighted that Rehema Cafe & Craft Shop is open and although the number of visitors to Musoma has decreased significantly, currently volunteers from Christian charity Go MAD in Tanzania are providing them with a steady flow of work, which is a real blessing to everyone. Unfortunately, this is set to taper off next week as the volunteers return to the UK.



Rehema – Grace and Anna

Prayer point: Give thanks for the employment opportunities created over the last few months and for our friends who support the work we do. As we approach a quieter time, pray that we may find new and innovative ways to keep the ladies employed.

This week, as I was attending to some administrative duties in the workshop, my colleague Cesi answered her phone. I heard someone say to her, "I sent you a message". I looked up from what I was doing and noticed she was reading an SMS. In astonishment I asked her if she was reading, and when she confirmed she was, I offered her my congratulations; she responded "but, Mama, you taught me". I was so thrilled because Cesi, one of our hardest workers, had been illiterate. Growing up in a village with a father who demanded she tend the land, do the household chores and look after her siblings, Cesi did not have the privilege of going to school and getting an education. A few years ago, we ran basic literacy and numeracy classes at Rehema after work. Not only did Cesi take on board what she learned, but she asked her primary school age girls to continue to teach her, and as they have advanced, so she too has flourished.

Praise point: Give thanks for the significant changes this brings to Cesi's life.

A few weeks ago, I visited my friend Agnes in one of the villages. Her daughter Rebeka was very pregnant. I asked where she was going to have the baby as she'd had difficulties with her firstborn, and she replied that she was going to have it at home because she couldn't afford to go to the hospital. I enquired about costs and

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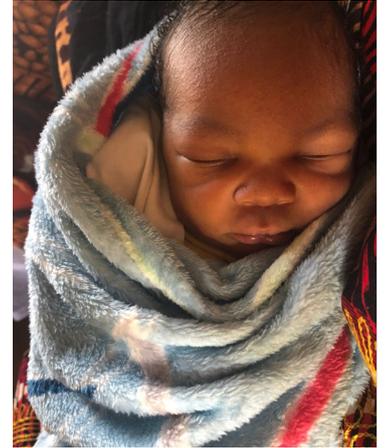
**With Jesus
With each other
To the edges**



discovered the hospital charges TZS 50,000 (about £18) for the first day and TZS 25,000 for each subsequent day. One also must pay for any medicine used and even bring one's own medical supplies!

I suggested that rather than have the baby at home, it was safer to have it at the hospital and I set about trying to raise the money to cover the costs. By God's grace, and the generosity of a donor, I was successful and a few days later I popped in to see the family and took with me the contribution for the medical expenses, only to discover that Rebeka and her mum had

left for the hospital 15 minutes earlier as she was in labour. They went on the back of a motorbike! Imagine that! I spoke to Agnes on the phone, and she said I should come to the hospital, which wasn't too far away. By the time I arrived 10 minutes later, Rebeka had given birth to a baby boy (less than half an hour after she arrived at the hospital). Thanks be to God she had decided to go to hospital as the umbilical cord was wrapped around the baby's neck, which could have led to problems during a home birth. I was allowed to visit Rebeka and her son almost immediately, which was such a blessing and he is by far the youngest baby I have ever seen. Rebeka and Agnes were amazed that I was there and that I had brought money for the hospital. They asked me how I knew to come, but clearly it was God's hand in the situation.



Praise point: Thank God for his great provision.

Not so long ago everyone was abuzz with the joy of the Queen's Jubilee celebrations, and we were especially blessed to have the fabulous team at St John's in Cophthorne turn their making of fascinators and wristbands into a fundraiser for the Rehema Project. The fundraising coincided with Anna, one of the Rehema ladies, being evicted from her home.

Anna's husband, Wambura, is in jail for a crime he didn't commit. This situation is already so problematic for Anna, who tries desperately to support their children, but to compound matters, Wambura's brothers threw her and the children out of their house as it is built on Wambura's family land and he is considered a disgrace and not worthy. Whether their opinions are justified or not is debatable, but their actions are incredibly harsh, and they made direct threats of violence again Anna and the children if they did not vacate the premises. Anna was despairing as she was too scared to continue living in their home, and the police didn't want to listen to her complaints.

By the grace of God, over the years, working for Rehema, Anna managed to save enough money to buy a plot of land near her family home. She also bought a bag of cement every few months as a form of savings and had managed to accumulate almost 20 sacks. With the support of the fabulous fundraising team, we have been able to build a two-bedroomed house for Anna and her family. Once again, we thank God for his perfect timing and provision.

Mungu akuwabariki.



Photos from top to bottom: Cesi; Rebeka's son Stabro; Anna's house; visiting Anna



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