



## Hope For The Future Ministries: our Background



[www.hopeforthefuturetanzania.com](http://www.hopeforthefuturetanzania.com)

### **Our Story**

Sharmala Buell, founder and director of Hope for the Future, was born and raised in Sri Lanka. On a trip to Canada in 1983, she found herself unable to return to her homeland due to the outbreak of civil war. A trained Montessori teacher, she took a job teaching in the Canadian North. In the late 1990's she felt God calling her to the mission field in Africa. Over the next three years, through a set of circumstances only God could orchestrate, Sharmala was moved and equipped for the work God had prepared for her in Mbeya, Tanzania. Upon arrival in 2001, she was invited to visit the Remand Home for children. What she witnessed there ignited the vision of Hope for the Future Ministries.

Like many regions of Africa, the poverty stricken areas of Mbeya, Tanzania, are home to children experiencing life's biggest challenges. Often orphaned, usually co-existing in one room with several other siblings and kin, these children receive only one meal a day. The head of the household ekes out a living perhaps from a small plot nearby, selling a few vegetables, or possibly by making and selling sweets or the local pombe (homebrew). Alcoholism, prostitution and drug abuse are prevalent, as is AIDS.

Young girls are left at home to care for the younger children. The boys are left to their own devices, too often forsaking school for the chance to "find" food or "earn" money on the streets through stealing and gambling. If caught by the authorities, they are sent to a Remand Home where they sit and wait for their trial. If not, they easily fall into a life of crime. There are services available to help the girls and boys who present as "good" children, but for those who are labeled "bad", there are no avenues for help. They are regarded as Watukutu (scum of society).

In response to these circumstances, Sharmala founded Hope for the Future Ministries in 2002 with the following mandate:

To identify and address physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs of the children and youth who are affected by poverty and the fallout of HIV/AIDS in the city of Mbeya, Tanzania.