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WE  
WELCOME

## **A Refugee's Vision**

**Alenga Alukula, Guest Speaker  
WTAP Annual Community Breakfast 2020**

(transcript)

“My name, I’m Alenga and I am a refugee from Congo. I have been in United States since 2016.”

### **Tell us about your journey to America.**

“Actually it was a long journey because I fled from my country, Congo, since 1996. And we moved to Tanzania and at that time we lived in a refugee camp. Almost like it was 20 years I was like in a refugee camp in Tanzania. I didn’t know even I would be like resettled in the United States, but it happened in 2016 and I never know how it happened, but I think by God’s grace that is why I’m here.”

### **What challenges did you overcome upon arrival in Phoenix?**

“Good question. First of all, like it’s like perception. What I can say is schema. Since I was in the camp, I would try to have like a different picture of the United States and at that time I knew like when you came to the United States, it’s a place where life is easy. You’re going to enjoy and you’re going to become rich people, but when I came here the first challenge: I didn’t meet my expectation. Now that was the first challenge. Second challenge is language barrier. You know when I came here I was not able even to speak English and even someone was interested to help me because of my having a shortage of English. I was not even able to communicate. That was another challenge. Another challenge: knowing where I can get other resources because I knew only the office where I can go where my case worker and he came to pick me up to go, but I didn’t know other places where I can go and find resources which I can use and to help me and my family.”

### **You often talk about “vision.” What do you mean by that?**

“Right. When I say vision, to me I say like it’s knowing your why. When I’m saying knowing your why, it’s like having discipline in your life. Vision is your roadmap. I know everyone has like his own desire of life and to me when I’m saying vision, it’s like I’m planning to reach somewhere and when you are planning to reach somewhere at least you have to know where are you going because if you don’t know where you are going, you end up going everywhere. So, you end up like losing your life. When you have vision, you have discipline of achieving everything. And in another aspect to me, my vision, because I know like I grown up in an area where people are like living an oppressed life. So, most of my vision is at least to use my skills and knowledge to help other people, at least to help people like those people who are hopeless, to give them hope. Those people who are poor. At least to help them at least to give them skills to become self sufficient.”

### **Tell us about FC Congo Arizona and why you formed this team.**

“Thank you for that question. FC Congo is like a soccer team and I was at home when I’ve seen like in Arizona there are a lot of like young refugees from Congo and that is not only from Congo, is from other country. And my plan, I’ve seen like when I was trying to organize that team, I’ve seen a lot of young people they end up like going to jail or end up like doing

something which is against the regulation of this country. But, I saw like meeting other people or bringing them together can prevent them from like doing some bad stuff. So, by knowing that, I know my community loves soccer and I have talented people in my community. Those young people, they are good at playing. Now, we get like a team, we are more than like sixteen people who are able to play soccer and a lot of people who have talent of like playing soccer. But, that is not like our target. Our target is like to bring the community together. To bring the community together to know where they can get all the resources. Not only playing soccer, but also they can get scholarship. They can know they got like Welcome to America to get the bikes. They can get furnitures. They can go to PCs for Refugees to get like some computer for student. They can know where to learn English. That is our... we gather this team in order to help the community to become self sufficient.”

**Is there anything else you would like to share?**

“Most of all, I think like what I can say, people in this world where we are living right now... people will always remember how you make them feel. People will not remember how you give them or what you give them and I want to make my audience to know that Welcome to America is doing like a great job helping the refugees at least because when they are doing like act of... I'm telling like they are doing like an act of kindness, it's helping those people. Welcome to America is like this organization, I like the work is doing to the refugees and immigrants. You know refugees how hopeless and when you come to other people who are hopeless at least you give them hope. That is like a light to them. I can say that is light of love because when you are sharing some stuff for those people who doesn't have, at least you make them confidence and you tell them you care for them. So, I want to let my audience know Welcome to America is doing a good job and whenever you have like something to donate or to give, you can give like money and something, I can let my audience see come to Welcome to America just think about what is they're doing because they're adding value to the community. It's not like everyone wants to help, but by helping you are teaching other people to know how to help. So, to end up, I want to thank Welcome to America and I want to let my audience know Welcome to America is a good place and let you know this place help other people who are hopeless.”