

Classis Huron – spring, 2023

Submitted by Peter Bulthuis, Canadian CORE Team Leader

A. General Updates:

As you may have heard, World Renew Canada has completed our search for a new executive director: *Jamie McIntosh* has been selected to lead our agency. He succeeds *Ida Kaastra Mutoigo*, who held the role from 2006 until 2022, and *Kenneth Kim* (Director - International Disaster Response), who graciously stepped into the role in an interim capacity over the past year, has continued on through the transition period and has now returned to his previous role. Coming to us with leadership experience in World Vision and Compassion Canada, Jamie says: "I'm excited to serve with World Renew, joining families courageously at work rekindling hope and reconciling lives in their communities, amidst rising volatility, vulnerability, and violence." **Welcome, Jamie.**

B. Upcoming Synodically-Designated Church Offerings:

June 25: Justice for All Sunday, to help equip communities globally to overcome injustice.

Thanksgiving, Oct. 9: This day starts the World Hunger campaign, which culminates on Nov. 5. Many resources are available for order, and online.

Nov. 5: World Hunger Sunday, to support communities around the world as they walk their journeys of ending their poverty and hunger.

Dec. 25: Christmas, to support the work of World Renew generally, world-wide.

Church resources for these Special Sundays can be ordered from FAITH ALIVE quarterly.

C. Community Development: An example of God's work through World Renew.

Like many farmers in rural Uganda, Monday Justus used to buy his potato seeds at the market. He worked hard planting these seeds, but struggled with low yields. He was unaware of some helpful methods, such as selecting the right quality of seeds, properly preparing his land, and spacing his crops. So he could not find a way to improve his results and increase his income so that his family could meet their basic needs.

One day, Monday Justus joined *conservation agriculture* training facilitated by Pentecostal Assemblies of God, World Renew's local partner in the community, focused on learning new agricultural practices—such as the use of mulch and cover crops—that would not only help them grow stronger crops but also help to protect and restore their soil.



What a difference these environmentally-friendly farming practices made! These farmers were able to harvest a total of 2,600 kilograms, a HUGE increase from their prior yields. They were able to sell 14 of their 19 bags at the local market for a good profit and the rest they kept for their families' consumption.

"I give many thanks to World Renew and partners because our prayers have been answered and all our problems concerning Irish potato growing are being solved," he said.

D. International Disaster Response: Examples of God's work through World Renew

Ukraine: 12,500 displaced families, vulnerable to the oncoming climate of winter are also facing food insecurity are projected to receive cash transfers to support immediate food needs between December 2022 - March 2023

Bangladesh: During this project's second year in 2022 17,000 people have benefitted from training through a project focused on improving health and nutrition of vulnerable families.

Kenya: The people in the Turkana South region of Kenya have endured a prolonged drought. Hunger and scarcity are on the rise and so too are feelings of hopelessness – especially for those living with a disability.

Wheelchair-bound Simon Lochor Amojong, a married father of three children, was born and raised in Shanti Village in Turkana South. A self-taught beader, Simon relied on what he earned selling necklaces, called shanga, that he

made to generate income to support his family. But he just did not earn enough to meet his family's basic needs – and as the drought grew worse, so too did his financial woes. Eventually, Simon's family left him and he began to depend entirely on the kindness of his neighbors for survival. He shares, "I lived hand-to-mouth as the little I got from my beading was not enough for my very basic needs... my shanga-making business would barely bring me 100 KES (\$1.10 CAD) per day."



With funding from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, World Renew implemented a food distribution program in Turkana focused on supporting people living with disabilities, the elderly, orphans, and the most vulnerable. The project came at a time when Simon had lost all hope. He and other beneficiaries were given 50 kilograms of sifted maize flour, 10 kg of beans, 3 litres of vegetable oil, and 0.5 kg of table salt monthly for a period of 9 months.

The food support was what Simon needed to lift his spirits and restore his hope for the future—there was enough to feed his family and he rejoiced when his children and wife returned home. Then, with the guidance of the project staff, Simon began to focus on his potential and his bead-crafting skills. He began to grow maize, tomatoes, green grams, cowpeas, and other crops on a half-acre of irrigated land that he had left unattended. And he revived his shanga business. Now, with the money he earns farming and from shanga sales he is able to support his family, including paying for school fees for his children and buying school uniforms and household necessities.

Simon says, "This project brought hope to my life".



E. Disaster Response Services: Examples of God's work through World Renew

There have been 100 homes repaired since July 1/22!!!!

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Texans like Umbelina, who is disabled and elderly, also faced Hurricane Hanna and the damage it did in their communities. Coming from the Gulf of Mexico with sustained winds of 93 mph and 12 inches of rainfall, Hanna wrecked homes, tore through roofs and walls, and downed tree limbs and power poles.

Last year, World Renew Disaster Response Services (DRS) worked in Rio Grande Valley, Texas, helping people rebuild their lives and sharing hope with homeowners like Umbelina who were struggling to recover from the storm.

When Hurricane Hanna touched down, Umbelina fearfully sheltered in her home with her caregiver. The strength of the wind created holes in the walls and the water that stood for months afterwards resulted in mold. Several places in the ceiling and walls needed repairs and one hallway was left without sheetrock or ceiling. Elderly and unable to take on rebuilding projects on her own, Umbelina lived in her bedroom while the rest of her home was filled with construction materials waiting to be used in a rebuild project. Umbelina felt stuck, unsure of how to solve the problems Hurricane Hanna left with her.

When DRS volunteers received an assignment to work on Umbelina's home through Rio Grande Valley Faith Communities for Disaster Recovery, they explained that they travel to disaster-impacted communities to rebuild homes like hers. They spent two weeks transforming Umbelina's house while she stayed with her caregiver. The volunteers rebuilt the main bedrooms, drywall, and closets. They installed new lighting, patched concrete walls, painted the concrete floor, and repaired and painted the walls and ceilings. Suddenly, not only the home withstood Hurricane Hanna, but also Umbelina's heart. The volunteers led Umbelina in a last nail ceremony, celebrating her new home by tapping in the last nail and gifting her a quilt and Spanish Bible.

F. Refugee Settlement Program: An example of God's work through World Renew

We are currently working on 54 applications for a total of 126 refugees

When Maranatha CRC, Lethbridge, embraced the idea of sponsoring a young South Sudanese family of seven residing in a camp in Kenya, they needed to make only a few phone calls to get 7 or 8 enthusiastic positive responses. They believed that God was calling us to welcome this family to our community.

Starting with paperwork in 2019, they relied heavily on the expertise and encouragement provided by *World Renew's Refugee Sponsorship Program*. Surprisingly, the fundraising was not onerous. People gave generously! There were plenty of challenges, but God provided answers to each of the problems through a church member or a community connection. They discovered that though God was using our individual gifts, he was also continually gifting us in surprising ways. They learned to rely on his provisions. They also learned to rely on and appreciate each other.

When the Mabiors arrived in Canada on June 15, 2022, the work multiplied along with the joy. The newcomers, though overwhelmed and tired after days of travel, immediately embraced the welcoming group at the airport as their friends. An even larger group met them in their new home where they shared their thanks and joy and gifted the church group with their trust. Three days later, all 7 family members attended church where Bol, whose English was good, thanked the congregation and God our Father for “caring about us.”

Even though it was summer, each member of the family remembers that first month as being so cold—the hardest thing about adjusting to their new life. Now, coming to the end of a frigid Alberta winter, they are proud that they “are getting used to it” though Deng thinks “snow-pants and boots are the worst.” Bravely, Bol had even taken a snow-shoveling job! Besides the cold, the Mabiior family says their biggest challenge is learning English. At the same time, they agree going to school is the best thing about their new life. Bol says they are “the luckiest people because [the church] provided everything we needed, and we are never lonely because there are always people around.” The adults are looking forward to job opportunities and believe Canada is “a great place to start a good life.” Along with their participation in Sunday School, GEMS (girls’ club) and Adventure Club, the children appreciate all the fun they have at the swimming pool and the sledding hill, and they anticipate playing soccer, shooting baskets, and riding bikes again in the spring.

So, does Maranatha recommend sponsoring? Yes! Is it a lot of work and time? Yes! Yes! And there are unanticipated challenges like having bikes stolen, navigating bus routes, arranging transportation, filling out endless government, school, and banking forms, visiting health care professionals, and deciding when and how to carefully transition from their reliance on us to their empowerment and independence. But there is so much loving and growing, too. We’ve been supported by Immigration Services locally and federally and have come to appreciate the many dedicated employees. We have discovered many cultural similarities between the Mabiors and ourselves and realize that differences enrich us. We have learned about the giving spirit in our church community. We have been inspired in our faith by working together. And we have new friends and family to love.

Year	# of Arrivals	# of Refugees Sponsored	# of Applications Submitted
2023 (ongoing)	48	16	4
2022	193	200	85
2021	96	115	55
2020	55	205	75
2019	224	226	102
2018	190	216	88

CRCs broken down by province (applications submitted)

	AB	BC	MB	ON	SK	NB	Total # of CRCs
2022	4	6	0	11	1	0	22
2021	1	5	0	15	0	0	21
2020	7	6	0	17	1	1	32
2019	6	5	2	17	1	0	31
2018	3	5	0	21	1	0	30

G. What else can the people and the churches of Classis Huron do?

-Donate for the ongoing disaster response work in around the world, especially in response to the *World Hunger Crisis*, on our website [here](#); use the **DONATE** button.

-Be open to the Spirit’s leading, and connect with us to learn about a possible partnership with a program of project in an area outside of North America. Contact Iona Buisman (ibuisman@worldrenew.ca)

Blessings,



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