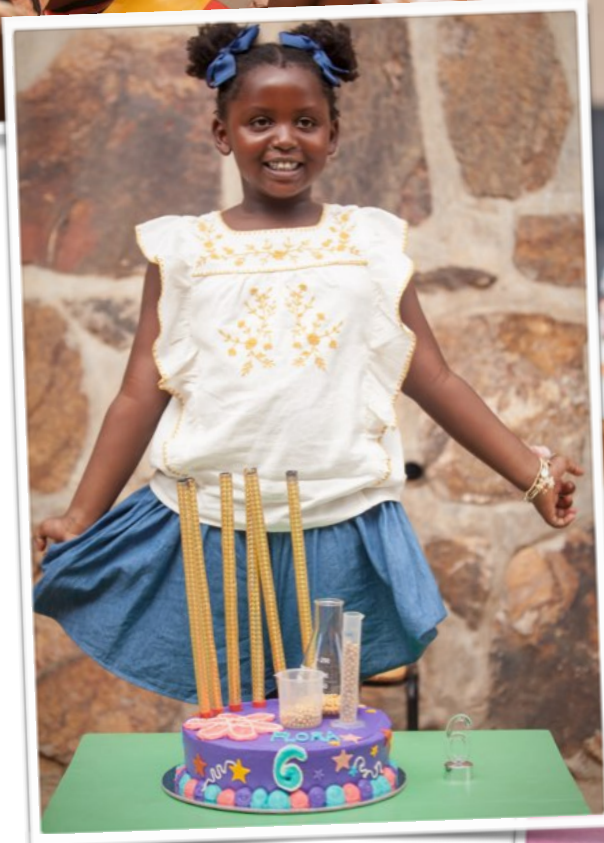
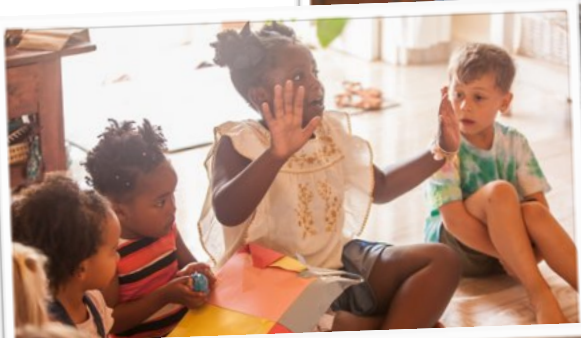


A Visa Update

Romans 5:4-5

Endurance produces character, and character produces hope. Now this hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.



She's 6!

And no - I can't believe it - how did we get to 6 and what has happened to those 6 years!

Just a couple of weeks ago, we celebrated Flora's 6th birthday science party and this coming weekend we remember 6 years since her sweet 'chocolate' Mumma left her here in Kigali, helpless and mother less. Little did we know then the plans He has for us, He knew I was here, for then a different reason, but when we stand up and say, Here I am send me - His path is always perfect no matter what twists and turns it has in it. Hindsight is a wonderful thing and the reason He got me here was to train nursery teachers, which of course for many years I did.

What I didn't know was the main reason I was uprooting my life to serve Him, was to in fact become a mother, to a sweet, innocent 19 day old baby girl, who has grown up into a smart, intelligent, sassy, extrovert, fun loving, faithful friend and half Aussie! And what a journey 6 years has been, so many joys, so many laughs, so many hugs and moments of learning, so many frustrations, so many tears, so many hard days, so many smiles behind a mask (literally these days), so many disappointments, so many decisions out of my control, so much bureaucracy, so much red tape.

And here we are.

Ten weeks ago it was suggested to us that we apply for a Visitors Visa to Australia, and that it would take 3 weeks. We submitted our application and now 8 weeks on we still have not heard a thing from Australian immigration and home affairs. We were desperately hoping to be in Sydney for Christmas - this past weekend we set up our Christmas tree and decorations re shifting our hopes and dreams and telling ourselves we are in Kigali for Christmas. Now with the new variant of Omicron and government authorities going into shut down until mid January, we will put off our hopes of a Visitors visa and submit an application for an adoption visa, which in the long run will be better as it will give Flora citizenship to Australia.

Are we disappointed - yes! Are we discouraged - no! We have so much to be thankful for, against all odds we have been able to obtain:

- A Rwandan adoption
- An inter country Hague Convention Adoption
- A Compliance Certificate
- A Rwandan Passport

We have learnt to be patient, tenacious, bold, strong, up at 2am for Skype calls, not to take no for an answer, prayerful, faithful to the core - we have learnt so much through this incredible journey and we wouldn't change a thing. Flora lost one Mother, and she is not about to lose another one due to documents and red tape - I will keep advocating on her behalf to have the same rights as most of you reading this. We have also learnt that an Australian passport is an absolute privilege - if you have one treasure it - you have access to the world - a Rwandan passport on the other hand, limits you and your ability to travel. Oh how unjust this world is.

We would love you to pray for:-

- Our Visitor Visa to be approved as well as a travel exemption.
- That Rwanda will not become a banned country for Australia's borders.
- One day with a Visa Flora will step onto Australian soil and be reunited with her Grandparents.
- For Flora's sweet little heart - as she processes the ups and downs of this roller coaster ride.
- For wisdom for me to know what to tell her and what to shield her from, to know when to sell up our life and when to wait.
- For me to keep my head in the game - especially at work when there is so much going on outside of work through papers and documents.
- More paperwork from Rwanda to be complete.

We give thanks for:-

- Flora's beautiful school teacher who supports her through her toughest of days in living out all this uncertainty.
- Flora's little group of friends we have been making some precious memories with together.
- My Boss and Director of the School are sooooo understanding and accommodating through all my ' we are leaving - oh no we are staying' moments and are here to support both Flora and I.
- A network of friends and faithful supporters both here, in Australia, as well as other places around the globe.
- Good relations with my Rwandan lawyer, my immigration lawyer in Sydney, as well as the Department of Community and Justice in Sydney.
- Patience and Perspective.

While we were so hoping to see many of you over Christmas, we just thought we needed to send you an explanation as to why we are not boarding a plane any time soon. That one little piece of paper that gives Flora access to Australia is our missing link - we keep waiting. We keep hoping. We keep praying. We invite you to join us in this prayer and we believe in the right time we will be in Sydney - while we don't understand right now when that timing will be we know it will be the perfect timing.

Thanks again for partnering with us, whether you are new to this journey or you have been travelling with us for a long time - we thank you.

Bless you,

Michele and Flora.

Proverbs 19:21 Many plans are in a mans heart, but the Lords plan will always prevail.