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AUTUMN 2012

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DARK WORLD OF TRAFFICKING

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The King will reply, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." —Matthew 25:40 (NIV)



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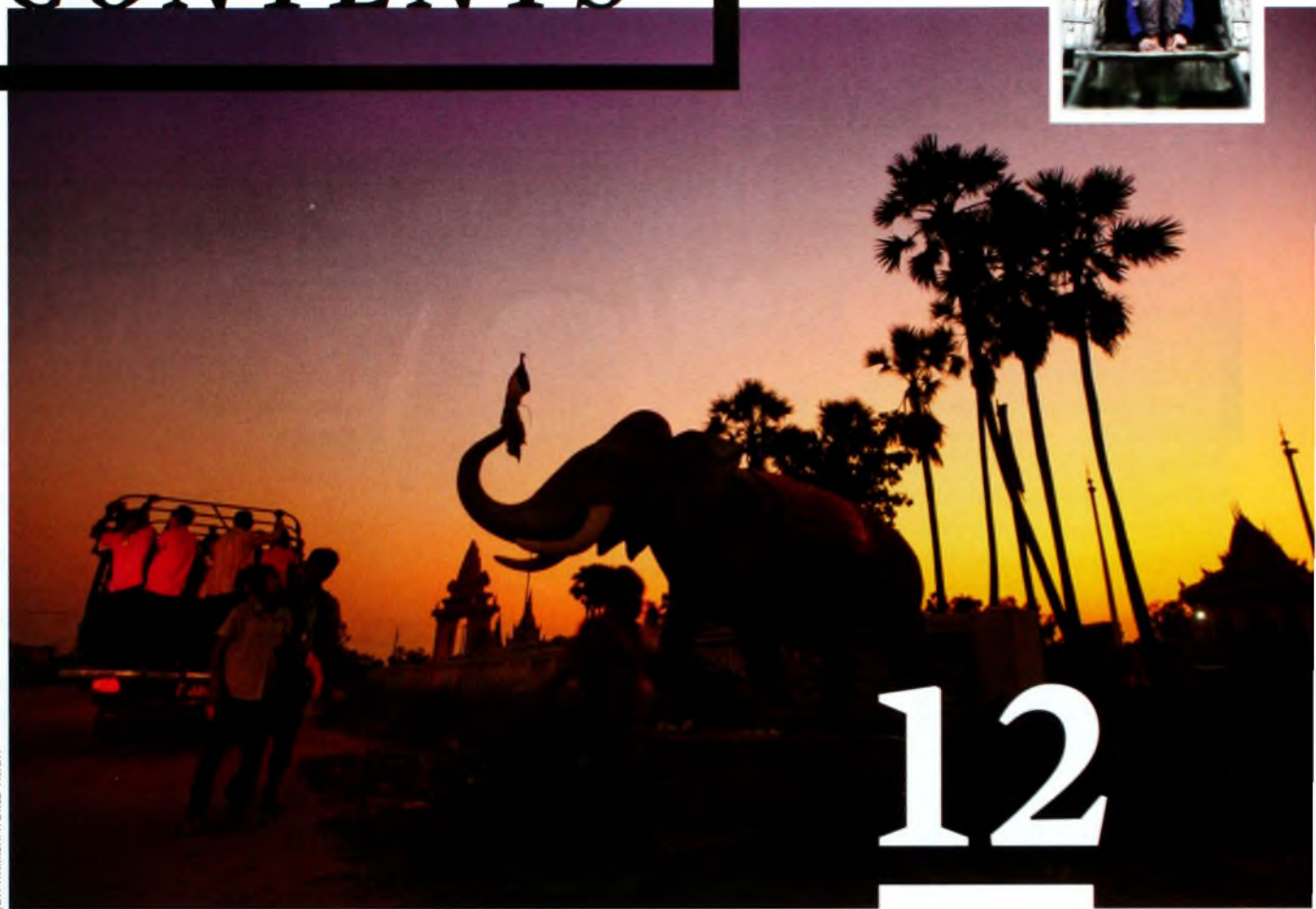


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JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

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HEIDI ISAZA/WORLD VISION

Gangs and guns threaten children in El Salvador.

Once Broken, Never the Same

BY RICH STEARNS

In February I met a young woman who taught me a profound lesson about sacrificial love. I was visiting Cambodia to see World Vision's child protection work. Up three flights of stairs, in a small, one-room apartment, I met someone who offered everything she had for her family.

Ruse grew up extremely poor, and when she was 13, her mother became very ill and needed medical attention. Ruse's father had already left his wife and their three children. Her family desperately needed money.

A neighbor offered a way out. She knew a brothel owner who would pay a lot for a young virgin. As Ruse told us her story that day, she said something I will never forget. "My virginity was the most valuable possession my family had."

Can you imagine being that poor and that desperate? What a terrible choice this young girl faced.

Ruse sold herself for \$400 and spent the next three years in a brothel, having sex with more than 700 men a year. She was eventually rescued, and she was sent to World Vision's Trauma Recovery Center in Phnom Penh. The center currently has more than 30 girls in recovery, some as young as 8 years old.

After about two years in the center, where she was able to heal from her trauma in a safe environment with loving counselors, Ruse now has a small apartment and a job as a nanny. She is raising her younger brother and sister. She also has committed her life to Christ and attends a local Baptist church.

World Vision estimates that roughly 30,000 young men and women are trapped in Cambodia's sex trade—a number that could be higher due to the sex trade's invisible nature. Ruse's story is typical. Lured by lies, young people become modern-day slaves, sold into markets across Asia and even in the United States.

As wonderful as it was to see Ruse restored, healthy, and spiritually alive (she preaches the gospel to the children for whom she nannies), how much better it would be if Ruse had



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

Ruse's name is changed and her identity hidden for her protection.

"Lift up your eyes and look around; all your children gather and come to you. As surely as I live," declares the Lord, "you will wear them all as ornaments; you will put them on, like a bride."

—ISAIAH 49:18

never been abused to begin with? These girls—and all children—are like priceless vases. Once broken, the vase can be glued back together, but it is never the same. That's why our child protection strategy is to prevent, protect, and restore. We need to rescue these girls from brothels, but we also have to stop them from being trafficked at all.

Shortly after my visit with Ruse, I traveled about an hour outside of Phnom Penh to visit Leuk Daek, one of the places World Vision works to ensure that these precious vases are not broken.

More than 2,000 Leuk Daek children are sponsored. On the day we visited, several children performed a drama that depicted a girl sold into a brothel. The children expressed what they had been learning in World Vision-sponsored kids clubs. To all the parents, teachers, police, and government officials present, they sent

a strong message: This is a community that won't tolerate the abuse of children. Children are to be loved and cared for, not exploited. (Read about how Leuk Daek protected a girl from trafficking in "Saving Savooun," page 12.)

This is an important part of what child sponsorship programs allow us to do. Through a deep involvement in a community, we can work to change the values and the culture that allow any violence against children to occur. In Leuk Daek, throughout Cambodia, and in countries around the world, World Vision is protecting children well before any harm ever comes to them. ●



KEEP UP WITH RICH STEARNS at
www.facebook.com/RichardStearns.WVUS

FRONTLINES



SIMON PETER ESAKU/WORLD VISION

f

EXTRA, EXTRA

With print news on the decline, it's something of an anachronism to see young people poring over newspapers. But for teens in Kibale district, western Uganda, this is as good as news gets. Previously their knowledge of the world came from textbooks and teachers' lectures.

Forget smartphones, digital tablets, or even desktop computers—here, newspapers are innovative. In 2010 World Vision started collaborating with the *Daily Monitor* on a special pull-out section, "Newspapers in Education," to distribute in schools. Fourteen-year-old Margaret Atuhairwe (left at the front desk) read her first newspaper in February 2011. "I saw the names

of presidential candidates in Uganda and pictures of landslides," she says. In the next edition she learned about Libya's uprising.

Lack of news isn't the only problem burdening students in rural communities around the globe. Many spend their days in substandard classrooms (Margaret studies in a dilapidated building with a leaky roof) without qualified teachers or basic school supplies. Despite these deficits, education is precious. Child sponsorship enables thousands of children to get the learning they crave, from fixing faulty classrooms to feeding eager minds. ● —Reporting by Simon Peter Esaku



CHRIS SISHACH FOR WORLD VISION

WEST AFRICA

WEST AFRICA | FUNDS DRY UP

Humanitarian organizations struggled to fundraise for relief efforts in response to acute food shortages and growing instability in West Africa. In April, World Vision, Action Against Hunger, Oxfam, and Save the Children issued a statement noting they had secured less than a quarter of the money required to bring assistance to about 6 million people in greatest need. Funding shortfalls forced World Vision to trim some relief efforts. However, World Vision continues to conduct programs assisting 1 million people, including food distribution, well drilling, seed distribution, and teaching advanced irrigation techniques.

SOUTH SUDAN | CRISIS FOLLOWS CRISIS

Sporadic fighting intensified on the border between South Sudan and Sudan in April as the two countries continue to clash over valuable oil reserves and unresolved political issues. The conflict takes place in the midst of South Sudan's tribal skirmishes, poor harvest, economic downturn, soaring food prices, and a burgeoning displaced population. These conditions left about 1 million

people in urgent need of food aid. World Vision has scaled up relief operations in border areas, delivering food, clean water, healthcare, and child protection programs designed to reach 500,000 people.

ASIA | MALARIA MAGNIFIED

Scientists have found drug-resistant strains of the malaria parasite along the border of Thailand and Myanmar, indicating that the disease is becoming more difficult to treat. The World Health Organization (WHO) now recommends giving the plant-based drug artemisinin in combination



KHAING MIN HTODI FOR WORLD VISION

ASIA

with older medicines to help minimize the risk of developing resistance. Malaria—which WHO reports killed 655,000 people in 2010—also can be prevented by sleeping under insecticide-treated bed nets, spraying insecticides inside to control mosquitoes, and eliminating standing water where mosquitoes breed.



ARMENIA
ARBEHPUHI SAHAKI/WORLD VISION

ARMENIA | HELPING HEALTH

At the urging of the Mother and Child Health Armenian Alliance—a World Vision initiative—the Armenian government allocated \$18 million to improve the quality and accessibility of healthcare services for children. Rural and marginalized children primarily benefit from this investment, because rural under-5 mortality rates are almost double urban rates.

U.S. | DISASTER DINNERS

For the second year in a row, tornadoes ravaged broad areas of the country in the spring. World Vision responded from our domestic disaster response hub in North Texas, which is strategically located to deploy quickly into disaster areas. Volunteers

gathered there in early April to assemble 1,500 food kits for those whose homes were damaged or destroyed when dozens of tornadoes tore through the Dallas/Fort Worth area.

GUATEMALA | ENDING EROSION

Tens of thousands of trees are being planted in Guatemala's countryside to reduce soil erosion in the areas where World Vision works. For years, many community members in rural villages have cut down trees to fuel fires and clear fields for farming. Reversing this trend, youth and adults alike are planting the trees near rivers, schools, and highly deforested areas to improve their communities' environments.



GUATEMALA
WORLD VISION STAFF

ALBANIA | MAPPING THE FUTURE

The first internet website mapping Albania's social services is live, providing better and faster referrals for people in need of assistance. World Vision and other humanitarian groups joined with government officials to launch the site, which features information on more than 300 Albanian social services. The site also is helping officials to determine where additional social services are needed.

U.S. | SOCIAL MEDIA BENEFITS

More than half of polled teens (55 percent) say social media sites like Facebook and Twitter have made them more aware of the needs of others, according to an online study by Harris Interactive. This is a jump from 2011 when little more than 4 in 10 (44 percent) said their use of social media made them more aware. According to the study, about nine out of 10 (91 percent) agree that it's important to volunteer locally. ●



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★ ★ ★ **WORLD VISION HONORS** ★ ★ ★

GLOBAL | DISABILITY AWARD

World Vision International has received InterAction's 2012 Disability Inclusion Award, in recognition of the organization's focus on inclusion, from company-wide policies to hiring of disability advisors and mainstreaming programs. The award was presented at the 2012 InterAction Forum in Washington, D.C., in May.



COLLINS KAUNBA/WORLD VISION

AFRICA | A FILM'S JOURNEY

World Vision's film *Jamaa* has been nominated for the African Movie Academy Awards' best short film and best child actor. *Jamaa*, which has previously won awards, is a theater-quality film telling the story of two children who make an impossible journey—and a family that faces an impossible choice in the midst of crushing poverty. You can watch *Jamaa* free at www.worldvision.org/jamaa.

UNITED STATES | SONGS FOR CHILDREN

"Music Inspired By The Story" won the 2012 Dove Award for Special Event Album of the Year. The album, which features 18 songs written by Dove Award-winners Nichole Nordeman and Bernie Herms, is a collaboration with the WOW partnership, Zondervan, Proper Management, and World Vision. ●



BIKING FOR A THIRSTY WORLD

A senior couple pedals across America for water.

Their doctor expressed reservations, but Grant and Shirley Adams—both 69—weren't about to change their plans. Sheer determination and a whole lot of heart propelled them to bicycle across the United States in an effort to bring clean water to areas of the world that desperately need it.

Before embarking on the two-month, 3,090-mile trip from San Diego, Calif., to St. Augustine, Fla., Grant and Shirley took their doctor's advice—each had knee surgery and then healed and trained for two months, gradually building up to riding 50 to 75 miles each day.

Once on the road, the desert areas of the Southwest

"I CAN'T EMPHASIZE ENOUGH HOW WE FELT THE PRESENCE OF GOD EVERY DAY. IT WAS JUST SO POWERFUL." —SHIRLEY

proved particularly tough going, with temperatures reaching 113 degrees. On one arduous stretch they biked 71 miles carrying all their food and water, because no fresh supplies were available. That experience, Shirley says, was a reminder of what millions of women in Africa endure every day.

Early in the trip, the couple collapsed exhausted into bed at the end of each ride. With time, their bodies adapted, and they could socialize in the evenings. During a karaoke night in Louisiana, Grant and Shirley were asked to share their story, attracting applause and generous donations.

Shirley says most of the money was raised through casual encounters along the road. She and Grant wore shirts reading "Every.1 Needs Clean Water." The message provoked questions, allowing them to talk about the urgent need in poor communities. They handed out cards promoting their blog, giving people an opportunity to donate.

Shirley updated the blog regularly. "There were some great comments," she says, noting how encouraging it was to hear from all who were touched by their story.

And not only was the trip free from any surly motorists, but "I can't emphasize enough how we felt the presence of God every day," Shirley says. "It was just so powerful."

The trip raised more than \$21,000, which will help fund World Vision water projects in Africa. ●

CHANGE AGENT

NAME The Davis family

HOME Joplin, Mo.

CHURCH Pentecostal Church of God

PROGRAM Malaria Sunday

THE BUZZ Children dying of malaria left a sour taste in the mouths of Daniel and Rhonda Davis and their sons, 7-year-old Evan and 6-year-old Gideon. During their church's Malaria Sunday, the family learned how malaria kills a child about every 60 seconds. Inspired by the fact that just \$6 would purchase a net to protect two children living in remote communities from malaria-carrying mosquitoes, the boys dug into their piggy banks. But that wasn't enough for Evan, who resolved to raise more money by selling lemonade. With the help of their church and Messenger College students, the family soon launched "Lemonade for Life," a lemonade-stand fundraiser that to date has raised enough to purchase more than 400 mosquito nets. World Vision will soon deliver these nets to families in need around the world. ●



COURTESY RHONDA DAVIS

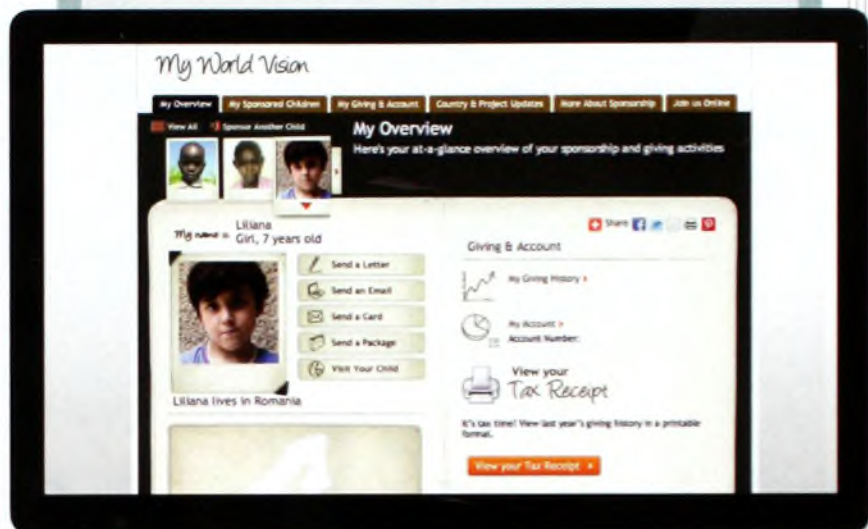
"Lemonade for Life is proof that even the smallest ideas from the little people can make a big difference."

—RHONDA DAVIS






LEARN HOW YOUR CHURCH can host a Malaria Sunday and save children's lives:
www.worldvision.org/malariasunday

WHAT YOU CAN DO ON

My World Vision



WORLD VISION offers a new way to connect to your sponsored child at myworldvision.org. It's a must-visit site for sponsors—everything about your child and his or her community is there at your fingertips. One of the latest features: videos especially for sponsors about the impact of letters and gifts for your sponsored child. ●

-  **Email your sponsored child**
-  **Learn how to send a gift to your child**
-  **Manage your account**
-  **See photos from your child's community**
-  **Watch videos**

See how you can connect with your sponsored child through My World Vision by scanning this QR Code »

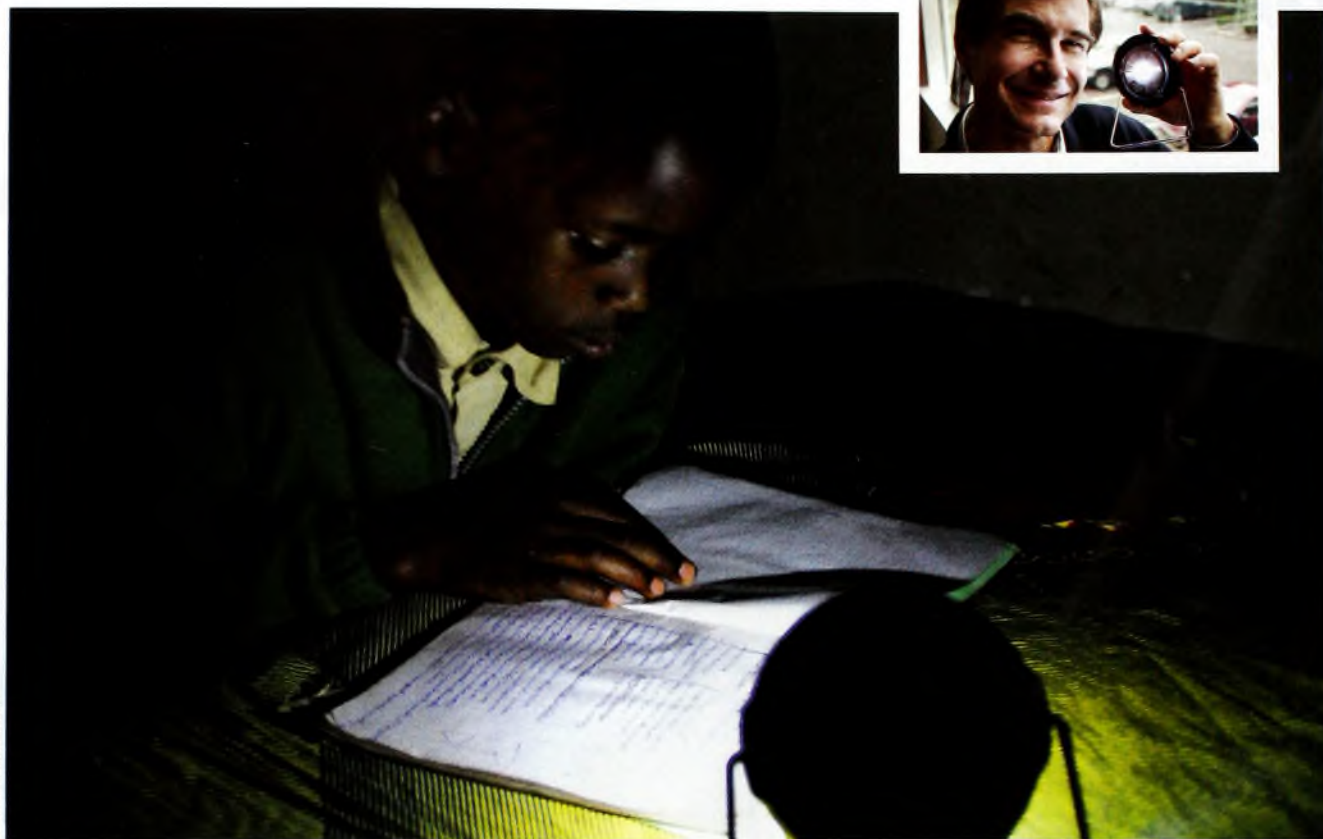


BRIGHT IDEA

A Wisconsin church brings solar light to Rwanda.



JAMES ADDIS/WORLD VISION



COURTESY DAVID STRAIT

A chance remark made to mechanical engineer David Strait during a visit to southern Rwanda led to safe lighting in thousands of homes for the first time.

David (pictured above) was among members of Christ Presbyterian Church in Madison, Wis., who visited Nyamagabe, Rwanda, in 2008. The congregation sponsors about 300 children there through World Vision.

During the visit, World Vision staff member Ananias Sentozi noted that it was difficult for children to do schoolwork in the evenings as it got dark about 6 p.m., and local homes had no electricity.

David did not think much about it at the time. But months later, while riding his bicycle in Wisconsin, he remembered the

remark while praying for his sponsored children's studies.

Then it came to him: My own kids would not do well if they could not study after school. How can I expect these Rwandan kids to do well if they can't study after school?

The energy-efficient LED light he used on his bike gave him the idea that there might be cost-effective solar-powered LED lighting available in Rwanda.

As it turned out, such lights were just coming onto the market. After some painstaking research, David sent 10 trial lamps to Nyamagabe for evaluation. Later, he flew to Nairobi, Kenya, to attend a solar lighting conference and discovered three more models for World Vision to test in the community.

The feedback was overwhelmingly

positive. Children could not only study longer, but families could enjoy more social time in the evenings.

Christ Presbyterian Church raised more than \$73,000 to purchase 5,000 solar-powered lights for the community in a project dubbed "Lights for Learning." Each lamp provides about four hours of light after a full day's charging. "It is a really cool design and much cheaper than some of the original models I had seen," David says.

Solar-powered lamps are a considerable improvement over traditional kerosene lamps, which consume costly fuel, cause eye and lung damage, and pose fire and burn hazards.

The project has been so successful, it's serving as a model for similar programs elsewhere in Africa. ●

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WHY I LOVE BEING A CHILD SPONSOR



TOP: HILLGENESS PHOTOS

BETTEJANE BROWN, ORLANDO, FLA.

I have a precious little girl in the Philippines I signed up to sponsor after watching a TV program in October 2007. She was 7 years old at the time, and I see by her letters how she is maturing into a beautiful Christian young lady. In the beginning, Shenna asked if she could call me "Mama." Because she already has a mom but no grandmother, we worked it out that I am now "Grandma BJ." This is the role I should be playing, as I am 80 years of age and definitely too old to be her mama. When I jumped into sponsorship, I was fulfilling a dream for myself but unsure if I could do it monetarily. Now I know God is blessing Shenna's entire family, as well as myself. Just knowing her and realizing that I am helping in some small way is such a joy. Bless and be blessed! ●

TELL US YOUR STORY. Why do you love being a child sponsor? Write the editors at wvmagazine@worldvision.org.

VISITOR CENTER



WAYNE MCCOY/WORLD VISION

This interactive center at World Vision's headquarters near Seattle takes visitors of all ages on a journey through World Vision's early years in Korea to worldwide ministry today. Compelling displays, stunning photos, and audio and video presentations show how hope is being restored around the globe.

The center is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; guided tours are available 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. ●

FOR MORE INFORMATION, visit www.worldvision.org/tours.

SAVING SAVOEUN

BY KARI COSTANZA | PHOTOS BY JON WARREN

IN THE UNITED STATES, AN AMBER ALERT IS BROADCAST WHEN A CHILD GOES MISSING. BUT HOW TO CREATE AN AMBER ALERT IN CAMBODIAN VILLAGES WHEN THE ENEMIES ARE SEX TRAFFICKERS? WORLD VISION CAME UP WITH A PLAN.

One warm Wednesday in June, 15-year-old Savoeun Chea went to work in Leuk Daek in southeastern Cambodia. Leuk Daek is a place of rice fields and rivers, its scenery strewn with ornate pagodas that bespeak the country's Buddhist heritage.

Savoeun quit school to work at the sewing factory when she was 12. Back then, she rode a bicycle to work. But on this day, the teenager took a motortaxi, her hands clutching a small bag containing the items she had been instructed to bring: her clothes and her

older sister's birth certificate.

At the factory that morning, Savoeun's sister Simean was the first to notice.

"I did not see her working," says Simean, 21. "I asked where she was. People told me that she'd gone to work in Malaysia. I called my family."

In making that call, Simean set in motion a Cambodian-style Amber Alert. Savoeun's family, friends, local officials, co-workers, the police, community members, and the children of two villages joined in a singular task: bringing Savoeun home—alive.





It took a village to save a child. Playing a role in Savoeun's rescue were Leuk Daek's police force, top; Savoeun's sister, Simean, middle; and commune chiefs Sarom Ye, sitting to the left of commune chief Chrin Voeurn, bottom.

Note: Photos on pages 14-17 were taken by Jon Warren with an iPhone. Read why at www.worldvisionmagazine.org.

LAUNCHING A RESCUE

When Savoeun's mother got the call from her oldest daughter at the factory, she and her brother hastened to inform Chrin Voeurn, 56, the village commune chief, or mayor, that Savoeun had disappeared.

"They looked like they were very afraid," says Chrin, recalling how Savoeun's mother and uncle arrived at his office on that June day in 2010. "They told me the daughter went to work as usual but she'd brought a case with a plastic bag. There was something inside it, maybe clothes."

Savoeun's mother panicked and paced. "Sometimes she sat. Sometimes she stood," says Chrin. The mayor acted quickly, picking up the phone and calling Sarom Ye, the commune chief in Prek Dach, where the sewing factory is located. "I knew that if we didn't intervene in time, we would lose her," says Chrin.

Sarom Ye immediately called the police. With each passing minute, everyone knew that Savoeun's vulnerability intensified. Everyone remembered with fear how a similar story in the village had ended.

SAVOEUN IN DISTRESS

Savoeun had become entranced with a woman at the factory named Srey Pich. Srey Pich was a newcomer who took a job at the sewing factory and took a shine to Savoeun. The two would sit together and talk, often retreating to a quiet place in the factory. Srey Pich was not a pretty woman. She had one big eye and one small eye. She was nasty to her co-workers and to her husband—to everyone, in fact, but Savoeun. She told Savoeun she loved her.

"I heard she was a prostitute," says Savoeun's sister Simean. But what no one realized was that Srey Pich was something far more dangerous—a broker who seduced young girls with lies about promising jobs and then sold

them into the sex trade or child labor.

Srey Pich had convinced Savoeun to come with her to Cambodia's capital, Phnom Penh. From there, Savoeun was told she would fly to Malaysia to work as a caregiver. Her monthly salary would increase from \$55 per month to \$200, money Savoeun could send back home every month to help her family.

"We are poor," says her mother. "Savoeun sees with her eyes our trouble. She has to try for us." Savoeun's mother

was sad when her daughter dropped out of school at 12 to work. "She said to me, 'Why should I study when you are so poor?'" Savoeun's mother had no answer.

"I knew that if we didn't intervene in time, we would lose her."

—CHRIN VOEURN, MAYOR

CAMBODIA'S SUFFERING

Poverty flows as wide and strong as the Mekong through Cambodia. Eight of 10 Cambodians live in rural areas such as Leuk Daek. More than a quarter of the population lives below the absolute poverty line, making less than \$1.25 a day.

Still fresh is Pol Pot's reign of terror that began in 1975, which the Khmer Rouge dictator declared Year Zero. Pol Pot abolished national currency, seized private property, and drove hundreds of thousands of people from Phnom Penh into the countryside to work as peasant farmers. From 1975 until 1979, around 2 million Cambodians were systematically executed or succumbed to disease.

World Vision started work in Cambodia in 1970 but was forced out during the Pol Pot regime. Only three of 270 World Vision's Cambodian staff survived the genocide. After the war, World Vision was allowed to re-enter the country, bringing back healthcare and building up communities through child sponsorship and development programs.

In Phnom Penh, World Vision established care centers for street children and aftercare for girls rescued from the sex trade. The Neaver Thmey (New Ship) center has served more than 800 girls since 1997.

Today, there are 34,500 commercial

sex workers in Cambodia. And while World Vision is committed to restoring those who are able to escape, JoJo Pastores, who manages World Vision's child protection programs in Cambodia, says, "We need to stop child trafficking where it starts—at the village level."

MING CHAN'S CHILDREN

A girl had been taken before in Leuk Daek. "This case happened before [I started,]" says Louy Samnang, 41, who joined Leuk Daek's police force in 1999. The girl was raped and killed. Community members admit no action was taken because back then, no one knew what to do.

In those days, deep mistrust lingered in rural areas Pol Pot had turned into the "killing fields." Not even the children could trust. It was amid such turmoil

in 2003 that a remarkable woman started with World Vision as a community development worker in Leuk Daek. At that time, sponsorship was just ramping up. Today U.S. donors sponsor 2,500 children in the community.

"Because of poverty," Sokchan Keng says, "people did not want to listen to me. Parents would not let their children go to school. Children were without hope."

"They did not care about the future," says Sokchan Keng, 52, whom the community calls Ming Chan, meaning Auntie Chan. "They had no goals." Pol Pot had left desolation in his wake.

"But war is just one reason," says Ming Chan. "The other reason is knowledge. The children did not know their rights. They did as their families did. And our society did not care much about the children."

Ming Chan understands with heart-break why families disintegrated in her country. She was 15 in April 1975 when her family was shepherded by Pol Pot's troops from Phnom Penh to a province surrounded by water. "We worked in the fields most of the time," she says. "Whenever we wanted to take a rest and the group leader saw us, they would hit us or kill us, just for taking a rest."

She still weeps when she describes how her family members died, one by one—her father from diarrhea and her older siblings were executed. "After the war, I became the oldest child," she says. "I had to take care of my younger brother and sister." Ming Chan has never married.

In 2003, Ming Chan began her assessments, traveling from village to village. The children were hungry.

The remarkable Ming Chan with some of the children who lead the youth clubs and comforted Savoeun's family when she went missing.



Some were naked. Few went to school. "When I reached a village, the children would approach me and ask for some cake or something to eat," she says. "I bought them cakes."

Their parents began to notice how Ming Chan cared for their children. "I used to tell them that we would not be poor forever," she says.

But first she had to help the community overcome its poverty of spirit. Ming Chan started with the children, developing clubs for children and teenagers in 2006. The next year she began to teach from World Vision's Peace Road curriculum. Peace Road taught what had been unthinkable—that children had value and should be protected; that beatings were wrong and that education was crucial, even for girls.

"Before [World Vision came to Leuk

Daek] the girls would just stay at home to help around the house," says Mayor Sarom Ye.

Today 600 children and youth have gone through the curriculum in World Vision's children's clubs. "God has given me a lot of children," says Ming Chan.

The clubs raise awareness as well. "The youth club uses banners to educate the community," says Sarom Ye, "like for example, for parents [to stop] using their children to earn money and to work."

World Vision has also worked with law enforcement, holding seminars across Cambodia in which FBI-trained personnel teach local police how to prevent child trafficking. Efforts extend to Phnom Penh where World Vision partners with a network of impassioned non-governmental organizations, taking the message to the highest levels of

government: In Cambodia, child trafficking will not be tolerated.

When Savoeun disappeared, the community sprang into action. And this time, it worked.

SAVOEUN IS SAVED

Mayor Chrin provides one reason Savoeun survived: "Our commune has World Vision." Because of the groundwork set in place by World Vision, Savoeun's sister knew to raise the alarm. Her mother knew to go immediately to Mayor Chrin. Mayor Chrin knew to connect with other officials such as Sarom Ye who engaged the police. Savoeun's uncle had attended a World Vision workshop on child trafficking and rape. He knew trafficking put Savoeun's very soul at risk. He rushed to the factory, found Srey Pich's husband,



and plied him with rice wine. Trained police came to assist in the interrogation. By noon, they had Srey Pich's cell phone number.

"I called 100 times," says Uncle Ling Thoeun, 36. Finally, Srey Pich called him back. "I was angry," he says. "I said, 'Where did you take my niece? Did you

the car and bolted from the parking lot. Savoeyun was safe, but she appeared drugged. "She sat silent and calm like a chicken with a sickness," he says. "I tried to talk to her, but she could not respond. We immediately came home."

HOME AGAIN

World Vision



ABBY STALEN/TEEN/WORLD VISION

WHO WILL PROTECT THEM?

Each day millions of children are abused in the sex trade, forced into exhausting labor, or abandoned to the dangers of the street. While much of the world ignores their plight, we can bring help and healing to these exploited children.

Will you join World Vision in protecting them? Together we can build a better world where children are restored and thriving.



Pictured from top: Savoeyun's Uncle Ling, whose persistent phone calls paid off; Savoeyun's mother, now calm; Leuk Daek's police chief, Saobun Chhoeun, who assisted in the rescue. At left: Savoeyun, safe at last.



WEBSITE BONUS Watch a video of Leuk Daek's children using Savoeyun's story to teach others about the dangers of trafficking by scanning this QR Code or visiting www.worldvisionmagazine.org

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Their parents began to notice how Ming Chan cared for their children. "I used to tell them that we would not be poor forever," she says.

But first she had to help the community overcome its poverty of spirit. Ming Chan started with the children, developing clubs for children and teenagers in 2006. The next year she began to teach from World Vision's Peace Road curriculum. Peace Road taught what had been unthinkable—that children had value and should be protected; that beatings were wrong and that education was crucial, even for girls.

"Before [World Vision came to Leuk

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Today 600 children and youth have gone through the curriculum in World Vision's children's clubs. "God has given me a lot of children," says Ming Chan.

The clubs raise awareness as well. "The youth club the community, example, for parents to encourage children to earn

World Vision law enforcement personnel teach to prevent child trafficking in Phnom Penh. Partners with a non-governmental organization are spreading the message

government: In Cambodia, child trafficking will not be tolerated.

When Savoeun disappeared, the community sprang into action. And this time, it worked.

SAVOEUN IS SAVED

Mayor Chrin provides one reason

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HOME AGAIN

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PLEASE TEAR ALONG PERFORATED LINES AND PLACE UNFOLDED COUPON INSIDE ENVELOPE.



Pictured from top: Savoeun's Uncle Ling, whose persistent phone calls paid off; Savoeun's mother, now calm; Leuk Daek's police chief, Saobun Chhoeun, who assisted in the rescue. At left: Savoeun, safe at last.



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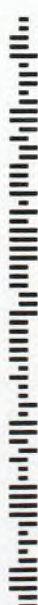
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and plied him with rice wine. Trained police came to assist in the interrogation. By noon, they had Srey Pich's cell phone number.

"I called 100 times," says Uncle Ling Thoeun, 36. Finally, Srey Pich called him back. "I was angry," he says. "I said, 'Where did you take my niece? Did you tell anyone? Any adult? You are not a human,'" he yelled. "'You are taking a child from her family's house.'"

Now in Phnom Penh with Savoeun, Srey Pich told Uncle Ling that she was about to put the girl on an airplane to Malaysia.

And Savoeun was now frightened.

On the way to Phnom Penh, Savoeun had watched Srey Pich hug a policeman. "She hugged so openly," says Savoeun. "We do not do that. He was not her husband." Savoeun knew something was amiss.

Srey Pich took Savoeun to a big house with a high, locked gate. "I was afraid," she said. "I saw many women there. Many of the women had short hair and red clothes." Savoeun was forced to take a blood test. "Srey Pich told us we needed to have blood tests because they wanted to know if we had a disease." But noticing that the woman who did the test wore plain clothes rather than a medical uniform, Savoeun felt dread.

The broker then took Savoeun by motorbike to a parking lot near a local hospital. "She told me to stay there and that she would find me something good to eat," says Savoeun. Srey Pich disappeared into the night. And that's when Savoeun remembered something in her small bag of belongings. She'd stashed away 10,000 Cambodian riel, or about \$2, just enough to make the phone call to her uncle that would save her.

Her uncle arrived quickly with police and Savoeun's mother. "When I saw Savoeun," says her mother, "I was not allowed to leave the car. They thought the trafficker might kill me."

Savoeun's uncle thrust his niece into

the car and bolted from the parking lot. Savoeun was safe, but she appeared drugged. "She sat silent and calm like a chicken with a sickness," he says. "I tried to talk to her, but she could not respond. We immediately came home."

HOME AGAIN

In Leuk Daek, the community surrounded Savoeun. Youth leaders from World Vision's children's club came to visit. They'd held a vigil at Savoeun's

house during her disappearance, providing moral support to Savoeun's family. Police guarded the family home, knowing Srey Pich had eluded law enforcement in Phnom Penh

and could still be a threat. To date, she has not been apprehended. Ming Chan took Savoeun to the hospital where she was treated for what appeared to be drug-induced memory loss. Savoeun spent many days in hiding but eventually became well enough to work again.

"I want to keep her safe and sound," says Savoeun's mother. "I don't want her to disappear. Every day I dream that my children will have good things in life."

Savoeun, now 17, is working as a waitress with her cousin in a province in northeast Cambodia. But she hopes to come back home and join a youth club—something she never got to do because of her work at the factory.

"I know the clubs help children and adults as well. I would definitely like to be involved," she says.

Savoeun is concerned for her younger sister, Srey Keo, who is 11. "I tell her to study hard. I tell her not to travel to a faraway place or she could be trafficked.

"I will protect my younger sister," she says, from brokers like Srey Pich.

And the people of Leuk Daek are standing by to help. ●

Albert Yu, Ratana Lay, Sopheak Kong, and Vichheka Sok of World Vision Cambodia contributed to this story.

"Every day I dream that my children will have good things in life."

—SAVOEUN'S MOTHER

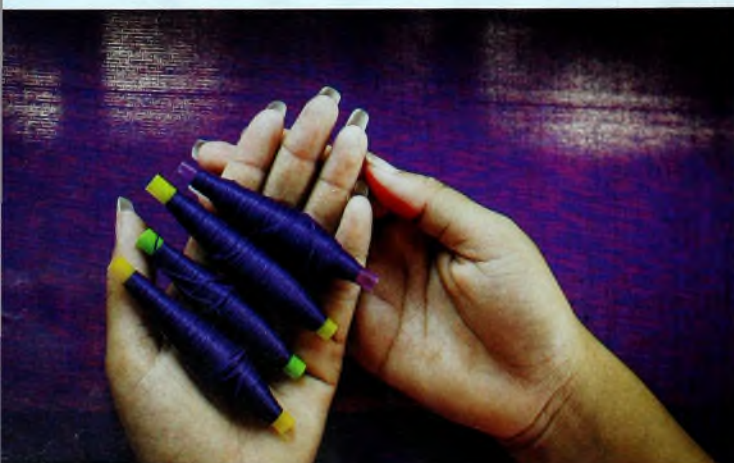


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Through sponsorship and development work, World Vision dives deep into Cambodia's communities with programs to prevent, protect, and restore children and their families. In Phnom Penh, centers provide care for girls rescued from the sex trade and children from the streets. At the village level, programs work to keep children safe from trafficking.





PROTECTING CHILDREN THROUGH PRAYER

Each day, hundreds of millions of children suffer sexual exploitation, labor in hazardous conditions, or struggle to survive on the streets. Often these children live in the world's poorest countries. Abuse, neglect, exploitation, gender discrimination, deprivation, and other forms of harm against children are among the greatest evils in the world. Here's how you can pray for these children, beseeching God to "deliver them from the hand of the wicked" (Psalm 82:4).

1 Pray for regions where children are at high risk.

In Africa, war and fighting can separate children from their families, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation. Children are also forced to join armed rebel groups. Famine and hunger compel families to make desperate choices about putting children to work or girls into early marriage. In Asia, children are trafficked for sex, sent to work in dangerous factories, or locked into domestic servitude. In Latin America, gang violence tears families apart and creates a culture of violence that draws youth into harmful activities.

» Use the stories in this magazine to pray for specific children, such as Savoeun in Cambodia (page 12) and Maria's children in El Salvador (page 22).

2 Pray for better practices and protections:


Child exploitation can be fought at many levels—governments can enact or strengthen laws around human trafficking and labor; corporations can ensure that children are not exploited along their supply chains; communities can take greater responsibility for collectively protecting children; families can value their children's well-being above economics.

» Pray for the power of God's love to counter greed and desperation and change hearts among those who can create better circumstances for children.

3 Pray for World Vision's work.

Inspired by World Vision founder Bob Pierce's prayer, "Let my heart be broken with the things that break the heart of God," World Vision works to protect children from exploitation and violence: preventing children from being trapped in abusive circumstances; protecting children with shelter and healthcare; and restoring children through life-skills training, education, and reintegration with families.

» Pray for strength and courage for staff at the forefront of this work, and for World Vision's fundraising efforts to help even more children.

A young child with dark skin and hair, wearing a purple t-shirt, looks directly at the camera with a serious expression. The child is holding a small green object in their hand. The background is dark with blurred lights, suggesting an outdoor night setting. Another child is partially visible to the left.

*“Arise, Lord! Lift up your
hand, O God. Do not
forget the helpless.”*

PSALM 10:12

JOIN THE HOPE PRAYER TEAM

Receive monthly prayer points
for children around the world.
www.worldvision.org/prayerteam

FIGHTING GANGS'

CONSUMING

FIRE

STORY AND PHOTOS BY HEIDI ISAZA

GANG WARFARE AND HIGH MURDER RATES MAKE EL SALVADOR A PERILOUS PLACE TO LIVE.

WORLD VISION'S COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

AND CHILD SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMS NOT

ONLY PROVIDE A WAY OUT OF POVERTY; THEY

ALSO PROMOTE YOUTH-FOCUSED COMMUNITY

PROGRAMS THAT KEEP KIDS FROM BEING DRAWN

INTO THE RED-HOT CYCLE OF VIOLENCE.





White horizontal bars, likely representing redacted text or a design element.

T

he sun shines bright on a small cinderblock house in a seemingly sleepy town outside of San Miguel, eastern El Salvador. Its inviting rays warm the air and illuminate the atmosphere.

But Maria Esperanza*, 27, and her 3-year-old twins, Carlos Antonio and Estrella Elizabeth, stay inside their small, dark home. A second wall blocks the sun's rays from entering the only window and hides the building and its inhabitants from the nearby street.

"I'm afraid," says Maria, "especially at night."

A year has passed since a case of mistaken identity shattered Maria and her family. Two gang members unsuccessfully attempted to kill her husband, Marcos, because

they thought they saw him talking to the police. The gang then demanded \$3,000, threatening to kill Marcos if he failed to pay. Unable to meet their demands, Marcos fled to the U.S., where he remains detained for attempting to illegally enter the country.

Life went from difficult to desperate for Maria and her children. Previously, Marcos earned \$4 a day delivering bread. "We were poor, but we lived in peace," Maria says longingly.

Now she can't work, fearing the

gang will take revenge on her or her children. "I don't have money to provide for my kids," she says.

One of the most terrifying aspects of Maria's story is that it is not unique. The effects of the region-wide gang epidemic is spreading through El Salvador and neighboring Guatemala and Honduras like an out-of-control wildfire, consuming or destroying anything and anyone in its path.

The terror has spilled over from major cities into small towns like Maria's. Day after day, most



LEFT: Life is difficult for Maria, without her husband to help her care for their children—especially when fear forces her to stay inside most of the time. BELOW: Carlos Antonio draws a picture to send to his father.



*Names changed to protect identity.



LEFT: "I am sorry for the crazy things I did," says Jonathan, once an aspiring gang member. BELOW: Kids play soccer in front of their houses in one of the most dangerous neighborhoods in El Salvador.

of the 14,000 residents live in fear of being robbed, held at gunpoint, threatened, extorted, or kidnapped. Even at home, families become targets as gang members telephone or leave notes in attempts to extort money.

"It affects everyone," says Marla Gonzales, World Vision's advocacy manager in El Salvador. "There are areas where you basically can't go. The levels of violence are so high that if you go in, you might not know how to get out."

The effects of gang crime permeate El Salvadorian society, leaving financial, physical, psychological, and emotional scars—impacting children and youth the most. "Our natural processes of development are being affected," Marla says, "not just the development of a person, but the development of the whole country."

THEN AND NOW

El Salvador, the smallest and most densely populated country in Central America, has a violent past and a violent present. In the 1980s and early 1990s a brutal civil war divided the country, causing destruction, killings, and mass migration. The British Broadcasting Corporation reports that nearly a million people fled as a result of the war.

Many of the men who escaped El Salvador found their way to Los Angeles where they became easy prey for the

well-established gangs that ruled the city's streets.

To protect themselves from L.A.'s notorious gangs, the El Salvadorian immigrants formed the now infamous *Mara Salvatrucha* (also known as the Mara or M.S. 13). But the fledgling gang's focus quickly shifted from defensive to offensive operations. Today, the Mara is one of the biggest, most violent, and best-organized criminal groups in the world.

In the mid-1990s, gang leaders detained in the U.S. were deported back to their countries of origin. Many gang members followed. El Salvadorians returned to a country recovering from civil war: anger was everywhere, opportunities were few, social services were scarce, corruption was rampant, and law enforcement was almost nonexistent.

When the flames of gang violence reached El Salvador, they found a generation of young people who were more than willing to fuel the fire—kids who were essentially abandoned during and after the war when their parents immigrated or worked long hours to survive.

"In the end, it is an identity problem," says Marla. "[The kids] don't know who their family is. They don't know their identity in Christ. For these boys and girls, these groups, the gangs ... are giving them the answer."

Jonathan Caleb, 16, is among those



who once thought gangs were the answer for his life. The tall, slender youth grew up angry. His dad, an agricultural worker, would spend long periods away, trying to make ends meet for his wife and three children. His family was the target of ridicule.

The pain of poverty and being an outcast filled Jonathan's mind with thoughts of violence and revenge. "I wanted power. My goal was to be a member of the Mara," he says matter-of-factly.

Jonathan admired their tattoos. "They were a thing to be feared," he says. "When people see them, they demand respect." He attempted to tattoo himself, writing the letters M.S. with a sewing needle and pen ink on his upper thigh. Thankfully, the homemade tattoo didn't leave a scar.



ABOVE: Jonathan demonstrates the vocational skills he learned as part of the Culture of Peace program. RIGHT: Daniel visits the grave of his friend who was killed recently; most community members believe his death is due to gangs.



GOD, NOT GANGS

World Vision has worked in Jonathan's community since 2004. Child sponsorship funding has improved access to education, clean water, food, health-care, and income opportunities. Sponsors and staff also reflect Christ's love to children and their families.

Faith-based organizations also are working to promote peace in El Salvador. Recently the Catholic Church initiated negotiations for a cease-fire among El Salvador gangs. Meanwhile, World Vision is providing youth with alternatives to gang activities by addressing poverty and identity issues. Culture of Peace, a new World Vision curriculum, empowers young people to express themselves and solve their problems with words instead of weapons.

Culture of Peace also challenges young people to dream about their future and make plans to achieve those dreams. The lessons are based on biblical concepts and speak to children's true identity—that in Christ they are loved, protected, and made new, no matter what their daily life is like. World Vision also provides teens with vocational

skills to earn income instead of taking the gangs' easy way out of poverty.

Jonathan's mom, Rosario, enrolled all three of her children in youth clubs teaching the curriculum. Jonathan wanted to quit when his friends dropped out, but Rosario stood firm.

Today, Jonathan is glad. "Before, I only thought about violence to solve my problems," he remembers. "[In the club], they taught me that violence doesn't solve anything.

"If it were not for the Culture of Peace program, I can only imagine what my life would be like" he says. "Who knows how many people I would have killed?"

Culture of Peace helped Jonathan let go of his anger, walk away from his gang aspirations, and come closer to the Lord. "Now, every day before I go to bed, I talk with God," he says. "This was something I learned from the World Vision workshops."

Rosario saw the biblical teaching take root in Jonathan. "One day he came and he hugged me," she remembers with tears in her eyes. "He told me, 'I've learned a lot, and I want to ask for

forgiveness.' He has changed a lot."

And, as one of the leaders of the youth club, Jonathan found what he was searching for. "I am really happy, because I have power. Without even looking for it, I have it, and I didn't have to use the violence to get it," he says.

MENTOR, NOT MARA

Daniel Cuellar, 18, is a model high school student—clean-shaven, wears neat clothes, and follows instructions.

But this Daniel is a far cry from the person he was just a few years ago. Although his childhood was relatively happy, he started down the wrong path with his friends. When he was 13, older kids on his soccer team offered him alcohol and drugs. "I let myself be influenced by them," he remembers.

Daniel's newfound friends joined gangs, and even through Daniel didn't, his association with them put his life in danger. On two occasions, gang members threatened to kill him.

"It's an ugly feeling," he says. "[Knowing] that someone wants to kill you ... because several of my friends have been killed by the gangs." Others

have been shot or are in jail. "They are disappearing," he says of his former friends and classmates.

Recently, a friend of Daniel's left the community to study in a nearby school known for gang activity. The 18-year-old boy was killed, and while his death is still under investigation, most community members assume gangs played a role. "It hurt a lot, because he was our friend. He got along with everyone," says Daniel, tearing up as he visits his friend's grave.

Daniel, a former sponsored child, was invited to a leadership workshop organized by World Vision. "They talked about life goals, always accompanied by biblical values, and this started changing my way of thinking," he says.

He stopped drinking, doing drugs, and hanging out with the wrong people. He started going to church, reading the Bible, and realizing the importance of focusing on his identity in Christ. "Having God present gives meaning to other things," he says.

Once Daniel turned his life around, he focused his attention on helping other teens in his community to do the same. With World Vision's support he started a youth club to provide kids with a positive alternative. "There isn't anything to do, so you go to the streets," he says.

During Saturday club meetings,

Daniel guides more than 20 teens between ages 13 and 20 through discussions, activities, and games about developing goals, avoiding temptation, and rooting their lives in the Word of God. "I want to help other youth," he says. "I have changed, and they can change too."

He hasn't given up hope that his former friends can change as well. "They still don't want to come [to the club]. But I am going to convince them to come," he says with a determined smile.

PREVENTION IS KEY

To fight violent gangs, El Salvador's government has tried direct attacks and repressive measures. Several thousand gang members are in El Salvador's jails, about a third of the prison population. According to El Salvador's major newspaper, the result has been prisons that are at 300 percent capacity and gangs that are even more organized.

Just as in fighting wildfires, the work has to focus on preventing flames from raging out of control. World Vision is addressing the issue of the "fuel" by empowering teens to reach out to their peers through youth-led clubs—providing young people with a viable alternative to joining gangs.

By keeping kids like Jonathan and Daniel out of the gangs and equipping them to encourage and inform their

peers, World Vision is helping to protect children and change society for innocent families like Maria's.

"[El Salvador] would be a different country, and that is what we are dreaming about," says Marla. "A country where we can resolve our problems without conflict ... where we can have peace ... and where the children can live safe and healthy. The worst thing we can do is lose hope." ●

Laura Matta and Baltazar Ventura of World Vision El Salvador contributed to this story.



WEBSITE BONUS Watch a video of how Daniel helps children resist the lure of gangs by scanning this QR Code or visiting www.worldvisionmagazine.org



ABOVE: Once on the cusp of being in a gang, today Daniel is finishing high school and dreams of being a teacher. LEFT: Daniel leads the youth club in his community. His lessons are based on the Bible and aim to give teens an alternative to gangs.





MARTIN NANAWA/WORLD VISION

HIGHER CALLING

A FORMER SPONSORED CHILD BECOMES A JESUIT PRIEST.

BY MARTIN NANAWA

Graduating magna cum laude from the Philippines' most prestigious university and embarking on a promising career as an accountant at the country's biggest auditing firm might easily satisfy many promising young men.

But Roseller Atilano, a former sponsored child, chose a higher calling—joining the brotherhood of the Society of Jesus and becoming a Jesuit priest.

He says the foundation for his current vocation was laid in first grade when he got to know several pastors who led Sunday school activities for sponsored children. "If you had asked me in grade 1 or 2 what I'd wanted to be when I grew up, I'd answer 'a pastor,' because they were real good to me," he says.

Given Ro's impoverished background, it's easy to understand why their kindness made such an impact.

Ro's father made a living driving a "jeepney"—an improvised bus, based on surplus World War II American jeeps. But even this meager income came to an end when his father died while Ro was still in kindergarten. The tough times forced Ro's two older brothers to drop out of school and his mother to take a factory job.

"I tell you, I've experienced poverty at its core," says Ro. "Not eating three times a day? We've experienced that. We came from a squatter's area. Our home was made of nipa [palm leaves] and plywood. We didn't own the land. The situation was very difficult."

Ro's dire circumstances easily qualified him for enrollment in World Vision's sponsorship program, which enabled him to stay in school. Ro still treasures the letters the Australian family that sponsored him sent through the years. "The program was very helpful, because that was the time when we were at our lowest," he says.

For Ro, being a sponsored child meant more than just having

the essentials for school. He participated in activities like Christmas programs and Sunday school classes. He recalls his excitement whenever he saw "aunt" Becky—World Vision staff member Rebecca Valerio who, whatever her official functions, always turned up bearing gifts.

Ro consistently earned top honors in elementary school and delivered the valedictorian address for his class. He says the pressure of maintaining good grades, then a requirement of the sponsorship program, drove him to excel.

Ro's academic success qualified him for a partial scholarship at a Catholic high school. Although his mother had no hope of paying for the balance of Ro's tuition fees, sponsorship provided further support to allow Ro to attend.

During high school Ro developed both academically and spiritually under the guidance of the Claretians—a religious community whose mission is to see life through the eyes of the poor. He continued to earn top grades and after graduation received a full scholarship to Ateneo de Zamboanga, a Catholic university in Western Mindanao.



COURTESY ROSELLER ATILANO

"...THE LORD WAS TELLING ME, DIDN'T YOU WANT TO BECOME A PRIEST? WHAT'S STOPPING YOU NOW?"

Ro studied finance, but in his freshman year he began to sense that his true calling might be the priesthood.

After graduating with honors, Ro was hired as a certified public accountant and fulfilled a long-standing ambition to help his family. He built his mother a new house and supported his younger sister through school. He also sponsored a child of his own. Writing letters to his sponsored child was especially moving for him. It reminded him of his own excitement when he received letters from his sponsor.

Even so, Ro became more absorbed in his accounting work. Then one night, he was almost killed after narrowly avoiding being struck by a speeding motorist. The experience caused him to reassess the path he was on. "When my work became the center of my life, I felt I lost my life," he says.

Ro took a government job teaching bookkeeping skills to impoverished farmers. The work gave him more peace, but in his heart he knew it was not where he was meant to be. One night he had a vivid dream: "It was like the Lord was telling me, Didn't you want to become a priest? What's stopping you now?"

Ro entered the Society of Jesus in 2006 and professed his vows in 2008. He has three more years of theological study before ordination. Once ordained, he wants to work among the poor. "I love that work, because I came from it," he says. ●

ABOUT World Vision

WHO WE ARE | World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to helping children, families, and their communities worldwide reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice.

WHOM WE SERVE | Motivated by our faith in Jesus Christ, we serve alongside the poor and oppressed—regardless of a person's religion, race, ethnicity, or gender—as a demonstration of God's unconditional love for all people.

WHY WE SERVE | Our passion is for the world's poorest children whose suffering breaks the heart of God. To help secure a better future for each child, we focus on lasting, community-based transformation. We partner with individuals and communities, empowering them to develop sustainable access to clean water, food supplies, healthcare, education, and economic opportunities.

HOW WE SERVE | Since 1950, World Vision has helped millions of children and families by providing emergency assistance to those affected by natural disasters and civil conflict, developing long-term solutions within communities to alleviate poverty, and advocating for justice on behalf of the poor.

YOU CAN HELP | Partnering with World Vision provides tangible ways to honor God and put faith into action. By working together, we can make a lasting difference in the lives of children and families who are struggling to overcome poverty. To find out how you can help, visit www.worldvision.org. ●

TO SPONSOR A CHILD see the envelope between pages 16 and 17. Or go to www.worldvision.org/ReadandRespond.

Life Through a Different Lens

BY ESTHER CHAPMAN

They say a picture is worth a thousand words, and that certainly has proved true for a group of teenagers in Tirana, Albania. Pictures, or specifically photographs, have given these youth the means to tell their peers about the dangers of child trafficking.

I met three of those teens—Adelajda, Mariglen, and Rodolf—in summer 2011 during my six-week stay in Albania, one of Europe's poorest nations. They told me stories about life in Bregu i Lumit, one of the capital city's most depressed neighborhoods. Here, children often provide for their families by begging or collecting scrap metal to sell. Young teenage girls sometimes accept marriage proposals from seemingly rich acquaintances, only to discover they've been sold into a life of slavery.

Adelajda, Mariglen, and Rodolf have themselves faced the trials of urban poverty. Adelajda, a soft-spoken 15-year-old, hasn't attended school for two years because her father is too ill to work, and the family can no longer afford school supplies. Sixteen-year-old Mariglen recalls having to work at a local car wash as a child to help the family make ends meet. And Rodolf, a confident 18-year-old, laments dropping out of school in seventh grade to become a musician—a life that led to alcohol abuse and promised little hope for a stable future.

Despite their hardships, all three say their lives changed for the better through a World Vision peer mentoring opportunity. They joined nine other young people in learning life skills and discussing issues affecting their community, such as poverty, child trafficking, and child labor. World Vision took this lesson a step further by loaning each youth a camera and asking them to take photographs in their community to illustrate these issues.

The results were dramatic. One photograph Mariglen captured shows tiny ripples of water disturbing an otherwise still pond. "We all know stories of children disappearing from our area," he writes in his caption.

Rodolf photographed a tiny sliver of light shining into a dark place. His caption reads: "For trafficked people, the sight of their future is limited. But there is hope, since we know that in a dark



COURTESY ESTHER CHAPMAN

"Defend the cause of the fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."

—PSALM 82:3-4

room, even a small window can shed light to cast away this darkness."

These photographs ultimately became a traveling exhibit that made its way to various locations in Tirana and to other Albanian cities. [You can see the photos at www.photovoices.org.] Project participants accompanied the exhibit at each showing, helping to facilitate discussions with community members or teenage peers about the dangers of child trafficking. The success of this project inspired World Vision to introduce two similar projects in other parts of Albania.

"People came up after the exhibition and said they were affected by what they saw and heard," said Rodolf. "It's a good thing that we're able to speak about this subject in this particular way. To say human trafficking is wrong—everyone knows that. But to bring it down to the level of showing them 'this is human trafficking' in a photograph, it gives it a wider perspective."

Speaking to these teens and seeing their photographs allowed me to see more clearly how art can open doors to educate communities, to deepen understanding, and to motivate change. In the case of Adelajda, Mariglen, and Rodolf, the experience of taking and sharing photographs empowered them to speak up and take steps to make a difference.

Prior to their participation in the photography project, they worked with fellow peer educators to build new trash bins for their garbage-strewn neighborhood. They also painted nature-themed murals designed to inspire their urban neighbors to respect the environment.

As for me, I now see my World Vision support through a new lens. I see it as a vehicle to make positive change for my sponsored child, yes. But child sponsorship also serves as a catalyst for broader change in cities like Tirana and countries like Albania. The lives of three youth, reflected in their photographs, showed me just how this can be done. ●

Esther Chapman is a freelance journalist, pastor's wife, and mother of four living in Sacramento, Calif. She and her family sponsor a child through World Vision.

RETROSPECT



ABBY STALSBERGEN/WORLD VISION

SWAZILAND

CHILDREN CATCH A RIDE HOME after attending a Bible club meeting in Nhlangano, Swaziland. About 430 children from several area churches gather together for one large club, where they learn Bible stories, memorize verses, and sing traditional songs. They also learn life lessons, including an age-appropriate skit about the dangers of HIV and AIDS. The World Vision-supported clubs bring bright smiles to children's faces, help them grow in faith, and prepare them for any bumps that might lie ahead on life's road.

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