



Raising Chickens for a Better Future

When a Covenant congregation in Kenya started a micro-enterprise funded by Covenant World Relief to enhance their ministry, they had no idea where their plans would lead them.

David Husby

Just outside of Nairobi, Kenya, the Kitengala Covenant Church began a poultry project with the intent to mainly benefit the church. But God had other plans. The project was a micro-enterprise, funded by Covenant World Relief (CWR). Their plan was to raise chickens, including layers (chicken who lay eggs) and broilers (chicken used for meat). They planned to buy one-day-old chicks from local hatcheries and raise them in a small plot of land with a small simple structure next to the church. They began with 500 layer chicks and 300 broiler chicks, and their goal was to use the profits from the business to improve their church building and to buy musical instruments for the church community.

When I visited the church last fall, Simon Kamau, pastor of Kitengala Covenant Church, told me about the challenges they encountered during the year. Their lack of experience in farming meant they tried to raise too many broiler chickens in the available space. As a result they lost many chickens and the ones that did survive were quite small. Learning from their mistake, they reduced the number of chicks they raised by half, thus increasing the survival rate to 97 percent. As well, the five-week growing cycle produced

much larger chickens.

Then the price of feed skyrocketed. The church was unable to buy enough feed, and chickens started to die. The church sent an emergency appeal to CWR for additional funds. While they were waiting for our response, several neighbors in the community heard about the dying chickens and loaned funds to the church to buy more feed. Once the church received the additional CWR funds, they were able to pay back those loans.

In the next several months the business made enough from the sales of broilers and eggs to buy adequate feed as well as to expand and improve the facilities at the church. They even made a healthy profit.

Before they were able to begin improving their facilities or purchase the musical instruments as planned, the church learned that a group of more than 250 Congolese refugees had arrived in the area and were in desperate need of food and basic supplies. The refugees had fled from war-torn eastern Congo three years earlier—a large number of them orphans whose parents had been killed in the war. Many had not survived the journey, and it became clear to the leaders of the church that instead of improving the church building, the profits from the poultry business

should be used for the refugees.

They purchased food and basic supplies, and they started English classes so the children could eventually enter the school system and the adults could find jobs. Among the refugees, we met a nurse, a young man with a law degree, and a social worker, all who spoke only French. In Kenya without English they would not be able to find work. In the meantime, the poultry project leaders hired several of the refugees to sell eggs in the market.

Several months into the project, Pastor Simon and the other leaders were in great distress thinking that the business would fail. Now they marvel at how God saved the project and enabled them to reach out to desperate Congolese refugees who arrived

Evangelical Covenant Church of Kenya (ECCK) leaders came up with several options that would aid some of the poor communities throughout Kenya in which they had churches. I was very impressed by all of their ideas. But several months later the leaders submitted their new project proposal. Instead of focusing on their own people, they decided to continue to address the needs of the Congolese refugees. Without education, the lives of the refugee children would likely never change. Believing in the importance of education, the ECCK requested funding for school fees, books, uniforms, and school supplies for the children. Now the Congolese refugee children have been given an opportunity to obtain an education in Kenya.



Pastor Simon Kamau (left) with a group of Congolese refugees who came to Kenya, where the Evangelical Covenant Church of Kenya, aided by funds from Covenant World Relief (CWR), provided them with English classes. When this photo was taken, the CWR funds had not arrived yet, so the students did not have uniforms. Today the students all have uniforms.

just in time to become the unexpected beneficiaries of this project.

During our visit last fall we discussed options for a new Covenant World Relief project proposal. The

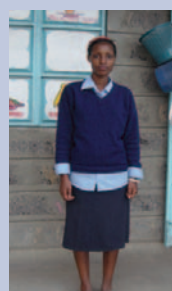
I am thankful that we have such selfless committed partners as the ECCK. I am also thankful for the generous Covenant churches and individuals who give to Covenant World

Stories of Hope

Mutabazi David is a sixteen-year-old refugee from Congo. His father died in the war, and he does not know if his mother and siblings are alive. He escaped to Kenya with his uncle and joined the Evangelical Covenant Church of Kenya. He used to work at construction sites but sometimes was not paid for his work. Now he attends secondary school, and his dream is to complete school in order to help other people who are suffering.



Nyamitavu Francine is seventeen years old and says that being in school is like a rebirth. Her goal is to become a nurse, and she says that the assistance God has provided through Covenant World Relief means that her future is no longer desperate but bright and hopeful.



Three of Jonas' children died in the war, and he does not know where his other two children are. He left his country with his orphaned grandchildren and fled to Kenya. He never imagined that his grandchildren would be back in school. In spite of tribulations, he says, "God has finally revealed himself to my offspring and to me specifically. May our God who sees the secret of the heart bless Covenant World Relief abundantly."



Relief so that these young Congolese refugees have a chance to break out of the cycle of poverty and start their new life with hope.

When you give to Covenant World Relief you are able to help to bring about real change in the lives of the poor, the powerless, and the marginalized around the world. Thank you for your faithful partnership.

For more information about Covenant World Relief please see our website at www.covchurch.org/cwr, our blog at blogs.covchurch.org/cwr, and our Facebook page. ■

David Husby is the director of Covenant World Relief.