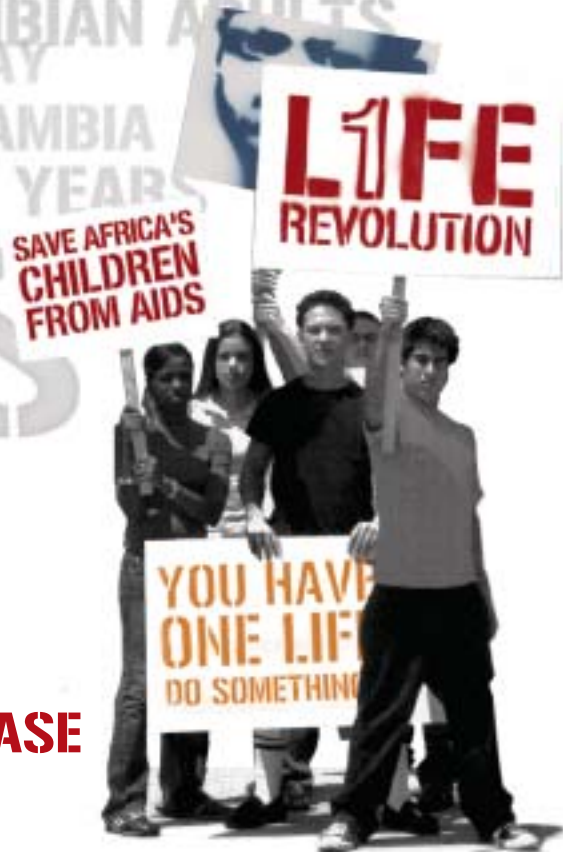


WorldVision

SUMMER 2004

ARMENIA LAND OF SECOND CHANCES

650,000 CHILDREN IN ZAMBIA
ARE ORPHANS BECAUSE OF AIDS.
AIDS KILLS 100 ZAMBIAN ADULTS
EVERY DAY
LIFE EXPECTANCY IN ZAMBIA
HAS PLUNGED TO 35 YEARS
BECAUSE OF
AIDS



DEADLIER THAN HEART DISEASE AND CANCER COMBINED.

AIDS is the greatest humanitarian crisis of our time. And it's killing Africa.

As governments worldwide struggle to meet this emergency, American youth are taking matters into their own hands. Through One Life Revolution, they are coming alongside thousands of widows, orphans, and vulnerable children in Zambia, one of the African countries where AIDS is hitting hardest.

With One Life Revolution, people raise money to

directly benefit those affected by AIDS. The One Life Revolution catalog lets you choose exactly how you want to help, with options ranging from blankets and health care provisions to new schools and homes.

Call us to learn how you can get involved. And if you know a young person or youth pastor, encourage them to find out about One Life Revolution.

YOU HAVE ONE LIFE. DO SOMETHING.

Go to www.oneliferevolution.org or call 1.866.952.4453 today.



WWW.ONELIFEREVOLUTION.ORG

One Life Revolution is a partnership project between World Vision and Youth Specialties.

WorldVision

VOLUME 7, NUMBER 4

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» ON THE COVER

World Vision has been active in Armenia since 1988, focusing on improving children's lives.

Photograph by Jon Warren

World Vision, a free quarterly publication, affirms people responding to God's call to care for the poor by providing information, inspiration, and opportunities for action, linking them with children and families in nearly 100 countries where World Vision ministers. In an effort to be careful stewards of our resources, this publication costs less than 35 cents a copy to print and mail.

We welcome your comments and/or address changes. Send them to: The Editor, World Vision magazine, P.O. Box 9716, Federal Way, WA 98063-9716 or e-mail us: wvmagazine@worldvision.org.

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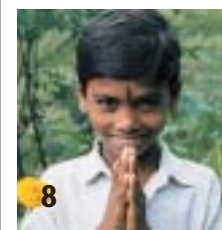
For employment opportunities at World Vision, visit our Web site at www.worldvision.org

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Find out how you can get involved with World Vision

We'd love to share more information with you about our programs and about partnering with World Vision to care for the poor. Check the boxes on the form below, and return it in the envelope provided between pages 16 and 17. For more information, call (866) 952-4453, or visit www.worldvision.org.

Share World Vision with your family

- 1 FAMILY SPONSORSHIP** This sponsorship program allows you to break the cycle of poverty by sponsoring an entire family in Ghana, Romania, Sri Lanka, or El Salvador.
- 2 WORLD VISION GIFT CATALOG** On behalf of your loved ones, give unique gifts such as goats, bicycles, or medical supplies to those in need.

Bring World Vision to your church

- 3 A CHILD IS WAITING** Show your church family how they can make a difference through child sponsorship.
- 4 30 HOUR FAMINE** Get your youth group or school involved in the fight against world hunger by participating in World Vision's nationwide annual famine event. www.30hourfamine.org

- 5 LOVE LOAF** Help your congregation learn more about world poverty as they collect offerings for your church and World Vision.
- 6 REACHING OUT TO THE POOR** A World Vision staff person will call you with ways World Vision can help your church reach out to the poor.
- 7 ONE LIFE REVOLUTION** Give your youth group a tangible way to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic by providing practical, life-sustaining items through this catalog.

Expand your world vision

- 8 E-MAIL UPDATES** Receive the latest news on World Vision's work throughout the world. *Must provide e-mail address to receive these updates.*
- 9 WOMEN OF VISION** Join a volunteer ministry that serves the poor, learning from and advocating for women in developing countries. www.womenofvision.org

- 10 WORLD VISION'S PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES** Find out what World Vision is doing for U.S. children through tutoring programs, inner-city youth initiatives, and other domestic ministries.
- 11 WORLD VISION ADVOCACY** Learn how to be an advocate for the poor and those in need around the world. Go to www.worldvision.org/globalissues.

Show World Vision to your company

- 12 MATCHING GIFTS** Learn how your employer may match your contribution to World Vision.
- 13 CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS** Your company can benefit by supporting World Vision.

Share your resources with World Vision

- 14 GIFT PLANNING** Establish a legacy of hope by including World Vision in your will or learn about other estate-planning options.
- 15 KEY CONTRIBUTORS** Donate your car, boat, real estate, or recreational vehicle to World Vision and receive a tax deduction for your contribution.
- 16 SCHOOLTOOLS** Practical ways your group can provide essential school supplies to children around the world.

Volunteer through World Vision

- 17 ARTIST ASSOCIATES** Help Christian artists promote child sponsorship by volunteering at a local concert.

Know World Vision's reason for hope

- 18 WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST** Simple steps to a personal and lifelong relationship with Jesus Christ.

From the President

A Drop in the Bucket?

GLOBAL POVERTY STATISTICS CAN BE overwhelming, even to those of us at World Vision who have dedicated our lives to helping. Almost 3 billion people live on less than \$2 a day; 1.5 billion have no health care; more than 1 billion don't have clean water to drink; and 790 million are chronically hungry and malnourished. The United Nations says that some 29,000 children die every single day—deaths largely related to poverty.

In light of these staggering statistics, I am frequently asked, "What can one person possibly do to tackle global poverty? Anything I do will just be one small drop in a very large bucket."

I have an answer for people who feel that way. But first I'll share a story about a boy I met last year in Myanmar (formerly Burma).

Tun Tun was 14 when I met him, though he looked to be about 7. He was in a homemade wheelchair cobbled together from bicycle parts. I was traveling in Myanmar with some World Vision donors, and our staff had arranged for kids from our street-children program to perform songs and native dances for us.

It was a marvelous evening as we witnessed how World Vision had taken in homeless children and taught them to perform at a level that any group of American school children would be proud of.

"Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me." —Mark 9:37

Toward the end, this little boy in the wheelchair was pushed onto the stage, where he proceeded, with his winning smile, to sing like a songbird.

Afterward we met Tun Tun and heard his amazing story. Born with a deformity of the spine resulting in an open cavity, paralysis, and a host of other problems, this little boy also had been mistreated by his parents. His inability to walk except by pulling himself along on his hands, plus his incontinence, infections, and resulting odor, were too much for his family. He was eventually abandoned to the streets.

Tun Tun ended up living at the train station, begging for money to survive. World Vision learned of his plight from other street children who took pity on him and insisted that he must be helped.

World Vision brought the boy to our street children's home and began to help him. Two spinal surgeries and two years later, Tun Tun no longer has abscesses on his spine. He has regained control of his bowels and is able to move his legs. With therapy, we hope that he will walk someday.



For children like Tun Tun (in hammock), a little help makes a world of difference.

And he sings like a songbird because he actually has something to sing about. This boy, who was truly a "throwaway" child, is not a lost cause—not a statistic.

He is precious in God's sight.

So to those who wonder if your efforts are merely a small drop in a very large bucket, I say, "Think again!" You are seeing the problem the wrong way. Instead of one large bucket, imagine thousands of tiny little buckets that can each be filled

to overflowing with just one drop.

Then the question is turned around. Instead of asking if a small drop can make a difference in filling a large bucket, the question becomes: "How many buckets can I fill? How many will I take?"

Tun Tun's little bucket is filled to overflowing. In this issue you will read about other special-needs children who might be considered "the least of these" (see page 22). My prayer is that you will see them as God sees them: tiny buckets waiting to be filled. ■

WORLD VISION READER SERVICES

Clip and return in envelope between pages 16 and 17.

Please tell me how I can:

Share World Vision with my family

- 1 2

Bring World Vision to my church

- 3 4 5
 6 7

Expand my world vision

- 8 9 10
 11

Show World Vision to my company

- 12 13

Share my resources with World Vision

- 14 15 16

Volunteer through World Vision

- 17

Know World Vision's reason for hope

- 18

FIRST NAME _____ LAST NAME _____

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News From the Field



DAVE ROBINSON/WORLD VISION

Iran > World Vision provided a safe haven for more than 1,200 children affected by the December 2003 earthquake in Bam. Working with the government, Red Crescent partners, and local organizations, World Vision transformed tents in the quake zone into "Child-Friendly Spaces" equipped with toys and books and staffed by caring adults. Children ages 2 to 12 could find solace there from the rubble-strewn environment outside. Carol Toms, World Vision's child-protection officer, said that the Child-Friendly Spaces were part of World Vision's effort to support children's return to normalcy after the earthquake. "It has been so encouraging to see the children taking part in activities and enjoying themselves," she said.

Cambodia > The U.S. ambassador praised World Vision Cambodia for its work to protect children from abuse by tourists. World Vision Cambodia has joined with the U.S. State Department, the Cambodian government, Australian police, and other organizations to combat child sex tourism and to bring sex offenders to justice. "You are helping us in our efforts to prevent U.S. citizens from preying on children," said Ambassador Charles Ray.

World Vision focuses on Iranian children's emotional well-being after the earthquake.

Mozambique > Health officials blame poor sanitation for a cholera outbreak that has killed nearly 90 people. The more than 14,000 cases reported since December 2003 have greatly surpassed the national number of cholera sufferers for all of last year. As the disease swept through six of the country's 10 provinces in February, World Vision responded by assisting health committees in affected areas and providing chlorine for water purification. Cholera spreads through overcrowded, poor neighborhoods where hygiene conditions are hampered by limited access to potable water, poorly maintained drainage systems, and inefficient refuse collection.



Brazil

MARCO DIAS/WORLD VISION

FAST FACT In Nairobi, Kenya's capital, 60 percent of the population lives in slums and squatter settlements crowded onto only 5 percent of the land. (UN-Habitat)



Mexico

DAVID MUÑOZ/WORLD VISION

Mexico > Handcrafted candles made by women in a World Vision microenterprise project were a hit at a recent international craft fair in Mexico. World Vision helped a group of six entrepreneurs—most of them single mothers—exhibit the candles, made of orange peel and natural flowers, and sell more than 120 of them. The customers were impressed by the design, says World Vision's Marisol Arangutia. "When we mentioned that the candles were made by a group of women in a marginalized community, their surprise was greater," she adds. The best buyer was a handcraft export organization, which ordered 200 candles to distribute to stores as a way to support impoverished communities.

Brazil > Heavy rain and mudslides swept through northeastern states in February, killing 91 people and forcing 117,000 from their homes. Although flooding hampered travel in some areas, World Vision staff quickly assessed needs and distributed drinking water, food, chlorine, soap, blankets, medicines, and other emergency supplies to more than 500 families. Later, they restored or rebuilt 250 houses.



Afghanistan

WORLD VISION AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan > Gray domes dotting the countryside in northwestern Badghis province signal hope for clean water. World Vision designed these water-collection devices, called *dabas*, to catch and store rainwater. When full, each *daba* supplies enough water to last a family for nine months. The collected water is a clear improvement over the region's salty groundwater, which residents say causes diarrhea and kidney problems. World Vision is building hundreds of *dabas* in villages throughout Badghis. ■

World Vision engineer Dieudonne Kasonga (fourth from right, in white) leads Afghans in building a *daba* for clean water.

fyi *Five years of war have had a serious impact on children in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Two out of five Congolese children die during infancy. Up to 50 percent of children younger than 5 suffer from chronic malnutrition. In Kolwezi, a former mining town with dramatic hunger rates, World Vision works with UNICEF and the World Food Programme to operate six feeding centers targeting mothers and children.*

Hope Update

Going to the Children > Compassion for HIV/AIDS-affected children is increasing in the United States. Last year, American donors assisted 156,677 children through HopeChild sponsorship in nine countries devastated by HIV/AIDS.

One touching response to Africa's HIV/AIDS crisis came from a teen in Everett, Wash., with struggles of her own. Michelle Broeckling, 19, was born with Fetal Alcohol Effects and has coped with developmental difficulties all her life. Adopted into a loving home at age 6, she has thrived, becoming a Special Olympics champion in several sports.

When Michelle's church, Edmonds United Methodist, conducted a project around the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30), the high-school senior signed up to multiply \$100—and she knew just where the profits should go. The Broecklings have sponsored Odong, a boy in Uganda, through World Vision for nine years. "World Vision sent us a letter about HIV/AIDS," Michelle says. "It was about how there was HIV in [Odong's] country."

With her parents' help, Michelle designed colorful bookmarks on her computer, inscribed with messages such as "God is all around us" and "Jesus loves me." Then she went on the Internet to research AIDS in Africa on World Vision's site and created a poster-board display. At a church bazaar, she set up the board with her bookmarks in front of it, available for a donation.

"The thing that really sold it," her father, Hank, says proudly, "was that she stood there by this board the whole time, and nobody went by her without her saying, 'Hey, do you know what's happening in Africa with AIDS?'"

Michelle's pitch worked so well that she raised \$360 for World Vision's HIV/AIDS programs. She isn't surprised by the response. "People are going to give," she says, "if you're really nice and you let them know the money is going to children." ■

Hank, Michelle, and Joan Broeckling



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

Glad You Asked

How can I share sponsorship with my church?



CALEB MPANEI/WORLD VISION

Child sponsorship helps meet the very needs that afflict children worldwide: hunger, disease, and lack of education.

Sponsorship is a special way to serve God through caring for children. As Ephesians 2:10 says, "We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works." Sponsors value this way to carry out God's blessings—and understandably, they want to share the experience with church friends who may not have heard about child sponsorship.

Who better than sponsors can share the need—the reality that 29,000 children die every day of preventable, poverty-related causes—as well as the joy of changing a child's life?

Sponsors can also speak to the transformation that happens in their

own lives when they connect with a child in a poor community.

World Vision offers an easy way to introduce sponsorship to your church. Through a new program called A Child Is Waiting, you can help find sponsors for thousands of children. You simply share from your heart. World Vision will do the rest—providing you and your church leader with materials such as videos, brochures, and bulletin inserts.

"I have long believed that child sponsorship is the most effective and direct means for individuals to be a part of healing this hurting world," says Karen French, who presented sponsorship at Laguna (Calif.) Presbyterian Church. "I also believe that churches can be the major avenue to achieve both hope for the world's poor children and increased fellowship."

John Crosby, pastor of Christ Presbyterian Church in Edina, Minn., says that an initial 100 child sponsors among the congregation "served as a leaven for the next hundred and the next hundred." He adds, "Our stewardship in the area of missions has just skyrocketed."

World Vision recommends presenting A Child Is Waiting during the first weekend in June, but you can do your event whenever it's convenient for you and your church. To get started, call toll-free (866) 952-4453, or go online to www.worldvision.org/volunteer.

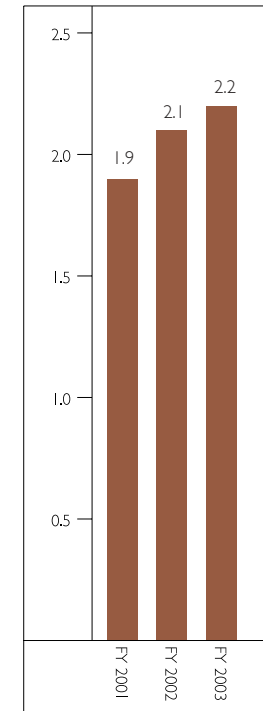
» FAST FACT From only 3 million in AD 1500, the number of evangelical Christians has grown to 648 million worldwide, with 54 percent non-Caucasian. (*World Christian Trends*, David Barrett and Todd Johnson)

Thanks to You

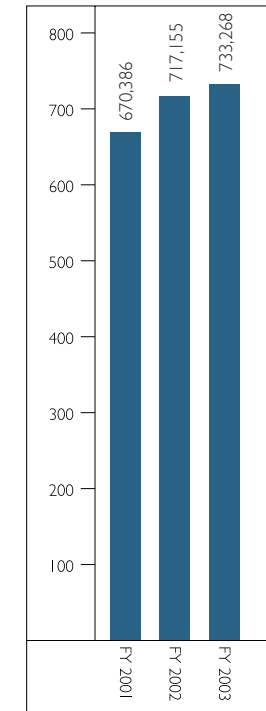
Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.—1 Corinthians 4:2

God continues to bless World Vision. In 2003, through your gifts and faithfulness, we reached millions of people. Last year we were blessed with record-breaking donations and devoted more funds than ever to programs directly benefiting children.

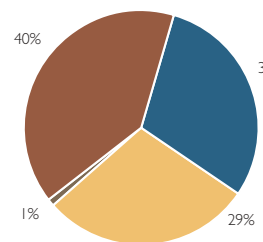
children benefiting from sponsorship worldwide (in millions)



children helped by U.S. sponsors



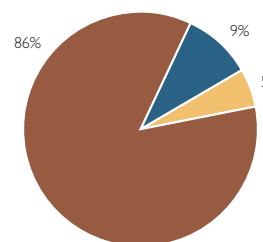
breakdown of 2003 revenue sources



revenue sources (in millions)

Source	2002	2003
contributions	\$265	\$278
gifts-in-kind	\$172	\$204
food commodities and cash grants	\$111	\$198
other income	\$5	\$6
Total	\$553	\$686

breakdown of 2003 expenses



expenses (in millions)

Category	2002	2003
programs	\$454	\$553
fund raising	\$56	\$63
management & general	\$32	\$33
Total	\$542	\$649

The difference between revenue and expenses in fiscal 2003 primarily reflects donated products received but not yet distributed at year end.

In the Media

God has favorites—and they may not be whom you think.

> Rick Warren was dubbed "America's most influential pastor" by Christianity Today magazine, with good reason: He pastors the fastest-growing church in America (Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif.), and his book *The Purpose Driven Life* has sold more than 10 million copies.



But he's clear that worldly success means little to God.

"If you read the Scriptures with total integrity," Rick explains, "you have to come to one conclusion: God has favorites. And God's favorites are the poor. Over and over and over again he says, 'If you

bless the poor, I will bless you. If you don't care about the poor, a curse on you.'"

To Rick, caring means acting—by moving outside his comfort zone. "It is not my nature to hang out with people not like me," he says, "but it is the Christ-like thing to do."

Even as his book tops the New York Times Best-Seller List, Rick refuses to upgrade his lifestyle, instead choosing to give money away.

Rick shared these insights with Peggy Wehmeyer



in an interview for World Vision Report, a radio newsmagazine airing on Christian stations across the country. To hear the full interview, learn more about World Vision Report, or find out where it is being aired in your city, please visit the Web site at www.worldvisionradio.org.

➔ In the Spotlight



NIGEL MARSH/WORLD VISION



ROBERT MICHEL/WORLD VISION

Cyrus Phiri (inset) inspired people of many races and ages to participate in AIDS-awareness events such as World Vision's AIDS Cycle Relay.

Going the Distance > To witness AIDS close-up—to watch loved ones languish and die—is enough to make a man run away. That's what Cyrus Phiri did. Only he did it *on behalf* of his relatives and fellow Zambians suffering with the disease.

In 1989, when most of sub-Saharan Africa had yet to wake up to the crisis in the making, Cyrus fearlessly blazed a 900-mile trail for AIDS prevention and awareness with a marathon across Zambia. Then he went on to raise national alarm bells with other events, hoping to save lives.

But this 43-year-old former teacher, Baptist pastor, and World Vision worker couldn't save his own. Behind his public battle with AIDS was a private one he lost in December 2003.

Cyrus took up running out of necessity. As a student, he daily ran the 30-mile distance to school because he couldn't afford bus fare. He arrived with blistered feet, but always on time for lessons.

Later, running again served a purpose when he hit on the idea of an AIDS-awareness run—his own response to the loss of many close friends and relatives. The secondary-school teacher targeted children with his messages about preventing AIDS' spread.

"This may not sound like much of an achievement, but it certainly was," says Robert Michel, Cyrus' friend and the World Vision communications director for southern Africa. "Anything related to sexuality is not something we speak about openly in Africa. Cyrus broke the silence."

It took Cyrus 10 days to run from Livingstone in the south to Kitwe

in the north, then back to Zambia's capital, Lusaka, finishing on Dec. 1, 1989—World AIDS Day. Afterward, he traveled around the country, educating children on HIV/AIDS on behalf of the World Health Organization.

A graduate of Baptist Theological Seminary in Lusaka, Cyrus joined World Vision Zambia in 1994 as a child sponsorship coordinator. The AIDS pandemic continued to loom large in his country—and his own family. He cared for his ailing younger sister, Phales (all six of his siblings eventually contracted HIV), and when she died in 1996, Cyrus' response to the pain and loss was, once again, to run.

This nearly 500-mile marathon, from Lusaka to Zambia's Copperbelt, called attention to HIV/AIDS among truck drivers, a major mode of the disease's transmission.

Cyrus continued to go the distance, but next he used a bicycle. His marathons inspired World Vision in 2001 to start the AIDS Cycle Relay across several southern African countries, with participants raising awareness of the pandemic along the route.

The annual events attracted cyclists from Africa and around the world and enjoyed the support of government leaders and celebrities. Cyrus, somewhat of a celebrity himself, also joined in.

Although always pictured smiling and vibrant, Cyrus deeply felt the toll of AIDS in Zambia. Robert Michel remembers walking with him past the largest cemetery in Lusaka, Leopard's Hill (where Cyrus has been laid to rest). Many of the freshly dug graves were for people younger than 40. "That's when I first saw tears in his eyes," Robert says, "tears of despair, but also tears of disappointment—the feeling of being left alone."

"Most of the people here are victims of HIV/AIDS," Cyrus told Robert that day. "Some

could still be alive had they received help in time."

By then, Cyrus' own time had almost run out. He fell ill while in New Zealand to promote another AIDS event for World Vision. He also had been

Although always pictured smiling and vibrant, Cyrus deeply felt the toll of AIDS in Zambia.

working as a counselor for a World Vision Zambia project called Sanduka—meaning "change"—that rehabilitates former sex workers. He leaves behind his wife, Brenda, and three children.

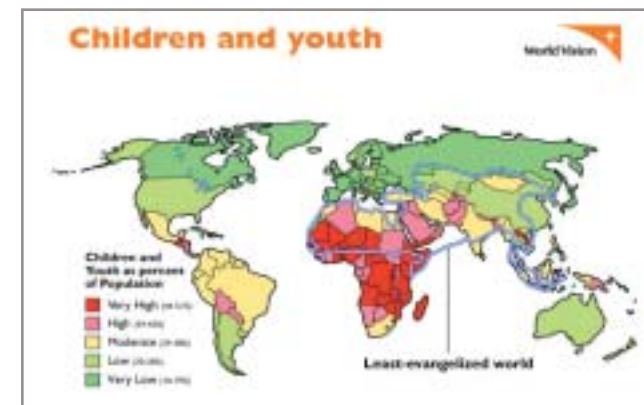
Cyrus Phiri will be remembered for his passion and courage in the face of a national and global threat. His many friends at World Vision will continue his fight. ■

—Jane Sutton-Redner

➔ Context for Christians

While western populations are graying, global age trends are going in the opposite direction, reports Bryant L. Myers in his new book, *Exploring World Mission*. One-third of the world's population is younger than 15—and 85 percent of these young people live in the developing world. As many people tend to make faith decisions before age 20, this demographic shift presents a challenge to the Christian church: how to effectively communicate the gospel to the global youth culture.

Exploring World Mission draws from the most current data available to present a meaningful picture of Christian mission in today's world. Using bold graphics to analyze the latest trends in population, economics, politics, and religion, Myers—a vice president of World Vision International—interprets the Church's greatest challenges as its greatest opportunity to influence the world with Jesus' compassion.



Exploring World Mission, available in book form and a CD PowerPoint® presentation, can be ordered online at www.worldvisionresources.com or by calling toll free (800) 777-7752.

➔ Service Awards

Winners of a Higher Prize > Co-recipients of the 2003 Robert W. Pierce Award for Christian Service are a nun serving Armenia's poorest children and a peacemaking pastor in Sri Lanka.

Born in Syria and educated in the United States, **Sister Arousiag Sajonian** moved to Armenia to care for vulnerable children after the devastating 1988 earthquake. She helped establish the Boghossian Educational Center in Gyumri, providing physical care, educational programs, and Christian instruction.

To date, more than 6,000 children—many orphaned, abandoned, or neglected—have benefited.

"The children have been very deeply bruised," Sister Arousiag says, "and we are trying to give them back that self-worth that they are loved. I think they will be able to love in return."

An outspoken champion for children, Sister Arousiag has drawn people from across the globe to volunteer at the Boghossian center. (See related story about Armenia on page 23.)

In a war-torn area of Sri Lanka, the **Rev. Roshan Mahesan** heeds God's call to stay and serve his people—even though his entire family has moved away. Both the government and the LTTE "Tamil Tiger" rebels work with the Rev. Mahesan and consider him a man of peace. He has negotiated with both sides to release innocent people wrongly arrested.

The Rev. Mahesan established eight churches in Sri Lanka, five in places controlled by the rebels. He provides special care for youth caught up or forced into the fighting—sharing the good news of God's love and meeting medical needs.

Dedicated servants like Sister Arousiag and the Rev. Mahesan have been honored through the Pierce award since 1980. The Pierce family established it two years after the death of World Vision's founder, to continue his legacy of supporting unrecognized, faithful Christian workers around the world. ■



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

➔ U.S. Scene

Home Improvements

Two compassionate, driven women are changing Chicago's poor areas, one home at a time.

by Cassandra Wyssbrod

"My work is about touching the people closest to me," says Josephine LoGalbo. "Helping those around me—that is what I like to do." For Josephine and her friend Mary Beth Smith, that involves providing high-quality housing to low-income families on Chicago's West Side.

Josephine grew up in these neighborhoods. Her marriage to a U.S. State Department employee then took her around the world. In India, she helped the U.S. government renovate housing for American diplomats. When she returned to Chicago and saw houses worse than what she'd seen in developing countries, Josephine felt she had to do something.

Mary Beth, a mother, pastor's wife, and retired teacher, also wanted to make a difference. Her way to exhibit the character of Christ is to roll up her sleeves and rehabilitate decaying buildings. The two 50-something women had faith and a sense of mission in common. They teamed up to embark on new careers in home renovation—gutting properties down to the brick.

When the pair first set out to work in the low-income housing sector, government bureaucrats warned them against pouring money into high-poverty areas. They didn't listen. Rebuilding homes for struggling families seemed the right thing to do.

While starting their first project, the women found The Storehouse of World Vision. Established in 1995, The Storehouse distributes donated building-supply materials to community organizations, churches, housing organizations, and those working to improve the quality of low-income housing. The Storehouse operates a 40,000-square-foot distribution center on Chicago's West Side.



"We could not do this work without The Storehouse," Mary Beth says. High-quality materials enable them to renovate homes with fixtures, toilets, and windows that are not only durable but often beautifully designed—Moen or Grohe faucets, for example. The women take gallons of paint from The Storehouse and mix it together to create rich and unique colors. They visit The Storehouse several times a week to be sure they don't miss a useful item.

In February 2003, when Josephine and Mary Beth finished one apartment, they traveled downtown to the resource room of the Chicago Housing Choice Voucher Program (CHAC, formerly Section 8) to post the unit in the property listings. There they met Victoria, 24, who was in desperate need of a stable home. Victoria suffers from an emotional disorder and has no support from family members. Her previous apartment was cold, with leaking faucets and torn-up furniture.

Josephine and Mary Beth were



immediately drawn to Victoria. They made an appointment with her to see the apartment the next day. Victoria walked in the cold to see it. It was just right.

There's a waiting list for homes for eligible, low-income recipients, according to Geraldine Hall, Victoria's CHAC housing counselor. Mary and Josephine, along with many other Storehouse members, fill a critical need.

When Geraldine met Josephine and Mary Beth, she thought they were too good to be true. "I thought they could not be real," she says. "Anyone who is this nice and patient and [who] creates such high-quality units has a big heart."

Josephine and Mary Beth have done more than provide a safe home for Victoria. They bring her to the doctor; they make sure she has food in her refrigerator so that she can take the medicine she needs. They also teach her to be self-sufficient—often being tough and direct with her. Victoria doesn't complain. "They are like mothers," she says with a warm smile.

Change is underway on Kenneth Street, where Victoria lives. Josephine and Mary Beth have renovated another home there, for a grandmother and her six grandchildren. "At first we were scared when we started our work on Kenneth Street," Josephine says. Now when they walk the street, they see people picking up trash, planting flowers, and apologizing if their property doesn't look just right.

Josephine and Mary Beth fulfill their mission one family at a time, block by block—touching those closest to them. ■

—Cassandra Wyssbrod is a marketing specialist for World Vision in Chicago.

The Storehouse's mission is not confined to large cities such as Chicago. Currently, 10 storehouses are in place across the United States, and plans for more are in the works. The Storehouse gives motivated individuals and nonprofits the materials they could not otherwise afford, to help transform people's lives.

» **FAST FACT** Of the 876 million people worldwide who cannot read or write, 66 percent are women. (United Nations Human Development Report, 2003)

➔ Join the Revolution

Fight HIV/AIDS > Thousands of people have begun a fight that can literally save an entire generation. They're going up against a killer the likes of which the world has never seen: AIDS. Tired of waiting, they're acting now, reaching out to the innocent victims—vulnerable children and widows—with help and hope.

One Life Revolution, a partnership project between World Vision and Youth Specialties, is geared to high-school and college-age students or to anyone looking for a practical, people-centered movement against AIDS. When you join this revolution, you make a commitment to stop the suffering of another—an orphan or widow in Zambia—by providing useful, life-sustaining items from One Life Revolution's catalog. You decide how to spend the money you raise to care for those affected by AIDS.

Groups and individuals across the United States are responding to this call to action, contributing more than \$700,000 to date. One high school in Illinois, Wheaton Academy, raised \$76,000—buying one of everything in the catalog (including a schoolhouse) to help children in a Zambian village.

Christian recording artist Margaret Becker heard about One Life Revolution last summer. She purchased a house for a Zambian family and enough food to feed a child for a year. "It's the easiest, most effective way to change someone's life," Margaret says. "A one-stop life change."

A crisis like AIDS requires nothing less than a revolution. For more information on One Life Revolution, call toll free (866)952-4453 or go to www.oneliferevolution.org. ■



Josephine (left) and Mary Beth (right) "are like mothers" to Victoria (center), in addition to improving her home. Above right: the next home the women will renovate for a low-income resident.



S E C O N D C H A N C E S I N T H E L A N D O F N O A H

A R M E N I A

To Armenians, Mount Ararat is everything:

a holy mountain and a place of rebirth. Armenian children learn and treasure the story of Noah's ark landing on Mount Ararat and of God's mountaintop covenant with humanity.

Today, Armenia needs a new promise—relief from years lived in desperation after communism and from a devastating earthquake. In the shadow of Mount Ararat, the people in the land of Noah need a second chance.

Mount Ararat, with monastery Khor Virap in the foreground. At Khor Virap, an Armenian king threw an influential Christian leader into a pit. Upon his release, Armenia became the world's first Christian nation.

After disasters—both natural and manmade—left this Armenian city in shambles, its people needed a promise.

By Kari Costanza
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JON WARREN



Unfinished buildings and cranes left behind after the 1988 earthquake loom over the streets of Gyumri. Part of the city's recovery plan involves caring for its seniors (top left), often the most economically devastated.

keeping promises in Gyumri

Driving is perilous in Gyumri. The streets are as scarred as the city they crisscross. Traffic moves like a demolition derby, with drivers swerving back and forth to avoid potholes.

More evidence of the plight of Armenia's second-largest city lies beyond the heaps of uncollected garbage lining the streets. Massive, dilapidated, Soviet-style apartment buildings—unfinished after a devastating 1988 earthquake—stand empty and windowless. Too dangerous to dismantle, too decrepit to inhabit, they're useful only to the desperate men who sneak in, steal, and then sell the exposed rebar. When communism collapsed two years later, the Soviets left this city half-repaired, turning off the gas heat as if flipping off a light switch when leaving an empty room.

Along the road to Gyumri, huge, empty, Soviet textile and glass factories, their windows shattered, serve as concrete reminders of life under communism. Armenians remember wistfully the years before 1990. Forgetting what they didn't have then, they focus on what they don't have now.

During the communist era, Armenia had thrived as one of the leading republics in science and technology. But when the Berlin Wall fell, Armenia was unable to get back on its feet. "Originally there was a lot of hope for a brighter future," says British-born David Thomson, national director of World Vision Armenia. "But the country, instead of entering a time of amazing freedom, has entered a difficult period of transition."

FROM COMMUNISM TO CATASTROPHE

It's not that the hardworking, well-educated people of Armenia haven't tried. But there have been too many setbacks. The 1988 earthquake crushed homes and hopes, killing 25,000 and leaving 50,000 without shelter. In one neighborhood in Gyumri, 70 percent of the families have at least one disabled family member. At the same time, Armenia began a war with neighboring Azerbaijan over a disputed territory, losing 25,000 more lives.

Today, more than 50 percent of Armenia's population lives in abject poverty—on less than a dollar a day. There is a poverty of spirit as well. The country recently ranked second-to-last in a

happiness study of 65 countries, conducted by World Values Survey—a two-decade-long research project by international social scientists who ask people their views on work, health, family, religion, morals, and other topics.

"They are bitter. You can understand why," says Shaghik Mahrokian, 34, who directs World Vision's work in Gyumri. Shaghik (shag-EEK) considers Gyumri one of the poorest places in the country, with an estimated 85-percent unemployment rate. What jobs there are, pay very little. "It's not a real community," she says of Gyumri's dislocated, disconnected, post-earthquake, post-communist existence.

After the earthquake, aid organizations rushed in with food, medicine, and clothing—important, lifesaving relief. Shipping containers were brought in for people to occupy temporarily. New apartments began to go up. But short-term hope only goes so far. Fifteen years later, many of those apartments will never be finished, and the temporary shipping containers have become permanent homes—10x-by-30-foot claustrophobic closets rife with mildew and melancholy.

Gyumri needed a promise—help that would come, and stay.

PROMISES KEPT

Within days of the December '88 quake that brought various relief groups to Armenia, World Vision responded with more

than \$1 million in medical supplies, and Christmas toys for children who had lost everything. A food relief program followed. Today, World Vision reaches out to Armenian families and children through child sponsorship, Christian outreach, and microenterprise development.

"At first it was difficult to believe World Vision was going to be here for the long term," says Siranoush Manoukiyan, 56. A powerful woman who lights up her airspace with energy and passion, she bends over, digging with a small shovel, her brilliant white hair shining in the noonday sun. In a beat-up sweater and skirt, Siranoush (see-rah-NOOSH) picks through the dirt, looking for potatoes for dinner and, if she's lucky, a carrot or a beet. She also collects cow manure to burn for fuel.

Siranoush knows that when the ground freezes, she won't be able to find any more vegetables. "We'd like to work," she says, "but we're stealing potatoes instead."

A single mother, Siranoush is the matriarch of a clan that includes her son's family and her daughter, Arax, also a single mother. Before the earthquake, their family did well. They had a



Siranoush (above) takes a break from her backbreaking search for food—including these potatoes, which she gleans at the end of the season. The depth of Armenia's poverty also shows in the lives of Gohar and her family (left page). They live in this 10-by-24-foot container with two other families—no plumbing, no electricity. Despite the physical challenges, Armenians are free after communism to pursue spiritual fullness. Echmiadzin (below) is the main cathedral of the Armenian church, built in A.D. 303.

home. Jobs. Even jewelry. On that December morning their home—and their world—caved in.

Arax (ah-RAKS) and her three girls live downstairs from Siranoush in a one-room apartment. The room has four beds, two tables, and a broken television. Greenish wallpaper peels off the walls. Four pieces of rug nearly cover the floor. Both Sona, 5, and Lilit, 7, sleep in cribs at night, even though Lilit is far too big. The crib is the only bed the family could find for her.

"World Vision helped us to come out from the life we had," Siranoush says. A devout post-communist Christian, she flips open her Bible to read some favorite verses from Isaiah. In the middle of her Bible is a World Vision bookmark, sent to one of her grandchildren by a sponsor from the United States.

World Vision is planted firmly in the middle of this family's life. All Arax's girls are sponsored. Every card, letter, and picture from the sponsors in Florida, California, and Ohio is saved in a gallon-sized plastic bag. "The girls sleep with these things," Siranoush says. "They put the cards underneath their pillows."

SPONSORSHIP'S TRUE VALUE

Sponsorship has been a godsend, especially for little Sona. Before she was sponsored, her hair was falling out in patches. She had become thin and withdrawn. "World Vision made her the girl she is now," Siranoush says simply. In their poverty, the children drank water flavored with sugar and ate no meat or noodles. Now they have three good, hot meals a day at school.

Arax's oldest daughter, Mariam, 9, seems to glow from the inside. Her sponsor in Florida is partly to thank. "No one else has ever told this child that she is unique," Arax says, holding a card



The World's Oldest Christian Country

In 2001, Armenia celebrated 1,700 years of Christianity—the oldest Christian country in the world. Apostles St. Thaddeus and Bartholomew had preached in Armenia around 100 AD. But at the end of the third century, Armenian King Trdat (ter-DAT) III began persecuting Christians. After one brutal execution, he went insane. Trdat's sister told him what she had learned in a dream: that he would only be cured if he released a certain Christian leader from imprisonment. The king released Gregory the Illuminator, his former advisor and friend. Gregory prayed Trdat back to good health, and the king adopted Christianity for himself and his country in 301.

sent from the United States, her face shining with delight. "I have no time to say those words to her."

It is at this moment that sponsorship's true value to this family becomes apparent: They know they are loved. They have the letters and cards to prove it.

Arax, like many mothers in Gyumri, is raising her daughters

Connecting Generations in Gyumri

It's bone-chilling cold in Bavakan Eghiazaryan's apartment. Bavakan (bah-vah-KAN) is 67 but looks much older. "I don't want to become a beggar," she says, her eyes filling with tears that she wipes away with an age-stained hand. "With your help, I can live. It would be really, really hard without your help."

The older population in Gyumri has it the worst. The factories where many worked for decades were destroyed by



the 1988 earthquake, never to reopen when communism fell two years later. With massive unemployment, these older people can really do nothing. Many live on a paltry pension of \$10 a month. With heating bills at \$30 a month or more, they must choose between warmth and food.

Siranoush Manoukiyan is visiting Bavakan today. Siranoush and 29 others—many the mothers of sponsored children—have been trained by World Vision to care for 500 older people in Gyumri, to help recreate a community of compassion here.

Every Christmas, the elderly are invited to attend the children's school programs. They dress in whatever passes for their Sunday best. "As if they're going to the theater," smiles one staff member. Afterward, there are cakes, cookies, and companionship with Gyumri's youngest citizens.

For her help with the program, Siranoush is paid in flour, vegetable oil, and lentils supplied by the World Food Programme. She visits her 14 clients at least weekly, cleaning houses, doing laundry, and performing basic first aid—whatever they need. Mostly, Siranoush brings a listening ear and a compassionate heart. She listens intently to Bavakan, her arm around the old woman's shoulders. Siranoush is older than most of the other caretakers, so she better understands the needs of her clients. Some of them cry when she leaves.

"We are called a Christian country, but it should be in our soul," she says. Working with World Vision's elderly care program is allowing her to put those words into action.

without a father. Many of Gyumri's men have gone to Russia, looking for work. Statistics report that 20,000 people have left since the earthquake. But officials know that this number is far too low. Most people leave without notifying authorities. Many, like Arax's husband, never return.

World Vision stepped in to help Arax with a job—a cleaning position at the World Vision childcare center that her daughters attend before school. "She was so shy," Shaghik remembers of her first meetings with Arax. "At that time, she was trying to do some cleaning for the neighbors and getting a couple of dollars to buy bread for her children, but the first sight of her was very sad.

"You should have seen her when she got the job. She signed the contract and said, 'I don't need anything else now. I just need to have this job.'"

Today Arax beams as she peers into a classroom at the childcare center and watches Sona eating a hot meal or Mariam practicing embroidery, or Lilit learning about Creation in a Bible study. She is a woman with new hope.

A COMMUNITY IS REBORN

Child sponsorship has energized this family and many others in the neighborhood. Evidence of sponsorship is everywhere. World Vision has built playgrounds for children who, before, played with dangerous toys—on leftover cranes or in falling-down buildings.

World Vision installed gas pipelines to bring heat to 90 families. Last year the neighborhood saw a low temperature of 22 below zero F. The organization also negotiated half-price gas payments with the government. In Gyumri, heating can cost a family \$30-\$40 a month on an average monthly salary of \$20.

Children in Gyumri wear boots and jackets provided by World Vision's gifts-in-kind program. They carry World Vision-



provided backpacks filled with school supplies. Mariam and Lilit go to a school that World Vision bought and refurbished last year. Even the mauve paint on its walls comes in World Vision paint buckets.

Sponsorship in Gyumri goes below the surface level of need as well, digging deep into the community's root problems. Siranoush works with World Vision's elderly care program (see "Connecting Generations in Gyumri"). Through this effort, World Vision hopes to reconnect the generations that poverty put asunder.

"If their own children are hungry, they can't care anymore for their own parents," Shaghik says. "I'm not trying to justify it; I'm just trying to explain."

Along with family ties, faith also waned under communism. During Armenia's time as a Soviet republic, baptisms were done in secret or not done at all. World Vision is part of Armenia's spiritual rebirth (see "The World's Oldest Christian Country"),

Arax tries to make Lilit comfortable in her too-small crib (lower left). "We just stuff her in at night," she says sadly. Still, Arax's daughters are thriving at their World Vision-supported schools. Clockwise, starting at immediate right: Mariam is a diligent student who wants to be a teacher. Sona prays with her classmates before devouring a hot meal. Lilit (below, at right, with Mariam) hopes to be a doctor someday.



organizing baptisms and providing Bible-study curriculum.

In Gyumri, hearts are changing. After years of hardship, women like Arax are starting to trust again. Mothers like Siranoush are finding ways to be agents of change in their communities. Children like Sona, Lilit, and Mariam are learning life skills in school, knowing that across the ocean, there are families who pray for them, write them letters, and support them.

And World Vision staff like Shaghik—who moved to this community when the project started in 2000—are making a commitment to stay as long as Gyumri needs them.

"I know that eventually I will go back to Yerevan," Shaghik says. "I can't stay eternally, because this program should be handed over to local people. But I can't imagine the day I leave. How will I do it? Gyumri has become my everything."

These are words that the people of Gyumri need to hear: words that hold the promise of a better tomorrow. ■





Doctors gave up on Mariam, but her mother (upper right) never lost hope. Mariam is a different girl today, engrossed in school (above) and enjoying sessions with specialists such as her psychologist, Ani (below).



In Armenia, children once considered defective are being schooled in learning and love.

By Kari Costanza
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JON WARREN

land of second

chances



“I can do it myself,” says

Mariam Bozaklyan, 6, slipping out of the leg brace that helps her walk. “Don’t help me.”

Such persistence kept this tiny girl alive after a trying infancy. “The doctors told us she could die any day,” says her mother, Srbouhi (Sir-boo-HEE), about Mariam’s first months.

For 15 tense days in the hospital, the girl languished. She seemed blind, not responding as Srbouhi flicked the lights on and off. Her tongue wouldn’t stay in her mouth. *Was it pneumonia?* doctors wondered. *Meningitis?*

They advised Srbouhi, 28, and her husband, Nshan

(ne-SHAN), 29, to return to their home in Armenia's capital city and let their daughter die. Instead, the couple had Mariam discharged, trying more doctors, massage, anything to keep her alive. Finally doctors came up with a diagnosis: cerebral palsy, probably due to oxygen deprivation at birth.

A FAMILY CRUMBLES

Mariam's condition made life difficult. Money was tight. Nshan's job as a driver in Yerevan's ailing economy paid the bills and bought the family bread, but nothing more. The family went into a tailspin. Although frail, Mariam was demanding. Srbouhi became sick with worry, losing weight. She ignored their healthy son, Hovhannes (ho-van-NES), 8, focusing completely on Mariam.

"I was really upset because I felt that I was the only one who was worried about my child," she says. The stress was too much for the young mother to bear. At one point Srbouhi told Nshan she was leaving. "I'm young," she told him. "I need to have a life too."

Yet she stayed. At wits' end, Srbouhi and Nshan enrolled Mariam in a children's rehabilitation center. To pay for the treatments, Nshan's mother—who had lived with the family—moved out of the country in order to find work. Armenia has a long history of migration, but extreme poverty has sparked a fresh exodus, with at least 800,000 people leaving the country in the last 10 years to find work.

Her grandmother's sacrifice was worth it. Mariam's success in rehabilitation gave Srbouhi the help and hope she needed. Mariam began to strengthen, learning to walk with her brace.

After rehab, though, Mariam was kept behind closed doors. "I was afraid that somebody would look at my girl and say

something," her mother says. Like many special-needs children in Armenia, Mariam was growing up in isolation.

Mariam and thousands of others like her in Armenia needed a second chance—the opportunity to grow up in the open, and to be valued. But much groundwork had to be laid. Experts needed to match special-needs children with opportunities in Armenia's education system. Armenian society needed to change its attitudes. And parents of disabled children needed to learn to fight against the historic stigma until those attitudes *did* change.

FROM "DEFECTIVE" TO TREASURED

A Soviet republic from 1922 to 1991, Armenia inherited the Soviets' elaborate system of institutionalizing children who were different. During those times, the Soviet specialists—called "defectologists"—convinced parents that their disabled children would never become fully functioning members of society. Today, about 1 percent of Armenia's children, 11,500 in all, are institutionalized. Many more, like Mariam, are hidden away by their parents, not allowed to play or go to school.

It's a paradox. Armenians adore their children, showering them with affection in public. "I would be surprised if you would find an Armenian mother who wouldn't choose to die and have her child live," says Sister Arousiag Sajonian, last year's Pierce award-winner, who runs an orphanage for girls in Armenia (see story on page 11). And yet, with special-needs children, the leftover Soviet philosophy of defectology prevails. Such children are still largely hidden away.

Mariam's mother never thought her daughter would go to kindergarten. "I didn't even think it was possible," Srbouhi says. "Now



Psychologists, speech therapists and art therapists (both pages) use creative methods to encourage learning. Mariam's speech therapist, Anaksia Svagyan (left page) is one of many who are loving her toward freedom and discovery. When Mariam started art therapy, even her drawings were angry. She'd pick up one color and scribble like mad, over and over in the same place. Now, Mariam's drawings reflect her joy.

I think she'll be able to go on to school, thanks to World Vision."

World Vision began working in Armenia's kindergartens in 1999, piloting a curriculum to mainstream children with disabilities. Today, World Vision supports 18 kindergartens and one orphanage in Armenia. More than 300 children with disabilities are learning alongside 3,500 nondisabled children.

In this program—highly praised by UNICEF—psychologists, speech therapists, and art therapists work with the children, helping them to learn successfully with others. Social workers interact with parents, assuring them that their children deserve the same quality of education that their peers receive. Parents meet weekly in groups to learn about special-needs children and discuss common concerns.

In Armenia, kindergartens are broken into smaller groups with about 25 children in each. Only two or three special-needs children are in each group. At Mariam's kindergarten, there are six other disabled children. Their disabilities range from attention deficit disorder, to stuttering, to Mariam's cerebral palsy, to varying degrees of mental retardation.

EDUCATING MARIAM

Mariam's mother was cooperative at first, remembers Ani Avakyan, 23, the psychologist who works with Mariam. "But when she saw children with greater disabilities than Mariam, she became cautious," says Ani. "She didn't want Mariam to play with the other children."

Srbouhi was afraid. The only disabled child she had ever before known was her own, and she felt protective. A social worker counseled her to overcome her fears and trust the



expertise of the staff at the center. Then the work with Mariam began.

"She was a closed child," Ani says. "She didn't want to play. She couldn't communicate. She didn't want to do anything." Mariam was also aggressive with the other children. She didn't know how to share. She bit another child.

Ani worked with Mariam, teaching her new behaviors, coaxing her with love and patience.

"Now she knows how to play," Ani says. "She can hold the other children's hands and hug them."

Ani works with Mariam's teacher, Rosa Kazaryan, 21, whose only education in teaching special-needs children has come through World Vision. "In university," she says, "we do not learn anything about inclusive education or children with special needs."

As Ani teaches Rosa the skills she needs to include Mariam, the little girl teaches her classmates a valuable life skill: compassion. "The other children help her to put on her shoes or get a cup of water," Rosa says, "or take her to the bathroom."

Watching Mariam at play with her fellow students is where you see the fruits of Ani and her team's labors. She gallops around the classroom, her thick black ponytail bobbing, a few wispy tendrils curling softly around her face. The teacher's assistant watches her with kind eyes.

Primary school will be the next step for Mariam. An Armenian organization, Bridge of Hope, has successfully begun similar programs in Armenian schools after the kindergarten level. As more special-needs children go from isolation at home and in institutions into the happy chaos of these inclusive kindergartens, their families benefit as well.

"Now I am changed," Srbouhi says. "Now I walk down the street and I don't care what my neighbors say. I know if I can accept my child for who she is, others can too."

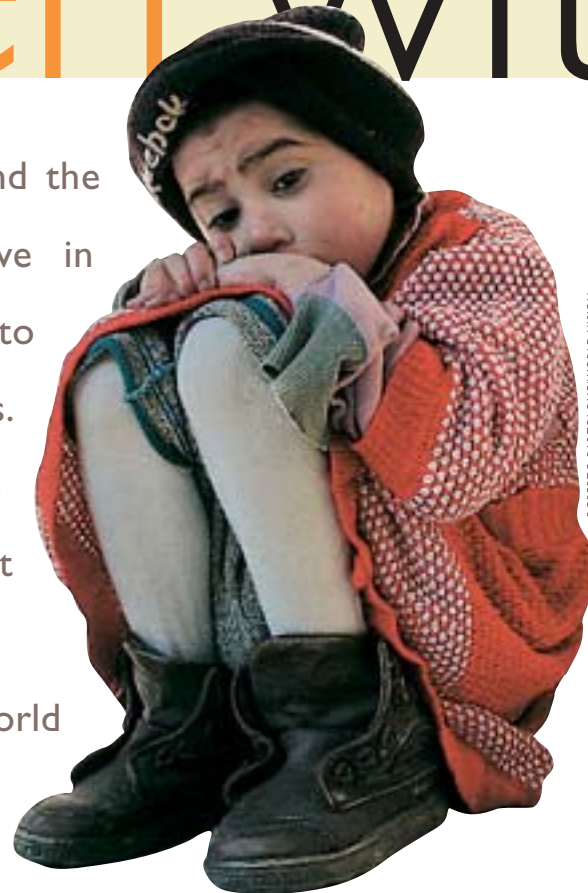
Just as Armenia itself is struggling for its second chance to recover and grow, Mariam is getting her second chance, and in turn, all those who meet her are learning how very special these special-needs children are. ■



children with disabilities

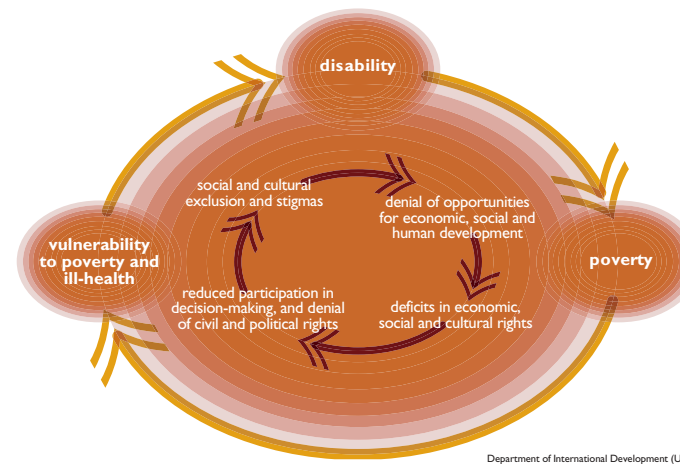
An estimated 150 million children around the world are disabled. The majority live in developing countries, where they fall victim to conditions easily avoided in wealthy countries. Only a tiny percentage of these children receive the rehabilitation or education they need to bring out their God-given potential.

What harms these children? And how does World Vision help?



ROBERTO BARTOLOME/WORLD VISION

Poverty and Disability—a vicious cycle








Department of International Development (UK)

Poverty sets the stage for disability as well as exacerbates the plight of the disabled and their families. Denied schooling and jobs, disabled people are also shut out of civic involvement, so they cannot change the very systems that limit their lives.

World Vision: Four Points to Fullness

- > **Prevention** Attack poverty-related causes of disabilities by helping communities produce healthy food, access clean water, and adopt better hygiene practices. Create health programs to target expectant mothers and children under 5.
- > **Treatment** Establish special projects to care for children with disabilities, such as schools for the deaf and rehabilitation centers for children with mobility problems. Help children transition into regular schools and nondisabled environments.
- > **Support** Educate families about the importance of early treatment. Raise awareness within communities of the value and potential of disabled children. In some projects, offer parents specialized training to address their children's needs.
- > **Sponsorship** Provide health and nutritional care to all sponsored children and special care for the disabled through the Childcare Ministries Fund—emergency care or long-term medical treatment, plus essentials such as medicine and wheelchairs.

Perils of Poverty	In the womb	Poor nutrition	Lack of immunizations	Environmental factors	Conflict
<p>Genetics cause disabilities everywhere in the world. But children living in poverty face additional dangers—many of them preventable.</p>	 <p>Mothers' poor diets can harm their unborn children. Micronutrients that are key to physical development—commonly added to foods in western countries—often are in short supply in impoverished countries.</p> <p>EXAMPLE: Lack of iodine (found in table salt in the United States) in pregnant women's diets can cause mental retardation in their children.</p>	 <p>The need for healthy food continues throughout childhood. Children with poor diets and no access to vitamin supplements don't develop normally and can suffer long-term disabilities.</p> <p>EXAMPLE: Vitamin-A deficiency, striking about 100 million young children worldwide, causes blindness and immune-system impairment.</p>	 <p>Many harmful diseases are easily prevented with vaccines. Children living in crowded slum areas who aren't immunized are extremely vulnerable to these disabling illnesses.</p> <p>EXAMPLE: Measles (rare in countries where vaccines are widely available) can cause deafness in children.</p>	 <p>Where children live can place them in dangerous proximity to toxins, waste dumps, and degraded environments. Closer to the ground than adults, and consuming more oxygen and water in proportion to their weight, they can be easily exposed to contaminated substances.</p> <p>EXAMPLE: High levels of lead in air and water leads to problems such as delayed growth and mental retardation.</p>	 <p>Recent conflicts have injured or disabled millions of children. Long after war's end, children continue to suffer harm from landmines and unexploded ordnance, which can be colorful and deceptively shaped like toys to attract children's curiosity.</p> <p>EXAMPLE: Children in 80 countries are threatened by the presence of landmines.</p>
<p>ONE WORLD VISION RESPONSE</p>	<p>A new health clinic in Badghis province, Afghanistan, provides expectant mothers with folic acid and iron supplements.</p>	<p>The MICAH program in Tanzania enables families to fortify their maize meal with Vitamin A, benefiting 138,000 children.</p>	<p>In the wake of a measles outbreak in western Liberia, World Vision participated in a UNICEF-led campaign to vaccinate nearly 28,000 children.</p>	<p>El Paraiso, a project in El Salvador, improved a water supply by removing garbage and human waste from a river watershed and constructing five new water tanks.</p>	<p>After Kosovo's war, World Vision used creativity in a tense situation: hiring a clown to keep children's attention while teaching them about the danger of land mines.</p>

SOURCES: UNICEF, World Health Organization, Kids Can Free the Children.

Making Her Way

The path to success hasn't been easy for this former sponsored child.

By Caleb Mpamei and Jane Sutton-Redner

THE PREGNANT WOMAN ARRIVED at the Banswara Mahatma Gandhi Hospital, bleeding profusely and suffering from critical childbirth complications. But staff at the facility in rural India balked at caring for her. Her problems were beyond their capacity, they said, and they prepared to send her home.

Then a young intern spoke up. Sunita Garasia told the doctors that the pregnant woman was her sister-in-law, Kamala, and she pleaded with them to help her. They immediately complied, working to save the lives of both mother and child. Years later, the intern's father heaves a sigh of relief

at the memory. "If it had not been for Sunita," Sukhalal Garasia says, "it would have been difficult for Kamala to survive."

Sunita, 28—now Dr. Sunita—doesn't take no for an answer. With quiet determination and diplomacy, she has often found a way through seemingly blocked paths. Career aspirations alone came with many complications.

Sunita was born in Banswara district, about 500 miles southwest of Delhi, an area where girls' education has markedly lower priority than boys'. (Recent statistics show girls' literacy rate at 27 percent, compared to 60 percent for boys.)

Her family is from the Bhil tribe, who are typically farmers and casual laborers.

Sunita's father is proud of her profession, telling everyone, "This is my daughter, and she is a doctor."

Under usual circumstances, a tribal girl would never have become a doctor. But Sunita's parents are Christians—missionaries had led all 30 families in Sunita's village to Christ—and her father was a teacher.

"My father educated all of us," Sunita says. "In my tribe, those who are Christian are more interested in education."

Not that putting Sunita and her three older brothers through school was easy. "There was hardly any income at home," says Mani Sunderlal, the principal of Saranathan Girls Home, where Sunita lived during her primary-school years. At the time, World Vision offered

sponsorship to those in Christian children's homes and boarding schools.

"I was sponsored when I was in first grade," Sunita says. "Realizing this, I began to study hard and put in my best at whatever I did." Sponsorship paid half her boarding fee and provided uniforms, books, school supplies, and health care.

Sunita doesn't remember where her sponsors lived, but she once saw a photo of them. "I was so excited that I could see the people who were helping me."

Sunita worked hard in high school, where she enjoyed science—especially dissecting cockroaches. The only tribal girl in her class, she excelled



Sunita, shown with son Ashish, 2, loves children and hopes to specialize in pediatrics.

academically, scoring the second-highest marks her first year.

During the 1980s, World Vision India instituted a special program enabling sponsored children to pursue higher education or vocational training. Sunita attended college and then medical school through the program. She had set her sights on the medical profession after meeting a woman doctor at the Banswara District Hospital.

But first, Sunita had to pass India's Pre-Medical Test (PMT)—a tough exam only attempted by the brightest students. Sunita took it once and failed. Most students then give up and pursue other careers, but not

Sunita. She took the PMT two more times and, on the third try, succeeded.

In medical school, academics was just one of the challenges facing Sunita, the odd one out. "Other students came from big cities like Delhi and Ajmer," she says, "and they were children of doctors and engineers. There were no Christians." But she kept reaching out to people and eventually made friends.

A bigger hurdle was language. Sunita only spoke Hindi, but oral and written tests were in English. Sunita studied with the dictionary or asked friends to explain the meaning of English words. She memorized entire lessons before tests. And it paid off. "Today, I'm a doctor," she says. "It's worth it all."

Sunita is now married to Hemroj Wilson, 32, also a doctor and a Christian. The couple has a son, Ashish, 2. Sunita works at the Kohala Public Health Center, leading a staff of six who serve a largely poor village population. She's loving toward the child patients and friendly to the elders, calling them *Baba* (a familiar term, similar to "Daddy").

"Her temperament is very cool, and she never gets annoyed," says Dr. Vijay Kumar Vij, chief medical officer at the center.

"I feel good that I've come this far," Sunita says, quickly crediting God's hand on her life. She also thanks World Vision: "Many people like me are getting help so we can stand on our own feet."

Sunita's not just standing—she's moving ahead, making her way to her dreams. ■

—Caleb Mpamei is a communications associate for World Vision India.

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Divine Matchmaking

SOME OF MY EARLIEST MEMORIES are of my father, World Vision founder Bob Pierce, standing before a crowd and challenging them to let their hearts be broken by the need of a single child. “The need is so big, it is easy to turn away, feeling that you can’t possibly make a difference,” he used to say. “But while you can’t do everything for everybody, you *can* do something for a child who needs you—and what you can do, you must do!”

And the people would respond, flooding to the sponsorship tables.

Today I’m a World Vision spokesperson for child sponsorship, and I have the privilege of telling the stories of the children I have met and the needs I have seen, much as my dad did. Like him, one of my greatest joys is watching people come to the sponsorship table afterward to search for the little face that touches their heart.

In the beginning, I have to admit, I thought this was a random process. After all, every precious child on the table needed a sponsor. Like any mother, I had no favorites, and I hated to see any child left behind. But over time I began to suspect an amazing truth.

Someone would come to the table and ask for a child of a certain gender and age, from a specific country, with the same birthday as their own child or grandchild. The first time this happened I panicked, praying that among the limited folders on the table we would find a child suitably close. But to my amazement, a quick search produced the exact child requested, as if God had planned this happy family reunion.

These happy “coincidences” have happened enough times to lead me to the conclusion that sponsorship is far from a random act of charity, but rather a very specific act of divine matchmaking. Psalm 68:6 says, “God sets the solitary in

families” (New King James Version).

There is no more solitary a figure on the face of the earth than a little child left orphaned by AIDS or made homeless by war. When you allow your heart to be touched by the suffering of these children, it isn’t hard to believe that the same God who “numbers the hairs on their heads” would take the trouble to carefully “set” these children in specific families, chosen just for them.

And of course, the matchmaking goes both ways.

Many years ago my sister Robin gave birth to a stillborn baby boy. We all grieved the loss of little Justin. A few months later, my mother felt led to ask World Vision for a new child to sponsor. She gave no specifics other than that she wanted a boy. When the new sponsor packet arrived, she saw that she had been given a little boy from Africa. Tears filled her eyes as she thanked God for his special gift: a little boy named Justin.

Being human, I am still occasionally tempted to dismiss these events as coincidental. But then God reminds me of a story I heard a few months ago. Volunteer Phyllis Lindsay was manning the sponsorship table at a World Vision Artist Associates concert. A woman named Margaret approached her with a puzzled look. Margaret held out a picture folder and asked, “What is this child’s name?”

Phyllis looked at the folder and immediately understood the woman’s confusion. She explained that, sometimes, developing-world mothers use unusual English words for names. This child’s name was Obvious.

Margaret’s eyes grew wide. “I had already decided not to sponsor a child tonight,” she confessed, “but as I walked over to the table I prayed, *Lord, if you want me to sponsor a child, make it obvious.*”

Margaret went home with a new child to love and a great story to tell of how God had set this solitary child in her family. ■

Marilee Pierce Dunker is a child sponsorship advocate for World Vision. Before joining the organization in 2001, she served God in a variety of roles, including Bible-study teacher, retreat speaker, author, and radio personality. She and her husband, Bob, live in the San Diego area and have two grown daughters.



WORLD VISION ZAMBIA

God placed 11-year-old Oliviah from Zambia in Marilee’s family.



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

Reflections

Z A M B I A

Lenos Nsofwa, 11, a sponsored child in Zambia, turns an old bicycle wheel into an exciting toy. In front of a nearby hut, girls transform ordinary pebbles into a rousing game of jacks. In an open field, little boys play with a soccer ball made from rags.

Making toys from scratch is common in Zambia, where 80 percent of the population lives on less than a dollar a day. HIV/AIDS has had a significant impact here, with one of every five adults carrying the virus. Life expectancy has dropped to 35 years. World Vision works in Lenos’ community of 17,000 through child sponsorship and other programs that allow children to attend school, drink clean water, eat nutritious food, and simply run, play, and just be kids.

a generation to save

*Help turn the tide
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