



Organizational Profile Accessible Hope International

www.accessiblehope.org



ACCESSIBLE HOPE
INTERNATIONAL

Opening Doors of Access for People with Disabilities Worldwide

Mission

Facilitating Gospel-centered transformation for people with disabilities around the world by equipping the global Body of Christ to open wholistic doors of access.

Vision

We envision people with disabilities living hope-filled lives as full and valued members of their communities.

Core Values

- ◇ Christ-centered
- ◇ Spiritual Formation Integration
- ◇ Affirming the Imago Dei
- ◇ Addressing Root Causes & Worldviews
- ◇ Wholistic Approach
- ◇ Multiplying Impact
- ◇ Diverse Inclusivity
- ◇ Promoting Biblical Justice



History

14 Years of Faithfulness

May | 2009

12 women met in Seattle to pray about what God might be asking them to do for women with disabilities in Sierra Leone. Accessible Hope International was founded not more than a month later, in June 2009 as Women of Hope International. The original intent was to address the needs of women with disabilities in Sierra Leone, West Africa, a passion which all the founders shared in common. An on-the-ground needs assessment in October 2009 resulted in the beginning of a wholistic discipleship program for women with disabilities in northern Sierra Leone using Bible storying groups for relationship and trust-building.

March | 2010

An office was opened in Sierra Leone, local staff were hired, and additional programming was begun. The US office existed primarily for the purpose of securing funding for the programming in Sierra Leone and providing capacity-building and discipleship for the staff there.

April | 2013

A Fair Trade Cooperative building was rented and women begin working independently. As women with disabilities began to realize their worth and value, and understand that God loved them and made them with a purpose, they attempted to go to local churches, only to find that they were driven away. This began a process of addressing the worldview issues surrounding disability, not only in the society, but also in the church. In time, this disability workshop for churches was expanded for global application, as the misconceptions surrounding disability, and the need for Biblical teaching in this regard are widespread.

June | 2014

Ebola breaks out in Sierra Leone. Despite the devastation that would ensue, WOH does not flee, but rather moves closer to the crisis with compassion and care.

July | 2016

Stemming from an unmet need, that of addressing the worldview issues surrounding disability, the Equip program was launched, offering Theology of Disability workshops for pastors and church leaders around the world. Over the years, this program has expanded and equipped hundreds of ministry leaders to better understand disability from a Biblical perspective and open their doors, hands, and hearts to people with disabilities in their communities.

June | 2019

Women of Hope turned 10 years old. The reach extended to four locations in Northern Sierra Leone, and more than a dozen countries around the world. In conjunction with the ministry's 10-year anniversary, Women of Hope rebranded as **Accessible Hope International**, opening doors of access for people with disabilities worldwide.

June | 2020

Accessible Hope closed its Memphis-based US office, partly due to COVID and partly due to a strategic move toward a broader scope and distributed office model. A back-office service was hired in Wheaton, IL to manage the administrative and financial side of the ministry and staff members transferred to home offices. A new strategy of ministry partnership was adopted, called Empower, partnering with small, indigenous ministries in the Global South to provide wholistic services to vulnerable people with disabilities.

September | 2022

Accessible Hope continued the expansion of its Equip training offerings to include full Training of Trainer events (in-person), online Theology of Disability workshops, online Made in God's Image introductory workshops, and *In His Image*, a video-based training curriculum available through the WhatsApp social media platform.

December | 2022

Accessible Hope now has Global Hope Partners in Sierra Leone, Burundi, and Tanzania, serving over 950 women and children with disabilities. New Global Hope Partners are in the process of being onboarded in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and India, with many trainings, both virtual and in-person being offered each year.

Across the 13.5 year-span, the leadership has continued to innovate methods and strategies, while remaining true to the mission and vision that God gave to the original founders - seeing people with disabilities transformed, and restoring their dignity and purpose as Image-bearers. The vehicle for facilitating this process is, has been, and will continue to be, the Body of Christ around the world.



STAFF, BOARD, & FINANCES

STAFF

Accessible Hope maintains a distributed virtual office with administrative back-office support provided in Wheaton, IL. Staff work from home in various states and overseas. Despite the distance, the team operates cohesively and collaboratively with established virtual meetings times and prayer daily. There are 12 field staff located in Makeni, Sierra Leone, 6 field staff in Burundi, and 8 field staff in Arusha, Tanzania at the offices of the Global Hope Partners (GHPs). Many staff members both in the US and on the field have been in their positions for many years, providing a solid foundation of longevity and commitment to the mission. Spiritual formation practices and spiritual direction is a part of the normal ministry rhythm, as AHI invests in providing that for each staff member.

BOARD

A key strength in regards to team leadership is the AHI Board of Directors, which oversees the CEO and the strategic mission of the ministry. The board consists of 7-10 members scattered across the US, and the CEO is a non-voting member. There is a sense of “all in” with regards to the ownership & devotion that the Board has for AHI, which employs a discernment process for decision-making. Both the Staff and Board are a deeply committed team of Christ-followers *fully* aligned with AHI’s statement of faith, values, and trust principles. They look to these as a basis to promote a team that works cooperatively and in one accord to lead the ministry to achieve its fullest potential.

FINANCES

AHI’s annual operating budget is over \$840,000. The ministry is primarily funded through partnerships with individual donors and grants from foundations. AHI is a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) and maintains strict adherence to the defined stewardship standards. In addition, to provide further financial transparency and accountability, AHI hires an independent CPA to audit its financial statements on an annual basis.

A woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a pink and white vertically striped short-sleeved button-down shirt, is seated at a wooden desk. She is smiling warmly at the camera while her hands are positioned on a green Braille typewriter. The typewriter has a white label on its front with Braille and some printed text. The background is a plain wall with a light green horizontal stripe. The overall lighting is soft and natural.

WHAT WE DO

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

People with disabilities in the Majority World live at an even greater level of vulnerability than the average person in their country. AHI serves over 650 women in four communities in northern Sierra Leone, who have disabilities of many kinds. Some of the disabilities represented among the women are blindness, deafness, Post-Polio Syndrome, paralysis (from injuries or poorly administered immunizations), elephantiasis, amputation, leprosy, and war wounds. Another 350 women with disabilities are served in Makamba, southern Burundi.

- Less than 2% of women with disabilities earn a sustainable income or are employed.
- 98% of women with disabilities fall below the HPI (Human Poverty Index.)
- Less than 20% of these women have an education above primary school, and 46% of them have no education at all.
- More than 70% of women with disabilities have suffered from rape or sexual exploitation.

Accessible Hope addresses the complex needs of women with disabilities through wholistic programming and support. They know that people are complex beings, and that every aspect of our lives is interconnected with the others. We cannot separate our economic success from our emotional health, or our physical health from our spiritual condition. They address all of these areas of life as a whole, knowing that the Gospel, when fully lived out, impacts EVERY area of life.

Similarly, AHI's Global Hope Partner in Tanzania serves over 50 children with disabilities through educational and therapeutic programming. However, they don't stop with education. The families of the children in their program are treated as a whole unit, assisting with employment, safe housing, food assistance, and vocational training.





Organizational Culture & Ethos

"Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing. I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. That the people whom I formed for myself might declare my praise."

Isaiah 43:18, 19, 21

AHI has an incredible story - and is a unique niche ministry - that could be used as a template for many other ministries to follow and/or include in their work. It focuses on most of the elements that are the “hot topics” on the missiological landscape today: [a] women, [b] disabilities, [c] mobilization of Global South leaders, [d] vulnerable ministry partnership, [e] unreached peoples, and [f] caring for the most vulnerable.

AHI is on the growing edge of missions in Africa and Asia. Our local ministry partners are passionate and committed, but they are often lacking the expertise and skill-sets to manage sustainable and flourishing ministries over the long-term. AHI sees it as our role to come alongside these faithful sisters and brothers and hold up their arms in the battle.

Our main headquarters office is comprised of a small, incredibly devoted team (both staff & board) that feels deeply called to AHI's ministry. We are willing to do whatever it takes to see God's work succeed. We are faith-filled, prayerful, Gospel-centered, and maintain a deep reliance on God—a true embodiment of a wholistic approach demonstrated and lived out. There is a deep, deep level of trust between staff and board, on "both sides of the water." AHI is fully distributed and virtual office, so there *must* be a high degree of trust and transparency in relationships. We intentionally stay very connected as a team with a high level of communication and accountability through daily staff prayer video calls, emails, a WhatsApp group chat, regular video meetings, weekly virtual lunch chats, and biannual in-person gatherings for planning and spiritual formation. The team is deeply committed to the mission, to prayer and discernment, and to personal and corporate formation. We are *highly collaborative* with a high value on verbal processing.

Some descriptors to AHI's team culture are as follows:

As Individuals we are:

- Spiritually formed
- Vulnerable, owning our own brokenness
- Always actively learning
- Valuing integrity in all things

As a Leadership Team we are:

- Collaborative
- Non-hierarchical with value equality
- Equipping and Empowering others
- Interdependent, valuing others

As an Organization we:

- Integrate wholism, valuing every part of every person
- Address root causes purposefully
- Take big leaps of deep faith
- Help well and equip others

Some values that drive and define our ethos are:

- The formation of ourselves as individuals and as a community is of paramount importance. We view ourselves as contemplative activists.
- We value female leadership and will not allow male leaders to overbear their sisters in the leadership of AHI.
- We affirm and ascribe to intentional diversity. We will strive for balanced leadership composition in gender, race, ethnicity, and ability levels on both the staff and Board.
- We will not engage in poverty porn, but will honor and protect the dignity of those we serve.
- We will help in ways that come alongside and work with others, and not in ways that make us the savior.
- We do not provide relief services for people with disabilities in any country. There are extreme examples when exceptions might be made, but those exceptions would be made with meticulous intention and Board approval.
- We are constantly growing and learning. We will make mistakes, but we will own those mistakes, repent of them, and continue to press ahead by the power of the Spirit.
- We lean into accountability as leaders and require accountability both to and from our partners.

CONTACT

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