



Planting Hope, Nurturing Growth, Harvesting Peace

ANNUAL UPDATE – 2018

Dear friends and Partners:

I spent the bulk of March this year in Kenya and the Ivory Coast, and it was a VERY rewarding trip! We're seeing our program bear fruit across all cultures. In fact, this trip was a great summary of our work in 2018, so as an Annual Report, I thought that by recapping the trip I can give you a sense of what we were up to throughout 2018. So - here goes!

Nairobi

I began in Nairobi with visits to two organizations with which we have common ministry interests. Our goal was to see if NVI's training programs can be synergistic with their ministries, adding a dimension they don't have. Both are very interested, so we're continuing the conversations. I also was asked to speak at an all-Africa conference on a Christian approach to Poverty – we'll see how that plays out.....

Bomet

Bomet was where we started our first group of 8 trainees, who graduated about a year ago. Since that time, those 8 have all improved their savings/financial habits and started small businesses themselves. They have also started 12 new groups – 7 especially for widows and 2 focused on single women – with approximately 180 participants.

One group of widows has been so successful that a second group came and joined them, and then joined their church!

We're beginning to hear some great testimonies of changed lives from this group of trainees, but one really stands out: The woman pictured to the right (a widow herself) went through our training and began saving what she could. She saved 200 shillings (\$2.00 US) and began buying and reselling milk. Practicing what we taught her, every week she reinvested a little in the business before taking anything out for household expenses. Now, approximately one year later, her capital has grown to 1500 shillings and she takes out enough to live on weekly! This is an amazing accomplishment for a widow living alone in the Kenya Highlands!





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We have many more stories from Bomet, which we'll share as time goes on.

The final item for now from Bomet is this exciting news: All that we have been doing came to the attention of the local bishop of the Africa Gospel Church. He asked us to do a presentation to his leadership team on our next trip. We may have a chance to extend our ministry to about 400 churches!

Katito:

After Bomet, I went to Katito where our second group completed its training just recently. Already they are beginning to see results:



Fred:

An elementary school teacher, Fred took our initial training and radically changed how he and his wife were managing their money, resulting in a lot more marital harmony! Eventually he took the advice of the men in his group and ceased some of his “exotic” business ventures and has started a sure thing – a poultry business. Not only that, he has begun training some of his first-graders to put aside savings out of any money they receive. The next generation is learning good habits early!

A URL of Fred’s testimony is below – just copy and paste to your browser if the link does not open the video.

<https://youtu.be/jt4XyqnLZso>

Paul:

Another great success story: A struggling pastor of a small, struggling church, Paul kept chickens to sell to try and make ends meet. (Pastors in Kenya are not always paid by their congregations.) Going through NVI’s training was like throwing a rope to a drowning man. He



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immediately put our training into practice, and even began teaching his congregation what he was learning! He used our training on Sales and Marketing to find new and better clients, which allowed him to expand his poultry business. He has even diversified into keeping sheep as well.

From our perspective, though, the best result has been the impact on his children. Listen to what he says in the video (link below – copy and paste to your browser if it does not open automatically.)

<https://youtu.be/pvz7hR0XSL0>

Finally – I was asked by a new School of Theology to teach a class in Christian Economic Development. We will see how that works out!



Kissii:

In Kissii we began training a group of 7 people. They loved it and are eager for the next set of lessons:



The Kissii area has a sense of “lawlessness” about it. The church we met in was attacked the night before we arrived, and I was harassed several times just walking outside the church. But where the darkness is darkest, the light shines brightest. The folks in Kissii are the most sold-out for Jesus that I’ve seen so far. **Their purpose for partnering with NVI? To use our training as another way to build relationships in their area to preach the gospel of Jesus!**



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Homa Bay:

Our initial meeting in Homa Bay came to the attention of the area bishop of the Africa Gospel Church. After quizzing me about our program and listening to Paul's testimony (above), he immediately invited me to present to his entire leadership team for the area – about 50 churches.

Ivory Coast:

We began our initial training with a group of about 15 church leaders from around the country. It was a bit difficult due to the language barrier (they speak French), but once they “got it” you could see a light go on. They quickly coalesced a formal SCA and have proceeded from there.

If history is indicative, by next year we'll be seeing significant expansion of the program, as well as more conversions!



Pittsburgh:

Lastly, by God's grace and in answer to earnest prayer, a small group of supporters has come together in Pittsburgh to drive friend-raising and fundraising in the area. They have agreed to help put on a fundraising event this fall. Please add that to your prayer list for NVI!

Thanks be to God, and to each of you for your help!

Blessings,

Virgil Hughes

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