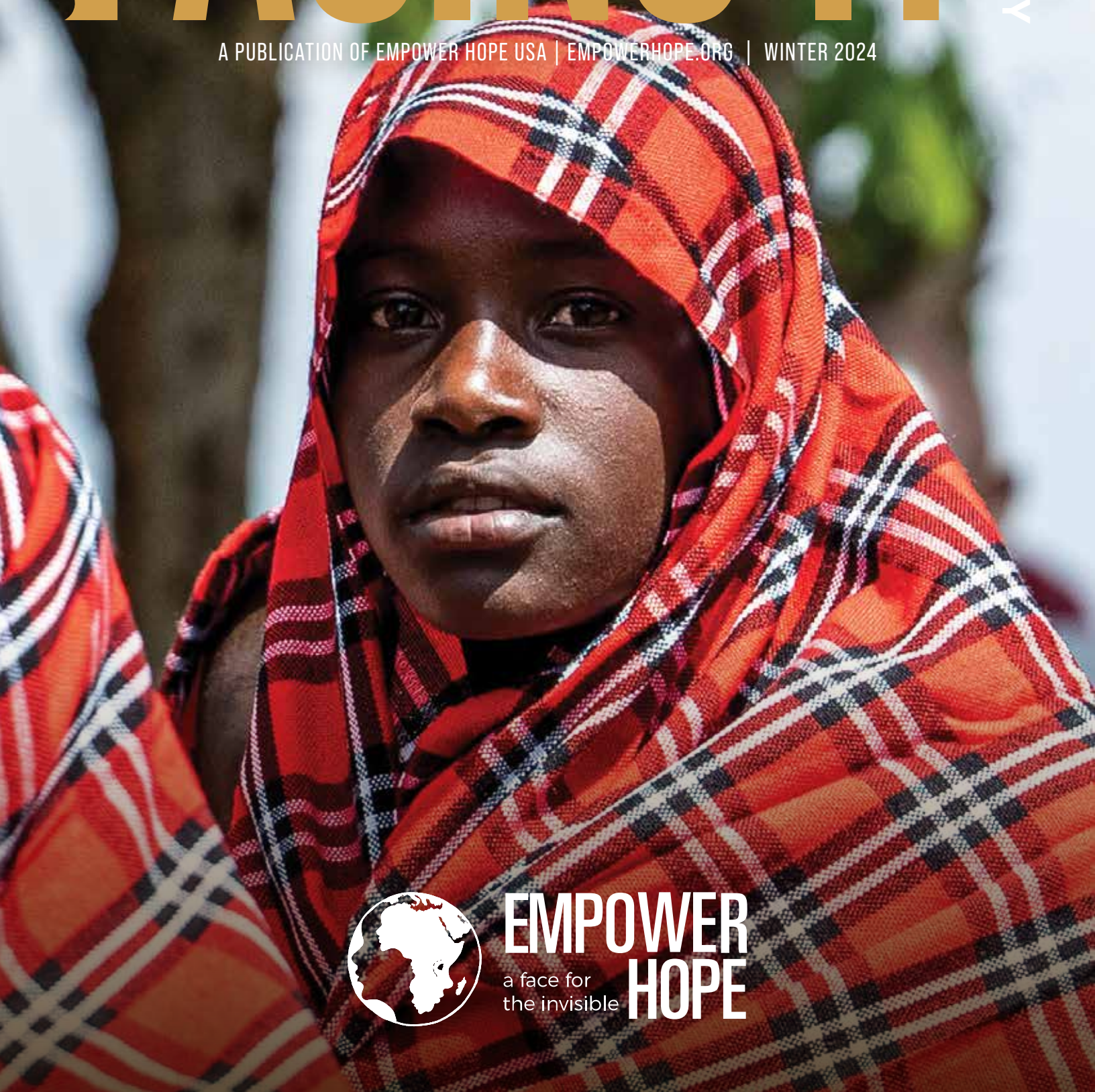


FACING IT

QUARTERLY

A PUBLICATION OF EMPOWER HOPE USA | EMPOWERHOPE.ORG | WINTER 2024



EMPOWER
a face for
the invisible **HOPE**

Dear Friends,

Take a step back in time with me for a moment.

I have been traveling to Kenya since 2011 assisting a friend on a project, not knowing that God was ordering my next steps.

When Jiana came alongside in 2014, ideas, concepts, and vision began to be communicated in meaningful ways. "Empower Hope: A Face for the Invisible" was trademarked in 2015. God opened the next window of opportunity as we legally formed in the US and, in 2017, partnered with Roselyne Mairori in Kenya to form Empower Hope Africa.

My wife Sharon (who says she 'doesn't do anything') plays a critically important role as "Shosh" (Grandma). She is in daily contact through stories and social media posts while praying for the outreach of Empower Hope.

The work of God is bigger than any one of us. As you read this edition of *Facing It Review*, please know that the more than 1,000 young lives we are impacting in Kenya are a direct result of the commitment to the "Power of WE". No great work happens due to the work of one person; it is through all those who choose to give of themselves that His work is accomplished.

Come with me, take off your baby shoes, put on your boots, and let's climb together.



With Gratitude,

Bob Cook
CEO



EMPOWER a face for the invisible HOPE

Habari! My name is Beatrice Kombo. Life as a single mother of six children is not easy. After I fled my husband's abuse and became divorced, I reached out to my family to assist me and received some initial help. However, that assistance was short-lived because our family land had to be divided amongst my brothers, leaving little for me and my children.

Because I did not have money to pay tuition and fees, my two eldest children had to drop out of school. I decided to leave home to go to Nairobi to find work as a casual laborer to provide for my family. I was ready and willing to do any work that came my way.

When I finally found a job, I was able to bring my fourth-born son Benford to Nairobi with me where he was able to attend secondary

Lifting Generations

school. I was so pleased when he did well on his final exam, but I knew I did not make enough money to send him to college. That's when we heard about Empower Hope's Ambassador Mentorship Program.

Benford joined the program and was nurtured and trained to be a responsible young man. He was offered a scholarship and attended a technical training program, eventually earning his diploma in Applied Biology.



Beatrice's son Benford presented his business idea at an Ambatana Community Business pitch event in December.

Beatrice and her son Benford,
Ambassador Program Trainee

“Because Empower Hope stepped in, [...] I was able to save enough to buy one acre of land back in my hometown and build a five-room house that can accommodate my family.”

Because Empower Hope stepped in, I was freed up to focus on my other children and venture into other development projects. I joined a ‘chama’ where I was encouraged to save 500 shillings per month [Editor’s Note: about \$4 USD]. Over the years, I was able to

ons Out Of Hopelessness

save enough to buy one acre of land back in my hometown and build a five-room house that can accommodate my family. This would not have been possible without the help of Empower Hope.

I am proud of my son who graduated last year with a distinction. He is the first person in my family to go through school and graduate. I am truly happy and bless the Lord for that. I am grateful to the team at Empower Hope, who were gracious enough to think of the less fortunate and strategize a way to help us. I am truly grateful.





VUKA

BOYS' RITE OF PASSAGE CAMP



2 TIMOTHY 2:15

VUKA Camp for Boys Launches in Mt. Elgon

After many years of the leaders and pastors in Mt. Elgon asking for a program for the young men in their communities similar to our VUKA Girls' Rite of Passage Camp, the very first VUKA camp for boys became a reality in Mt. Elgon this fall.

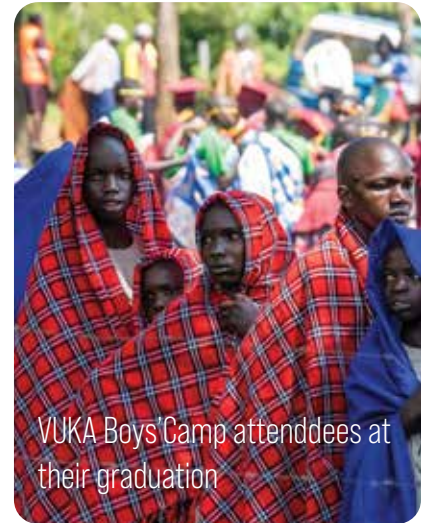

Local leaders had seen the value of the teachings and mentorship that was part of the VUKA program with the girls and shared with us their concerns that the young ladies would not find suitable partners when they returned to their communities.

This year, we were able to grant that request. Coordinating with local pastors and men in the churches around Mt. Elgon, we offered training and guidance to begin the program with the boys.

"The traditional [masculinity] culture was not good," one camp mentor told us. "Now, many of the young men that joined the VUKA Camp have rejected it and have embraced a better way—biblical manhood. They now know right from wrong and know the difference between good and bad tradition."

A hundred and twenty boys took part in this inaugural rite of passage camp with a culturally-aware focus on biblical manhood.

The two-week long camp culminated in a celebration of passage held along with the VUKA girls' celebration with thousands in attendance.

"[What I learned at VUKA] is much better compared to the old rites of passage—the old circumcision culture—because there are Church teachings. We were taught how to know God and to love God."

Allan Kibet
VUKA Boys' Rite of Passage Camper



Highlights & Happenings

Your generous financial support and prayers make these life-changing programs possible!



Ambatana Community Business (Nairobi)

First Business Training Cohorts and Business Pitch:

- Eight young adults did an amazing job pitching their businesses.
- These are young adults from slums and impoverished communities who stood up in front of many people and shined confidence!

Ambassador Mentorship Training Program (Nairobi and Mt. Elgon)

- Nairobi - 42 Ambassadors graduated.
- Mt. Elgon - 56 Ambassadors graduated, our first ever graduating group at this location!

VUKA Rite of Passage Camps (Mt. Elgon)

The program for boys launched this year and included 120 boys (see page 4 for details):

- A two-week program guided the young men into manhood with their rite-of-passage ceremony and biblical teaching.
- 78 gave their lives to Christ during the camp.

2023 VUKA girls camp included 100 girls:

- 43 girls gave their lives to Christ during this camp.
- All 100 participants are being placed into high schools to begin their secondary education.

Both VUKA Camps culminated in a graduation ceremony that brought the largest number of community and government leaders, parents and guardians we've had to date!

Gap Year Program

109 previous VUKA program graduates from Mt. Elgon have now completed their high school education and are entering our "gap year" program.



"In the past, I did not attend church, but now [our VUKA leaders] have taught us. I will be going to church much more frequently. Even my behavior has changed now. The habits I came with here now have changed."

Olgah Cherotich
VUKA Girls' Rite of Passage Camper



"VUKA Camp taught us things our parents did not teach us at home. We have been taught to be children with holy deeds."

Faith Chebet
VUKA Girls' Rite of Passage Camper

On the Horizon

Ambassador Mentorship Training Program

- Nairobi - Group 7 and Mt. Elgon - Group 3 to begin training in February.
- A new round of Tailoring and Catering classes in Nairobi will begin in February.

Construction progress on
Ambatana Manor as of
January 2024



Ambatana Manor

Construction Update on Our “Economic Engine”

We are excited to share the construction progress of Ambatana Manor, an Empower Hope Business4Purpose™ project—one we sometimes refer to as one of our “economic engines”!

As you can see, the stonework is nearing completion of the exterior. Electric and plumbing is being finalized, and all the lighting fixtures are being sourced. Stay tuned for more updates and praise God with us for His continued faithfulness!

Ambatana Manor is our first major endeavor into self-sustainability. The property for this ultra-luxe boutique hotel is nestled in the heart of Nairobi’s most influential and prestigious Runda area, which is home to the capital’s 93 diplomatic embassies. In addition to helping to reduce dependence on charity to sustain the overhead of our ministries in Kenya, the Ambatana

Manor project also aims to provide jobs for members of the community and improve the standard of living by helping to build much-needed infrastructure to the location—paving roads and providing access to clean water.

Construction first began January 2021 and continues steadily today, with the hotel’s anticipated grand opening in later this year.

We are grateful to the Lord for His protection over the many workers and for the creativity He has given to the architects, the contractor, and the interior design team who have worked tirelessly together to see this vision become a reality.

For information about Ambatana Manor and other Business4Purpose projects, visit empowerhope.org/business/

The Empowerment Center at Githogoro

Progress On Our Nairobi Headquarters & Education Center

We are closing in on the final stages of the center's completion! By the end of February, our administrative building and conference room will be completed and our team can move in! Our next group of ACB (Ambatana Community Business) Cohorts will be beginning in this new facility. Excitement is rising! Next in line for completion are the classrooms which will finalize this phase. The next phase will be furnishing and providing the necessary tools to begin our work.

By moving our offices into and building the center within Githogoro slum, we will be able to provide programs which reach youth and young adults right in their own community. When complete, the Empowerment Center at Githogoro will integrate all of our current programs into a single location. Our teams will mentor, disciple, teach practical life skills, workplace and entrepreneurial training, all of which are designed to elevate, equip and empower young adults to grow and thrive at live in the world outside of the slum.

For more details about project, visit empowerhope.org/githogoro/





EMPOWER
a face for
the invisible **HOPE**

FACING IT QUARTERLY

100 South Queen Street, Ste 222
Lancaster, PA 17603

Your Winter 2024 Update on our work in Kenya

PRAY WITH US

Please keep Empower Hope in your prayers:

- Ambassador recruitment process. God would bring the young people that need to be in the program.
- New mentor recruitment in Mt. Elgon
- Prayer for all students to stay focused in school and to do well in their studies.
- Sufficient grace for staff members as they begin yet another very busy year with an increasing number of students.
- God's continued provision for EH and also for parents and guardians.
- We are looking at business opportunities in Mt. Elgon this year in the area of agriculture. Pray for the right person to come on board to help guide this initiative.
- For EH USA as they seek to grow their fundraising and support team in 2024.






We are grateful for you!

We rely on the generosity of our supporters and sponsors to grow and sustain our ministry to the people of Mt. Elgon and Nairobi, Kenya. Because of you, we can continue to pursue our mission!



Ways to Give

-  **GIVE ONLINE**
Visit empowerhope.org for details
-  **MAIL A CHECK**
Please make checks payable to Empower Hope USA and mail to: 100 South Queen Street, Ste 222, Lancaster, PA 17603
-  **PLANNED GIVING**
Contact us about donor advised funds and other planned giving options

Spread
the Word

Follow us on social media, and don't forget to Like and Share our posts for greatest reach!

