



PARTNERING FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND RENEWAL – TRANSFORMING LIVES



## Quarterly News

Fourth Quarter 2021

YOUR IMPACT

# Repairing Much More than Nets

At first glance, Atputhaseeli may appear to be a simple woman who repairs and sells fishing nets in a fishing village in Sri Lanka. Anything beyond that first glance would convince you Atputhaseeli is an extremely inspiring woman! Of the tens of thousands of micro-entrepreneurs served by our Global Partners, she was the recipient of our 2021 Lydia Award. Come meet this very special woman who is much more than a repairer of nets.

### Forever Changed by War

Atputhaseeli and her husband, Anton, once lived a relatively peaceful life in the beautiful seaside village of Vidaththaltheevu. He was a fisherman and worked very hard to provide for his family of five children. In 2006, civil war returned to their region. The military placed strict curfews on the fishermen. On June 20, 2008, Anton headed out for his daily fishing. The curfew came, and Anton had not returned. Atputhaseeli and her children waited anxiously, but Anton would never return. It was reported that he had been arrested for just missing the curfew. What was done to him thereafter, Atputhaseeli can only speculate. She would never see her husband again and knew her life had been forever changed by war.

### Refusing to Give Up

Even before losing her husband, Atputhaseeli learned to overcome. Their second son lost his vision in both eyes at the age of 2. She took her now 12 year old and his four siblings and fled what had become a war zone. They tried to put up a makeshift hut in one village, only to have the war follow them and be forced to move again. Eventually they would end up in a refugee camp and remain there for 18 months before they could return to her village, only to find everything they had owned was gone.

Atputhaseeli and her family really struggled back in their village. She took on small labor jobs and would earn less than \$2/day. Her eldest son quit school to take a fishing job that paid \$3/day. It wasn't until 2012 that a woman in her village told her about HEED, YGro's microfinance program. It was the most encouraging and promising news Atputhaseeli had heard in a long time. She took an initial micro-loan of just over \$150 to purchase nets that she could rent to fishermen, get 1/3 of the fish they caught, and repair the nets upon their return. She faithfully repaid that loan and qualified for larger loans, growing her business. Eventually she started to take loans to start a second food catering business. Now she was able to enjoy profits of \$13/day – almost 10 times what she once earned.

### Strong Family, Great Neighbor

With her steady business income and various means of saving a little here and there, Atputhaseeli has put all of her children through school, including her blind son, who attended Peradeniya University. She is a role model to other women in her community who lost their husbands in the war. And she has been generous to many in whom she sees herself during those extremely challenging days after the loss of her husband. It was with tremendous joy and pride that she was able to contribute to her church's building work. She still dreams of an even better future as she expands her food business into a restaurant and becomes even more involved in helping others get through the challenges of life that she knows all too well. Atputhaseeli has repaired far more than fishing nets in her life, and she is very grateful to the PEER donors whose financial support of our 20-year partnership with YGro made it possible.

### Celebrating 30 Years of Partnership!

How we thank God for 30 amazing years of extending more of the kingdom of heaven to earth! Through your prayers and financial support, God is at work enabling tens of thousands of the materially poor and non-poor to experience economic, social, and spiritual transformation. Thank you!

If you would like to send a tax-deductible donation to PEER Servants, you can direct 100% of your gift to any of our Global Partner Funds. See the back side of the newsletter for contact info. Thank you for your generosity. **God bless you!**

*Todd G. Engelsen*

Todd G. Engelsen  
President



### Providing Much More than Water

Exciting progress is taking place in Kenya! Our Kenya Chapter of volunteers has been reaching out to the Samburu people of Tuale village for more than a year. As they have deepened their relationship, the Tuale elders expressed to the PEER Kenya volunteers their dire need for access to water (the closest source is 5 miles away), and the volunteers have decided to do something about it! Stay tuned for how you can bring water, both physical and spiritual, to the people of Tuale!

## WHAT TRANSFORMATION LOOKS LIKE

**A Moldovan Brick Artist**

If you'd like a beautiful fireplace built by Ruslan, you'll have it wait in line! Ruslan is a client of PEER's Moldovan partner, Invest Credit. His work is of such high quality that he works on referrals - often more than he can handle! Ruslan can now provide for his family of seven. He also built a fireplace for an elderly disabled woman for free.

**World Changers in Burundi**

Meet just some of the young people in PEER Teens Burundi! They participated in AKT3, the third "Advancing the Kingdom Together" conference of PEER Teens, the youth empowerment arm of PEER Servants. These young people are extending the kingdom to Burundi in very practical ways, changing the world for the better.

## THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEERS



Taban Manyok is past President of PEER Teens USA and completed an internship in the PEER office this past summer. Now a volunteer on Team South Sudan, Taban is also a very gifted athlete – State Champion and running cross-country and track at Fitchburg State University.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**We'd love to hear from you!**

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*Three much-loved members of the PEER Global Family who experienced unbelievable hardship in 2021, and yet they are overcoming. How? Through a close global family that embraces the opportunity to walk together even when walking through the darkest valleys of life.*

## Overcoming Hardship Together

For many, 2021 was an unwanted extension of the very hard days of 2020. COVID and material poverty are a very formidable one-two punch to being able to experience the kingdom of heaven on earth. As the PEER Global Family prepares to step into 2022, we do so with a very optimistic theme: Mission Possible. Why such optimism? Because we have withstood some of the darkest valleys of life and we're still committed to extending the kingdom. How? By walking humbly with our God and together with each other, not just one mile, but at least two, and finding there is joy in the journey, if not in the night, then at least in the morning. Here are just some of the stories of our beloved family members and how we have overcome hardship together.

**George in Zambia**

George is a sharp, handsome young man and a natural leader. The PEER Teens Zambia President, he is eager to pursue a degree in Anesthesiology, but the costs of such were beyond reach for his widowed mother. Given his leadership skills, George was nominated by CEMFIN, PEER's Zambian partner, as a PEER Teens Scholar. A North Carolina couple sponsored him, and before long, George was excelling at the university.

Then came the tragic news that his brother had COVID. Upon hearing this, his mother collapsed and lost her life. Now George was a double orphan, having lost his mother and father. To make matters worse, someone stole his laptop computer at the same time he was learning of his terrible loss.

The CEMFIN family walked with George through those dark days. PEER Teens from around the world did as well. The North Carolina couple got him another laptop. Eventually George continued pursuing his dream of becoming an Anesthesiologist.

**Eufemia in Peru**

Eufemia is the longest term employee at Kallarisunchis, PEER Servants' Peruvian partner. She is a beautiful woman who beams with the love of Christ. The clients of Kallarisunchis love her!

Peru experienced the highest COVID death rates in the world. To Eufemia, that became far more than a statistic. First her mother, then her brother. Then the virus took the life of her husband.

We will be grieving with Eufemia for some time to come. Her Kallarisunchis and "Team Peru" (PEER Servants volunteers serving Kallarisunchis) family have been at her side through her tremendous loss. She knows that joy will come in the morning, even if it remains a bit elusive in this current season.

**Lillian in Uganda**

Lillian was a good neighbor to Pamela, one of the leaders in PEER Teens Uganda. When Lillian's house burned to the ground, Pamela and some of her Teen colleagues applied for a \$100 Social Entrepreneur Grant from PEER Servants to bring Lillian food and household items to start to move forward. During their visit, God's Spirit spoke to the Teens that they were to do far more. They were to rebuild Lillian's home! The Teens reached out to their global PEER Servants family, and within days they had raised the \$5,000 they needed to hire contractors that will have Lillian and her large family under their own roof very soon!

You will often hear it said of PEER Servants that we are far more relational than transactional. That may concern some, but it's what allows us to be this beautiful global family that is a formidable force for the kingdom and enthusiastically embrace our theme for the year ahead: **Mission Possible.**