



HOPE'S STORY: KENYA

We've not had many babies in Hope and Kindness. Around here, babies without mothers don't live for long - where there is sickness and poverty the resources for health and for life are scarce. Hope arrived at 8pm on the 6th of June, in the arms of Pesila, a lady who works here with us. Less than two hours earlier, just before sunset, Pesila had heard a noise from somewhere in the bush. The noise stopped and she couldn't see anything, but she was sure that it was a baby's cry so she asked God to help her find whatever was hidden. Off the path, hidden away from any road or any homes, was Hope. She was lying under a bush, completely naked, on the rough dirt ground. Pesila wrapped her in a shawl and went immediately to the local police station. Having given her account of these events they drove her and the baby, in the dark, to our gates and into our home.

We all imagined that this baby had been abandoned by a frightened, teenage school-girl (the number of teenage pregnancies, especially amongst girls who are themselves orphaned, is very great in Kenya – 10% of all the world's teenage pregnancies happen in Kenya.) However, an investigation over the following 24 hours revealed that Hope's mother was in fact a 39 yr old woman married to a 70-year-old man who was not Hope's father. The couple already had ten children and neighbours and relatives reported that there was a lot of acrimony and violence between the two and between them and their neighbours. On this Friday, the mother took a piki piki (motorbike taxi) to our nearest town to buy vegetables. On her return, not far from our home, she realised she was going into labour so sent the piki piki rider onto Kosele with her vegetables whilst she walked off to give birth. Later that day she was back in the local market selling her vegetables. Many did not realise what had happened and those that asked were told that her baby had been stillborn.

Pesila walked a different path that evening to chase off birds that were attacking her maize crop. The path she was on was narrower than the usual path she took. Hope had been lying on the dirt, completely alone for at least seven hours. We have hungry wild dogs and mongoose (rat like creatures with bodies half a metre long – excluding the tail) roaming around this land. It was the rainy season and the day before, at about 3 pm, the heavens had opened and we had torrential rain and storms for almost two hours. This day, Friday, the thunder rumbled but the rain didn't come and the sun shone. The name Hope needs no explanation, and her surname Achieng is simply the Luo name that says 'the sun was shining'. Someone tried to throw Hope away but God's face shone upon her. He was with her and in control of every circumstance that brought her to a place where she is loved and adored by God's family.

