

# NEXUS

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*Ordinary people can make an extraordinary difference*

## PROFILE: ALICE AZUMI IDDI-GUBBELS

### PAMBE Ghana

~by Joe Gubbels~



Alice Iddi

Alice was born in the small village of Bongbini in a rural area of north-eastern Ghana. She is the first of 17 children in her extended family. She grew up in a traditional, tightly knit subsistence farming community where relationships and solidarity are paramount. Alice was among the first in her village to go to primary school and the first woman in her village to receive a university education. She has a Masters degree in Social Development Planning and Management, a second Masters degree in Elementary Education, a diploma in Home Science and Nutrition, and a Montessori Teaching Certification in preschool and lower elementary education.

From 1980-82, Alice led a community-based health care program, based in Walewale, in the Northern Region of Ghana, where she organized and trained volunteer community health promoters and traditional midwives in the villages. It was there that she met Peter Gubbels, a Canadian University Services Overseas (CUSO) volunteer. He was recruiting health workers and traditional midwives to participate in one of her training workshops. They were married a year later and have a daughter, Jamilatu, who presently resides in Canada.

Alice has over 30 years of experience in integrated community development. This includes community based health care, water and sanitation, functional literacy and local leadership development, as well as, building strong collaborative relationships among community leaders and with local government services. She held senior positions in integrated development and

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family health programs with World Neighbours and Oxfam-UK in West African countries.

In 1997, Alice moved to Canada with Peter Gubbels and their daughter. In Canada, Alice worked for three years with international development organizations that provided support and management to programs in a number of African countries.

In 2000, Alice moved to Oklahoma City with her husband who became Program Director with World Neighbors, an international development organization. This move gave her the opportunity to pursue her longstanding dream. She shifted her focus to promote quality early childhood education and worked as a cultural enrichment facilitator for lower elementary students and as a preschool teacher.

Alice became interested in developing a vision and a strategy for improving primary education in her native district of Northern Ghana, especially promoting the local

model that educates the whole child: physically, socially, emotionally and academically.

In the 2019/2020 academic year, LLC had a total student population of 266 students from pre-kindergarten (KG1) to primary six, 15 teachers and 5 support staff. Seventy-five students have completed primary six in LLC and are now attending Junior High School (grades 7, 8, & 9). The pioneer students who started LLC in 2008 wrote their Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) in June 2019, and are now in Senior High School.

Through Alice's supreme efforts in preparing proposals and requesting funds from various national and international organizations, including Rotary Clubs in Canada and Rainbow of Hope for Children, PAMBE Ghana developed innovative infrastructure, namely: a model school with eight classrooms, desks, chairs, and tables for all students, an efficient rainwater harvesting and storing system, a solar-powered computer lab, and an



language, Mampruli. In the public school system, all instructions were entirely in English. This made learning very difficult for most of the young Mampruli speaking students and caused high dropout numbers.

In 2006, to implement her vision, Alice founded Partnership for Mother Tongue-Based Bilingual Education (PAMBE Ghana) which is a registered not-for-profit organization. As executive director of this organization she established the La'angum Learning Centre (LLC) located in Bumboazio. Based on the Montessori philosophy and other active-learning methods, LLC strives to integrate the local language and culture, literacy and academic excellence. It promotes a holistic

environmentally-sustainable toilet facility which produces methane gas for cooking the students' lunch.

PAMBE Ghana provides many essential services, including: access to basic health care, a school lunch program, a well-furnished school library, and school learning materials and supplies. Parents make in-kind contributions for their children's education, including food stuffs for the lunch program and labour for infrastructure development.

Alice is working very closely with the national Ghana Education Service, which has recognized LLC as a model school. PAMBE Ghana's long-term strategy is to expand its impact throughout the Mamprusi district by

supporting public schools that are interested in adopting LLC's methodologies.

In response to the chief and councillors of the village of Bantambaari, Alice is currently involved with building a two-room school in this village. The reason for this project is that about 60 children do not attend school because they are small and unable to walk two hours to the LLC school in Bumboazio.

In September of 2020, Alice retired as Executive Director of PAMBE Ghana but continues to serve as Executive Director Emeritus, and as a Member of the Board of Directors.

Rainbow of Hope for Children Society acknowledges the great work and dedication that Alice has contributed to the advancement of her people in Northern Ghana. ✨

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## BANTAMBAARI SCHOOL PROJECT UPDATE

~ by Joe Gubbels with Baba Bukari, Program Director, PAMBE Ghana ~

The people, friends, children and chiefs of the Bantambaari community send their greetings. They extend and share their joy and appreciation for the work done so far on their school project. They are enthusiastic and hope to see their school completed and opened to their children come this September.



The objective of the Bantambaari School Project is to build a two-classroom school in the village. This school will be associated with the La'angum Learning Centre (LLC), which was established by Alice Azumi Iddi-Gubbels.

The children of Bantambaari have to walk seven kilometers, each way, to the LLC. The youngest children of Kindergarten and Grade 1 are too small to walk this distance each day. After Joe Gubbels met with Chief Zanjina Abdulai and community members, they became committed to help build a school for the children. Rainbow of Hope for Children Society (ROHFC) approved the project. With an agreement between ROHFC and PAMBE Ghana, the local registered society, construction of the school began in August 2020. In anticipation of the school completion, the Ghana Ministry of Education has allocated two teachers for the school.

The construction of the school is progressing very well. The community organized its volunteers into working groups and developed schedules to ensure that the construction proceeds as planned. Community members transported bags of cement, gravel, and lumber from Bumboazio, which is seven kilometers from Bantambaari. The women and men take turns working on the project according to the needs of the day. The men mix the concrete and the women carry it on their heads for building the foundation and the walls.



The school is now at the roofing stage. The lumber was left to cure (dry) before the carpenters could install the rafters and place the roofing sheets. Prior to using the lumber, volunteers sprayed it with a treatment to prevent damage by termites and weevils.



The community is hoping to have the school ready in time for the September 2021 start of the school year. The school year in Ghana has always been from September 1 to August 3 each year, but due to COVID-19, schools closed midway in March 2020 and resumed in January 2021. For now we cannot tell whether or not the academic year will start in September.

Chief Zangina of Bantambaari has said to the project manager, Baba Bukari, “Our community has tried several times to build a school of our own and failed. With the support of our Canadian friends (Rainbow of Hope for Children), we are gradually realizing our long-time dream. Thank them for me and tell them that my ancestors shall bless them”.

## ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT

~ by Charles Matt ~

What a time we are passing through! From about 14 months ago to now, so many disruptions, lifestyle changes, travel and gathering restrictions, and business closures. There seems to be some glimmer of hope on the horizon for many with vaccination programs getting underway. Various levels of government across Canada are putting forward ideas for opening up to somewhat larger get-togethers and loosening restrictions for businesses that depend on social interaction activities. This does not solve the problem in any way for developing countries who do not have the same means as we do to either make or purchase vaccines, respirators, and sanitation supplies. We need to keep up our efforts to provide aid where we can.

The Directors of Rainbow of Hope for Children (ROHFC) have been keenly monitoring the countries their projects are located in and have provided resources for food and sanitation supplies when the call comes to them for help. They have provided aid to Brazil, El Salvador, Nepal, Indonesia, Kenya, and Tanzania. The people have so graciously expressed their appreciation and gratitude for the supplies they would never have been able to find on their own. It has helped to save many families from very serious consequences that I pray we will never have to see for ourselves.

Almost all of our projects that involved construction of schools, safe housing, or health facilities were brought to a standstill last year. Some of the education projects tried to carry on using online learning, but many had difficulties due to the lack of computers for students and the low levels of internet service available in the remote areas.

From the perspective as a charity, ROHFC has managed to maintain a stable level of operations throughout the pandemic and overall we have been going steadily onwards. We are becoming all too familiar with Zoom meetings. This will be the new normal for us.

As a group of dedicated volunteers who strive to make lives better by providing ways and means to get an education and by providing safer and healthier environments for children and families to live, grow, and learn in, we sincerely appreciate your support of our efforts. It is very warming to learn of a student who was gifted with an education, and goes into the medical field, or becomes a teacher, or enters a profession and returns to her community to help them.

Thank you all so very much for your giving and caring. Stay safe and take care.

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## COVID-19 PANDEMIC UPDATE

~ By Connie Gerwing ~

Our project partners continue to struggle as the pandemic carries on. Vaccinations, while becoming common in Canada, are still a distant possibility in many underdeveloped parts of the world. Kenya, for example, received a million doses in March and this is for a population of 45 million! The variants of the virus are also beginning to impact these places as they have done here. The third wave will be a real test.

The economic situation is very hard with tourism almost shut down and the costs of necessary goods rising because of shortages. For example, a liter of fuel has gone up three times in Kenya since January first.

While North Americans are enjoying high availability of vaccines, our partner countries are not so lucky. As of May 13, in Latin America, Brazil has 16% of its population with a first dose and 7.5% with a second. El Salvador is 15% and 3.1%. In Asia, Nepal has 7.3% vaccinated with a first dose and 1.3% with a second. Africa, as usual, is last. Ghana has 2.8% with a first dose, Kenya 1.6% and Tanzania is not listed at all. It will be a long time before this is over.

### Brazil

COVID-19 ravaged Brazil—15 million cases and almost half a million deaths. Our partner, CEPEC's president Vando Santos, said, "Most of these people are residents of slums and poor neighborhoods. At Grota da Alegria, there is the lack of food to meet basic needs. We remain working voluntarily and pastorally, to help the poorest, especially children, youth, and women. Therefore, I come to you to request support to buy 200 basic food baskets and sanitation supplies to distribute to the people we serve at the Center for Popular Education and Citizenship Zumbi dos Palmares. It is a humanitarian appeal from those suffering, who have been your partner since the time of Thomas (*Al Gerwing*)."

### El Salvador



Families were most effected by loss of work and income. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, a tropical storm hit on May 31, 2020 as we noted in our fall Nexus. CIS helped the local economy by purchasing masks from the women in San Luis Los Ranchos, a sewing centre supported by ROHFC. Also, they bought beans from farmers in Comasagua, and coffee from San Francisco Javier, communities touched by Rainbow's previous support. "We were not able to reach La Loma, the community where Rainbow built a school, latrines, a water tank, and solar energy, due to a road washout." Thank goodness, they have since reached La Loma.

### Kenya

Things have reopened slowly in Kenya. There is some tourism allowed which has helped with employment. Schools started their regular year on January 4, 2021 and there have been no COVID-19 issues in the Kinyambu area. ROHFC has completed two short-term aid projects to the area to assist with food and sanitation supplies. A third project to supply masks to all school children in Kinyambu, Nzavoni, and Thange Primary Schools is almost complete. We also included school uniforms for a small number of the neediest students in each school and additional sanitation supplies to the local health clinic.



### Tanzania

Tanzania has struggled to come to terms with the pandemic. Their response for the first year was mostly one of denial or promoting the use of prayer or herbal and other unproven remedies. The case numbers are mostly untracked. Case numbers soared in February of 2021 and many deaths were attributed to pneumonia. Our relief project with the Tabora School for the Deaf is completed.

The biggest story in mid-March was the death of the President, John Magufuli. His death is "shrouded in mystery" as the Kenyan newspaper, *The Daily Nation*, reported. A number of politicians and government officials have died over

the last while, many more than would be expected in a normal year. In mid-February the death of the Vice President of Zanzibar, a semi-autonomous region of Tanzania, was attributed to COVID-19. The new president is a woman, Samia Suluhu Hassan, and it is not yet known what her response to the pandemic will be. Tanzania currently has no plans to vaccinate their citizens.

In early March, the Catholic Church in Tanzania spoke out about the increase in case numbers there. They stated that more than 25 priests, 60 nuns and two lay elders had died in the first two months of 2021. They wanted testing services in their health centers but this is currently not available.

One of the priests who died was Fr. Francis Chuwa who hosted ROHFC groups many times in Ussongo.



**Fr. Francis Chuwa** (written by Norman Duerr)

From Moshi in the Kilimanjaro area of Tanzania Padre Francis Kapurure Chuwa came as a missionary priest to serve in the Roman Catholic parish of Ussongo, a primitive rural area in the north-central part of the country. A titan among men, his accomplishments there were Herculean. For nearly thirty years he served his parish together with some 30 mission churches in the area. In 1996 he established St. Thomas Aquinas Secondary School, built on an abandoned primary facility. Today that school offers Forms 1 to 6 and Level A education to approximately 700 boys and girls from many parts of the country. In his efforts to improve area conditions Fr. Chuwa also had a bore-hole well dug to provide water for the school, a small health clinic, the parish centre, and the village. These are but a few of his accomplishments.

He ruled with an iron hand, sometimes like a benevolent dictator. His presence in the church and the school was viewed by some as intimidating and even formidable. Over the course of ten years and twelve trips there, during which we brought aid to the area, I got to know him well and saw another side of him few others witnessed. He confided in me; we became friends. He was always a gracious host to Arlene Jule and me, and others who came with us, including members of the ROHFC monitoring teams.

Padre Francis Chuwa died of COVID-19 on February 23 at the age of 69. His legacy will live on.

## Peru

While Peru acted early to try and stop the pandemic, their weak health system has meant that the death rate has been higher than many nations. As in our other project areas, Chinchá Baja has had many cases and the economic situation has also caused problems for the local people. A big loss was Fernando Angulo who worked with our partner organization there. Another great loss was Dora Rodríguez de Murguetyio, a charter member of Amigos de Siempre (Friends Forever), another of our partner organizations.



**Fernando Angulo** (written by Joe Gubbels)

Fernando was an exemplary teacher and supervisor during his educational career. He was a member of Amigos de Siempre, our partner organization, which managed our projects in Peru. In addition, he was our dedicated volunteer education coordinator to guide the process of establishing our Public Education Complex “Tony Gubbels” from its initiation in 2010. He provided instructional techniques to our professors and was the principal contact with the Peruvian Ministry of Education. He made great contributions to our projects in Peru that continue to be appreciated by the communities in the district of Chinchá Baja.

Fernando was a secondary school mathematics teacher for 41 years. For a few years he was seconded as personnel director for the local Ministry of Education. In 2016, Fernando came to Canada to experience our way of life and learn about our system of education.

Fernando Angulo died on Thursday, January 7, 2021 of COVID-19. He will be missed immensely by his family, friends and education colleagues. Fernando’s demeanor was always happy and positive. He will always be remembered for the times that he was present with us, demonstrating generosity by helping those in need. He had a kind heart and was highly regarded by all. “May he rest in peace.”



**Dora Rodriguez de Murgueytio** (written by Joe Gubbels)

It is with great sorrow we announce the death by COVID-19 of Dora Rodriguez de Murgueytio. She passed away on May 5, 2021, just four days before her 50th anniversary of marriage with Luis Murgueytio. Both Dora and Luis were catechists for many years, and in 1965 they were both catechists in the local Catholic Church where I, Joe Gubbels, was pastor. They continued to serve the parish, Dora as a catechist and Luis as an official minister. In 2006, Dora became a charter member of an organization in Chincha Baja, Peru called Amigos de Siempre (Friends Forever). This organization became the partner in many projects with Rainbow of Hope for Children Society. One of Dora's activities was to organize the distribution of a container of clothing for those affected by the devastating 2007 earthquake in Peru.

Dora was an exemplary mother of her three children. She was a nursing assistant, as well as a full-time homemaker and helper to her husband with their vineyard and commercial wine-making. Dora will be remembered as a kind, generous, and loyal person. She dedicated her life to her faith and prayer, especially for the sick, her friends, and family. Dora was always attentive to the needs of others.

May she rest in peace!

## Nepal

COVID-19 cases reported in Nepal were low for a long time but the wave of variant cases impacting India has spread to Nepal and they have very many cases now. In the past few months children went back to school and crops were planted. Our relief packages were distributed over the winter there and were very helpful. Things were looking up for a time.

Our project leader in Nepal, Harikrishna Devkotah, is himself suffering from a bad case of COVID-19 and is slowly recovering. He is weak but no longer in danger. He has told us that the COVID-19 situation in Nepal is very bad and getting worse every day. At the beginning of April daily cases were around 150 and by early May they had passed 9000 per day.



## INSIDE RAINBOW OF HOPE FOR CHILDREN

The annual financial review is in progress and will be presented at the annual meeting. The financial statements will be posted on the Rainbow of Hope for Children website prior to the AGM: <https://www.rainbowofhopeforchildren.ca/>

The statement of operations will be published in the Fall/Winter 2021 Nexus.

A copy of the complete financial statements will also be available from Treasurer Cheryl Budzinski at 780-968-3952 or [rohfc2018@outlook.com](mailto:rohfc2018@outlook.com).

### The Annual General Meeting - to be held by Zoom on June 26, 2021 at 10:00 AM MDT.

**You must register in advance.** Please contact Charlie at [rohfc2017@outlook.com](mailto:rohfc2017@outlook.com) or call 306-242-2484 to register. A Zoom meeting invite will be sent to you in the week of June 19, 2021.

Join us to meet the Board of Directors.

## PROGRAMS OF THE RAINBOW OF HOPE FOR CHILDREN SOCIETY

Your support is requested and appreciated for the following projects:

Program Description	Funding Goals	Program Description	Funding Goals
COVID-19 Emergency Relief	\$50,000	Bantambaari Rural School, Ghana	\$30,000
School of Family Agriculture, Bahia, Brazil	\$10,550	PAMBE Health, Nutrition, and Sanitation, Ghana	\$6,500
Arukarka Health Centre, Nepal	\$12,000	Ipuli School Classroom addition, Tabora, Tanzania	\$34,000
Kalika Rural School, Nepal	\$14,000	Paso Puente Dignified Housing, El Salvador	\$10,550
CIS Scholarships, El Salvador	\$33,250	Ambrosina Young Women's Empowerment, Brazil	\$10,550
Kinyambu & Area—Classrooms, Kenya	\$60,000	Mt. Moriah School, St Ann Phase 1, Jamaica	\$15,000
Disaster Relief Fund	\$10,000	Hospital, Itasy, Madagascar	\$26,500
Eye Health Care, Reducing Avoidable Blindness, Indonesia	\$4,500	Tabora School for the Deaf- Dorm Beds; and Sewing and Carpentry Shop Equipment, Tanzania	\$16,000

The Rainbow of Hope For Children Society (ROHFC) attempts to maintain as low as possible operational costs. The Society allocates 5.5% of revenue towards those costs. All ROHFC Board members are unpaid volunteers who donate their time and expertise towards these projects. There is no paid staff.

We thank you for offering a gift to any one of these projects and we are pleased to acknowledge your donation with an income tax deductible receipt. Kindly send your donation to:

RAINBOW OF HOPE FOR CHILDREN SOCIETY  
WAINWRIGHT, AB T9W 1S7  
PO BOX 2883

Registered Charity No: 889160172-RR0001  
[www.rainbowofhopeforchildren.ca](http://www.rainbowofhopeforchildren.ca)

- Cheques should be made payable to the full name of the organization:  
**Rainbow of Hope For Children Society**
- When making a donation using a credit card be sure to include the 3-digit security code on the back of your card. That number is required by the credit card companies.
- Donations of securities have a significant tax advantage. To donate shares please contact our Treasurer at [rohfc2018@outlook.com](mailto:rohfc2018@outlook.com) or 780-968-3952**
- Insurance policies** may be used as donations to charities

### RAINBOW OF HOPE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT OF ALL OUR DONORS, and

- Several Rotary Clubs, the Edmonton Community Foundation, the Holy Family Columbus Club, Blessed Sacrament School and parish, and the Al Gerwing Charitable Foundation for their extraordinary support.
- George and Louise Bunz who prepared the NEXUS mail-out.
- The Peter Van Winssen Professional Corporation, Wainwright, AB for donating the cost of the NEXUS mail-out.



### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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### ☞ SEEKING BOARD MEMBERS ☞

Rainbow of Hope for Children is looking for people with new ideas and fresh perspectives to join the Board of Directors. We are a group of dedicated volunteers whose objectives are to enable and support schools and other educational projects, capacitation of women and marginalized groups, construction of new homes, and the development of health facilities and services, where the need has arisen. Let's chat. Please contact me, Charlie, at:  
Email: [rohfc2017@outlook.com](mailto:rohfc2017@outlook.com) or  
Phone 306-242-2484.

NEXUS: Produced and edited by Connie Gerwing and Jan Schmitz in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan and Rainbow of Hope's Head Office in Wainwright, Alberta, Canada. The expressed views of the authors are not necessarily the views of the NGO.