

ALLIANCEWOMEN

CONNECTING WOMEN FOR KINGDOM IMPACT

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In uncertain times, we remember what is unchanging—the freedom and life we have in Christ. Last year, we introduced our “Set Free” theme and celebrated this truth: “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36).

This year, I invite you to consider how Jesus wants all people to “Live Free.” In his letter to the believers in Colossae, Paul wrote, “So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him” (Colossians 2:6).

Is there an open door that you are afraid to walk through? Has God opened up an opportunity that is beyond your comfort zone?

We read in Scripture, and know from personal experience, that not all people who are set free have chosen to live free. God’s chosen people, the nation of Israel, refused to enter the promised land. They had been set free from slavery in Egypt and given the opportunity to live free in the land God had promised. Instead, that generation wandered until their bodies perished in the wilderness (see Hebrews 3:17).

Rather than being constricted by fear, apathy, or any other manifestation of our sinful nature, let’s ask Jesus to set us free from

whatever binds us so that His life, like living water, can flow out of us to others who desperately need hope and encouragement.

I invite you to read these project profiles and Shelly Crouch’s article on reaching women and girls. As you read, consider how God would have you respond. Additionally, I encourage each one of us to look with fresh eyes and God’s heart at our neighborhoods and communities and consider how God desires to use each one of us as a vehicle through which He can unleash His Spirit in the world for His glory.

May we be courageous in our calling and engaged in our culture. May we be passionate about God as we step out and take risks together.

MAY WE LIVE FREE.



Jen is the national director for Alliance Women. She serves in a variety of ministry capacities including the President’s Cabinet. Jen and her husband, Doug, attend Dover Avenue Alliance Church in Orange City, Iowa.

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him (Colossians 2:6).



Healing UNSEEN WOUNDS



by Melissa Singfiel

In the center of Kosovo's capital city, Prishtina, sits Heroinat, a striking monument dedicated to the nation's estimated 20,000 victims of war-time rape. While the nation anonymously pays them tribute, these survivors of the 1998–1999 war in Kosovo still struggle to give voice to their pain.

Rather than finding justice, this community of women has been marginalized by society and rejected by their families. Many were divorced by their husbands and put out of their homes. Others have kept their secret from their family members, fearing the consequences should anyone discover what was done to them.

Today, these women continue to live with unseen wounds of psychological trauma, shame, and marginalization. The judicial system has failed them, and they are victimized a second time by a society that sees their suffering as a shame upon their families.

FINALLY SEEN

Alliance Missions in Kosovo has partnered with the Dardania network of churches to address this significant need. In the Drenica region of Kosovo the project, Healing Unseen Wounds, is helping war-rape victims using a two-pronged approach to bring healing and Christ's love to this overlooked and underserved community of survivors.

First, Healing Unseen Wounds seeks to provide trauma counseling to help heal emotional wounds. In August 2019, the project held its first trauma counseling event led by CAMA worker Lisa Ramsey, bringing together over 30 women.

The women were initially wary, since they are usually asked to dredge up painful memories and retell their stories of assault. However, at the end of the training the women's center director exclaimed, "We don't feel this today, we feel energized and

hopeful, and that's different. We didn't have to talk about what happened to us, and the activities really helped us feel better."

EMPOWERING IMPOVERISHED WOMEN

Second, Healing Unseen Wounds provides microenterprise investments. With the purchase of a cow, beehive, greenhouse, or sewing machine, women can meet their basic needs and generate a modest income. Connie Seale of the aXcess team and I are leading English classes, building relationships with women, and helping to identify those who will be recipients of these funds.

These simple investments bring hope. Since the project began, Healing Unseen Wounds has helped five families with investments such as these, but the need is great. There are still many survivors living at or below the poverty line, and Healing Unseen Wounds is eager to empower more women to provide for themselves and their families.

Alliance Women has set a goal of raising \$32,000 for the Healing Unseen Wounds project. This money will provide two years of trauma counseling through mental health workshops and two years of business consulting and funds for women to purchase beehives, sewing machines, cows, and greenhouses. Prayers and financial gifts are appreciated. **For more information, visit www.alliancewomen.org/give.**



Melissa and her husband, Jeff, have served as international workers in Kosovo since 2002. Melissa currently leads the women's commission for the national evangelical alliance in Kosovo and serves female international workers by facilitating Empower, a women's developmental program in partnership with the Metro District and Alliance Theological Seminary.

THE IMPACT OF INVESTING IN *women and girls*



by Shelly Crouch

Laying on the grass, gazing into the night sky, my dream was to be an astronaut. Some girls want to be nurses, lawyers, moms, or missionaries. There are so many possibilities. But this is not true for every woman or girl, especially in countries where poverty is overwhelming.

Did you know that more than two-thirds of the world's people live on less than \$10 a day? About 2 billion of them survive on less than \$5 a day and another 750 million eke out an existence on less than \$1.90 a day. God sees their struggle to survive and desires that we take up the cause of the vulnerable in prayer and action. Your support of this year's Alliance Women projects will make a positive impact in the lives of women and girls. **For more information, visit www.alliancewomen.org/give.**

International workers often see communities caught in cycles of poverty that lead from one generation to the next. Breaking these cycles can be accomplished through partnering with communities to provide clean water, job training, and educational opportunities. **It is proven that one of the best ways to impact poverty is to invest in women and girls.** When we do, we see the transformation of families and communities.

Women are vital to families and communities around the world. Lack of education for girls brings negative effects not only for the girls themselves, but for their children, families, and communities.

- A startling fact is that children who have mothers who can read have a 50 percent better chance of living past the age of five.
- Women make up 65 percent of those who are illiterate and will be joined by the 130 million girls who are not in school today.

- Currently, only one out of three girls finish secondary school, but for every year a girl remains in school she will earn 12 percent more income.
- Women spend 90 percent of their income on their families compared to the 40 percent that men likewise invest.

Bringing the whole gospel for the whole person means helping in tangible ways in the name of Jesus. Your support of this year's Alliance Women projects will

- provide transitional housing and employment opportunities for released women prisoners in the Philippines;
- offer mental health workshops and micro-enterprise investments including beehives, sewing machines, and green houses to wartime rape survivors in Kosovo;
- meet West African immigrant women's critical needs including ESL classes and housing; and
- give food, shelter, and medical care to Venezuelan refugees in Latin America.

Investing in women and girls is answering God's call to act for the vulnerable, whose dreams result in hope and help for everyone in the community.



Shelly and her husband, Tim, served 15 years with The Alliance in Russia, where she developed ministries to empower women. During their years in Turkey, Shelly worked with trafficked women and completed her M.A. in global development and social justice. She currently teaches at a multi-language school and invests in community development in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Tabitha FUND

by Michelle Davis

In the New York City (NYC) metro area, the birthplace of The Alliance, there are at least 80 unreached people groups represented and 800-plus languages spoken. NYC has more foreign-born immigrants than the whole population of Chicago! We are seeing how God has moved many of these peoples here so they can find Him.

This is an amazing time in history: Our King of Kings hasn't returned yet, and we get to be His ambassadors among unreached people who are more accessible than ever.

When people come to NYC, many are looking for opportunities—education, improved income, a better future for their children. They share these opportunities with their families and friends. When they encounter Jesus, they share Him as well.

Upon initial arrival here, it is challenging to find housing, secure a job, and learn how to navigate a vastly different cultural context. Women are especially vulnerable during this transition. We have met numbers of them who have heartbreaking stories and live in very challenging circumstances.

MEET BINTU

Bintu is one of them. When she first came to our ESL class, Bintu didn't laugh when the other ladies joked and shared stories. She was exhausted and dejected. In the weeks that followed, Bintu shared how she worked extremely long hours in a restaurant, and was getting paid under the table at an alarmingly low rate. She desperately wanted to send money back to her West African home country so her two elementary school-age children could attend school. Bintu was completely overwhelmed with life and felt stuck in her circumstances.



THE TABITHA FUND

Women like Bintu are why Envision New York City has started the Tabitha Fund. Named after Tabitha—a disciple in the early Church who was “always doing good and helping the poor” (see Acts 9:36)—this fund seeks to help West African women transitioning to U.S. culture by meeting their critical needs.

One of those needs is providing curriculum, books, and supplies for ESL classes. Currently, more than 25 West African women attend the ESL classes we teach twice a week. These beautiful women desperately want to learn English so they can find decent jobs in NYC, communicate with their children's teachers, and pass immigration tests to obtain green cards or U.S. citizenship.

The Tabitha Fund is also set up to provide scholarships for job-training programs, immigrant advocacy resources, and children's support services such as tutoring. The cost to provide these critical needs for 50 West African women is approximately \$11,300.

Envision New York City also dreams of providing transitional housing in which Christians live alongside new immigrants to incarnate Christ and disciple them at this key moment in their lives. This is a significant investment—\$850,000—yet so worth the stability and hope this facility will provide dozens of vulnerable women each year, who are overwhelmed by the city's high cost of living.

Alliance Women has set a total goal of raising \$56,500 for the Tabitha Fund—enough to cover the critical needs of immigrant women and invest in transitional housing. We invite you to partner with what God is doing among West African women in NYC by contributing to the Tabitha Fund through your gifts to Alliance Women. **For more information, visit www.alliancewomen.org/give.**



Brian and Michelle Davis are the Envision New York City site coordinators. In 2017, their family transitioned to this city after serving in Senegal with The Alliance for nearly a decade. The Davises currently teach ESL, share Bible stories with interested people, and develop Envision interns and immersion teams.

Ina-Inakay PROJECT COUNTRYSIDE



by Rachel Meier

THEIR STORY—THE BEGINNING

TCleo and Tim Undheim, marketplace ministries workers, had a dream. It was birthed 12 years ago from an opportunity Cleo had to speak at the Correctional Institute for Women in metro Manila, Philippines. During her visit, she recognized the need for helpful programming for soon-to-be released women prisoners. There was a distinct lack of preparation or training for reentry into society.

Within a year, Cleo and her husband had started an outreach called Ina-Inakay, which means “mother and fledglings.” Ina-Inakay is a licensed nonprofit agency with the Department of Social Welfare and Development. It was established to facilitate the reintegration of women into society through the formation of Christian values, family connections, child education, and livelihood initiatives.

Through financial allowances for schooling for the children of the female inmates and training sessions addressing handicrafts production, bookkeeping, ethics in the workplace and livelihood skills, Ina-Inakay has reached more than 2,000 people in need. The team led by the Undheims is making a Kingdom impact for generations and modeling “whole life Christianity.”

THEIR STORY—THE NEXT CHAPTER

One of the requirements for parole is a place for female prisoners to live and a family or community to whom they can be accountable. Without this provision, it is almost impossible for these released women to successfully reintegrate with their families and society due to their long separation from family and the stigma associated with having been in prison.

In 2016, seeing this need, Cleo and Tim, along with their ministry team, went before the Lord in prayer. Sensing the word “onward” from the Lord, the Undheims, Ina-Inakay staff, board of directors, and prison officials decided to launch the Project Countryside Living and Learning venture.

Through the generosity of a friend of The Alliance, the Undheims were able to purchase 22 acres of farmable land in September 2018. Slowly but surely, Project Countryside is coming to life!

OUR OPPORTUNITY

Currently, the Undheims are in the process of figuring out what can and cannot be planted on the Project Countryside site. They’ve tried rice (successful, but with negligible profit), green beans (unsuccessful), and green limes. They received 1,000 green lime seedlings in September 2019 and planted them over two months. They’ve been told that green limes will do very well, but it will be at least another year before they can glean fruit.

Electrical lines, roads, and plumbing were all added to the site. Now, a permanent row house containing 10 units is to be built. Each unit will house two–three residents. The estimated cost of each unit is \$15,000, which includes materials, labor, and furnishings. Alliance Women has set a goal of raising \$45,000 for Project Countryside.

Please consider a financial gift—and continue to pray that the lives of these women and their families will be transformed from the inside out by the love and truth of Jesus Christ. **For more information, visit www.alliancewomen.org/give.**



Rachel is the assistant for marketplace ministries. She and her husband, Tim, have served in youth ministry in the local church, as international workers in France with aXcess, and leading Envision. They live in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and have two boys and a rescue dog named Toby.

VENEZUELAN *refugee relief*

by Kassi Roedding

AN OVERWHELMING CRISIS

Venezuela is facing an overwhelming crisis. For several years, the essentials of food, medicine, and cash have been difficult to find or afford. Gang violence threatens all corners of society. Today, more than 4 million Venezuelans have fled the country.

Our compassionate God sees each person impacted by crisis. And He asks His Church to come together to surround hurting families with love.

Beginning in 2018, CAMA has had the privilege to partner with Alliance churches in Colombia as they care for thousands of Venezuelans who are trying to settle down or just passing through. Through generous giving to the Venezuelan Refugee Relief project, CAMA has joined the work of Alliance churches in the cities of Armenia, Bogotá, and Ipiales.

Here are a few testimonies of God's transforming work in three Colombian cities.

ARMENIA

In Armenia, the church focuses on meeting the medical and family needs of Venezuelans.

When Luciana* and her two daughters arrived in Armenia, her youngest was malnourished and her 15-year-old daughter was pregnant. They connected with an Alliance church that found them a place to stay; provided food, diapers, and a crib; and helped Luciana start her own small business, selling empanadas and coffee. The whole family has found Jesus and are in the discipleship process!



BOGOTÁ

In Bogotá, refugees are offered a free weekly lunch.

When two teenage Venezuelan sisters arrived in Bogotá, they had not eaten for days. Needing money to survive, they kept walking around looking for work and saw an Alliance church that runs a food program. At the point of exhaustion, they decided to enter and immediately received food, water, and rest. The pastor then put out a group message on WhatsApp, and church members really surrounded and loved the two. Now these girls know Jesus, were baptized, and are serving in the church today.

IPIALES

In Ipiales, a church-run shelter provides a safe place for families to sleep and eat before heading on their journey.

When this shelter opened in January 2020, sixteen-year-old Carioli, her boyfriend, and their one-year-old daughter were some of the first guests to arrive. They ate, took a shower, washed their clothes, and sat down at one of the computers to check in with family. Seconds after logging on, Carioli received a message saying that her father had been killed in Venezuela that day.

Carioli broke down in tears sitting at the shelter's computer table. The pastor and a group of volunteers immediately came around her, listened to her story, and prayed with her. The pastor also shared about the hope found in Jesus. Before Carioli left the shelter, she put her trust in Christ.

Alliance Women has set a goal to raise \$32,000 for the Venezuelan Refugee Relief project. **For more information, visit www.alliancewomen.org/give.** Please be praying for Venezuelans. Both refugees and those that remain in their country are very vulnerable. Praise God for churches that have stepped up in love around the world during this time! Let us not grow tired.

**Names changed*



Kassi Roedding is the marketing and communication specialist for CAMA and Alliance Missions in Colorado Springs, Colorado. She spent 16 years of her childhood as an Alliance missionary kid in Quito, Ecuador.