

What happened 2020?

2020 was a year of "unprecedented everything." We hope this update will shine a light on what we are doing in East Africa through and despite the ever changing world around us.

Thanks for Partnering.

Ben, Kristy, Myles, Neo and Ari Carlson

February 2021

Exploring Partnership in Kenya

As we wrapped up our sabbatical one of the largest questions looming over us was, "what's next?" We discussed and prayed through our hopes, dreams and options. We also reached out to mentors and leaders who had helped us navigate the previous 17 years living in Africa. One of these individuals is Haron Wachira. Ben met Haron at a Coffee as Mission conference in early 2017. Haron was a key note speaker sharing about his work with the organization he started [Akili group](#). The passion to impact his Kenyan family and neighbors in a holistic kingdom way captivated Ben

and lead to a back and forth discussion over the following years. Haron's approach mirrored our's in Burundi and the more we talked the more excited we became about partnering. Our Coffee Scout program that sends a team of junior agronomists into the fields and homes of neighbors to train and disciple captivated Haron and he asked if there wasn't a way we could bring this vision to Kenya.

Thunguri Coffee Factory is the Wachira family business that had been run by Haron's uncle for decades. The past three years this business and community gathering place had sat idle as aging coffee expertise, access

equipment and leaders could not maintain profitability.

Haron's passion to revitalize the coffee factory and find new in-roads into the hearts and lives of his neighbors captivated us. He has developed and managed systems to impact the value stream of everything from Macadamia nuts to computer coding! The missing pieces in the family business are exactly what we could provide to revitalize this potentially impactful enterprise. LMC brings technical

to a market and a model for community and Kingdom engagement. We agreed to a 2020 pilot of a Long Miles Coffee Kenya business as mission.

Haron and his dynamic wife Margaret (the best chapati maker in Kenya Neo says) are wrapping up our pilot project on Mount Kenya with all our hopes to grow it for years to come.



Haron and Ben inspecting coffee on Mount Kenya in December.

Other News

Why we masked up and went to Kenya.

We had been praying and dreaming of expanding our missional enterprise

since 2017. While 2020 did not see a great year for Burundi coffee production we did feel that replicating our way of ministry and business into Kenya was at an ideal time. An exploration of what this would look like led us to take a family trip to Kenya for a deeper look at our pilot project along with possible next steps and partners. (We're quite sure during our pre-flight COVID test Ari's screams, when a 3 inch Q-tip went up her nose, scared off at least one family from getting tested).

A rapid fire run-down of our Kenya month: Good time spent with Haron and Margaret on the pilot project on Mount Kenya. Kristy spending days bouncing around in an old Land Rover photographing and interviewing farming families. Ben managing (or would we say just holding on?) the kids school on the mountain and meeting local leaders. Lauren's wedding, a true highlight of the trip. Exploring, planning and discussing the potential large-scale farm in Western Kenya. Negotiating with the Catholic Church to lease the land. Connecting with local Navigator leadership as well as some great missionary friends along the way. Add in a Christmas seeing lions and New Years on the coast and you could say we saw just about every part of Kenya.

The kids highlight was staying at a house in Nairobi with 5 German shepherds. Kristy would say watching the kids experience and thrive back in East Africa. Ben would add just being back in Africa while seeing the potential start to come to life.

Pray:

-For the relationships and answers to our questions on how to continue our pilot project with Haron and Margaret on Mount Kenya. Also the potential of a large farm and community engagement in Western Kenya and for deep connections with our neighbors in both places like Samuel and his wife Elizabeth.

-For our Burundi Team and our new team leader Raphael.
-For our boys, Myles and Neo. They have started a nine month vision therapy treatment program after both were diagnosed with some key needs. This commitment to work on vision therapy made a clear answer to "what's next?" We will be in MN to see this program completed before making any major moves!

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Thank you for being a part of this community, bringing hope to the forgotten coffee farmers of Burundi and Kenya. We need and appreciate your prayers, financial support and encouragement!

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