

# WorldVision

SPRING 2013

DEPARTMENT

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DOMINICAN GIRLS DISCOVER THEIR TRUE POTENTIAL



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# CONTENTS

**ON THE COVER**  
Sponsored girls play near  
sugarcane fields in the  
Dominican Republic.  
ABBY STALS BROTEN/WORLD VISION



ABBY STALS BROTEN/WORLD VISION

## DEPARTMENTS

- 04 FROM THE PRESIDENT**  
Caring for girls today makes a difference for generations.
- 05 FRONTLINES**  
A former communist spy plants churches in Cambodia; more refugees flee violence; and an expert answers questions on gender inequity.
- 28 WHERE ARE THEY NOW?**  
A former sponsored child advocates for Kenya's Maasai people.
- 30 INSPIRATION**  
Five loaves and two fish: God asks us to bring all we have to him.
- 31 RETROSPECT**  
Two sisters in India are beacons of inspiration to girls around them.

**ABOVE**  
Beri Enecia, left, with  
her grandmother and  
mother.



Pray for women  
around the world  
to overcome the  
obstacles they face.

## FEATURES

- 12 God Made Me Free**  
In the Dominican Republic, girls are reaching their God-given potential with the help of dedicated World Vision staff.
- 20 Walking With the World's Women**  
The odds are stacked against women and girls at every stage of life in many developing countries. Pray about the challenges they face.
- 22 Pride and Prejudice**  
Though South Africa is one of the continent's most developed nations, 5.6 million residents are HIV positive—including two women choosing to live fruitful lives despite the disease's stigma and shame.



# Make a Difference for Generations

BY RICH STEARNS

**I**f you knew you could change the future by writing one letter, to whom would you write? A head of state? A celebrity? A CEO of a multinational corporation?

During my book-writing sabbatical last summer I paused to write one letter.

I chose to write to a girl born into a poor family in the mountains of Bolivia. Why? Because I believe that empowering a girl today is the best way to make a difference for future generations.

I'd met Ruth on a trip last year. Her story was striking. She had a powerful passion to pursue her education and become a lawyer so she could help abused women and children. Yet the obstacles Ruth faced were enormous.

Abandoned by her father at birth, Ruth grew up in a mud-brick home with a dirt floor and no running water or electricity. She came of age in a community where very few ever make it to high school, especially girls. Yet with World Vision's help, Ruth was able to attend elementary school.

Unfortunately, women are devalued in Bolivia, as in many places around the world where girls are often prevented from going to school.

Compared to boys, a girl growing up in the developing world is more likely to die before her fifth birthday. She is less likely to receive adequate food or healthcare; she will have fewer economic opportunities; and she is more likely to be forced to marry before the age of 16. If these conditions weren't enough, little girls today are too often victims of sexual and domestic abuse as well.

Ruth's education led her to become a student activist. Domestic abuse and alcoholism are major problems in her community. So Ruth led a small group to petition the government to open a legal office in the area where women and children could report abuse and find help and protection.

From this experience Ruth developed her own vision to become a lawyer and advocate for women and children who suffered abuse. But her family moved; she was made to live with an



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

Rich talks with Ruth about her future.

uncle; and her mother pulled her out of school, forcing Ruth to get a job.

When I met Ruth, she was 19. Against all odds, this girl, born into poverty in the mountains of Bolivia, had finished high school and enrolled in a university. She was still pursuing her dream to become a lawyer, to transform a nation.

Ruth is now getting the extra help she needs to finish her studies, but her struggle continues. In my letter to her, I told Ruth, "I believe in you. You have a dream, and I just know that you will never quit until you have reached it."

Because women and girls so powerfully affect their families and communities, there is no "anti-poverty intervention"

more effective than supporting a girl. The former U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan put it this way: "To educate girls is to reduce poverty."

In my next book, *Unfinished* (to be released April 30), I tell the story of Rahab, the prostitute who helped the spies from Israel enter the city of Jericho. Rahab would have faced similar obstacles to those confronted by many girls today. Yet her risky actions for God continue to have an impact. Centuries after her act of courage, we are told in the Gospel of Matthew that she was a direct ancestor to King David and eventually Jesus Christ.

Caring for girls and giving them a voice is one of the most powerful tools World Vision has to help poor communities—not just today, but for generations to come. ●

*"Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life."*

—PROVERBS 13:12

**RICH'S NEW BOOK**, *Unfinished*, challenges Christians to complete the mission Jesus gave to his church. *Unfinished* will be available April 30.



# FRONTLINES



## World Vision's Women of VISION

**RESTORING  
THEIR RIGHTFUL  
INHERITANCE**



## Breaking the Cycle of Injustice to Restore Quality of Life

There's something in every woman that objects to injustice. But when she sees it happening to the most vulnerable, there's an innate quality in her that rises against it even more fervently.

World Vision's Women of Vision is a movement of women intolerant of injustice. With a heart to see justice restored to the afflicted and oppressed, we're committed to defending and equipping those who are unable to defend themselves. Despite extensive world reaction, injustice continues to exist. So while the world waits, we won't.

Our vision is to break the cycle of injustice and give back that which has been stolen: a future and a hope, one that sees the rightful inheritance of every mother and child restored today and for generations to come—just as God has always purposed for their lives.

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y level. Yet Shahana is beating the  
future: "I want to finish my stu-  
e a schoolteacher to contribute in  
ful society." ●

LEARN MORE AT [WOMENOFVISION.ORG/CONTACT](http://WOMENOFVISION.ORG/CONTACT)

World Vision®



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Abandoned by her father at birth, she lived in a mud-brick home with a dirt floor and no electricity. She came of age in a community where few girls ever make it to high school, especially without Women of Vision's help, Ruth was able to attend high school.

Unfortunately, women are devalued in many places around the world where girls are not allowed to go to school.

Compared to boys, a girl growing up in a developing world is more likely to die before her mother, less likely to receive adequate food, and less likely to have fewer economic opportunities. In many places, girls are forced to marry before the age of 18. If they weren't enough, little girls today are also facing sexual and domestic abuse as well.

Ruth's education led her to become a lawyer. Domestic abuse and alcoholism are common in her community. So Ruth led a small group to open a legal office in the area where women can report abuse and find help and protection.

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**RESTORING THE RIGHT TO BE A CHILD, NOT A VICTIM**



**RESTORING A MOTHER'S RIGHT TO CHILD HEALTH**



**RESTORING A COMMUNITY'S RIGHT TO CLEAN WATER**

## IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD:

At least 2 million children are trafficked annually for child labor and sexual exploitation. - International Labour Office (ILO), 2006

One in three girls in developing countries, excluding China, will probably be married before they are 18. One in nine will be married before their 15th birthday. - United Nations (UN), 2012

An estimated 140 million girls and women worldwide are currently living with the consequences of female genital mutilation. - World Health Organization (WHO), 2011

Women and girls earning money reinvest an average of 90% of it into their families and communities (men average 30-40%). - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2010

*“Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed.”*

—Psalm 82:3 (NIV)

## While the World Waits, We Won't

Across the nation, local chapters of Women of Vision meet to serve, support, and advocate for those in need. United by our passion and faith in Christ, it's a mutually life-changing experience, as together, we put into action the heart of God for the world's oppressed.

Women of Vision chapters are committed to pray for the families and communities that benefit from our financial support; to educate ourselves about global and local issues affecting these communities; to advocate for specific issues of injustice; and to serve local ministries in our own communities.

**To get involved with Women of Vision, see the card between pages 28-29.**



# FRONTLINES



MUHAMMAD ALI/WORLD VISION

f

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

**Around the world**, books open young imaginations to a world of possibilities. Yet millions of children never know the joy of reading. For girls growing up in northwest Pakistan, education does not come easily. First came a Taliban-imposed ban on girls' education; then fighting erupted as the military flushed out Taliban militants.

Local families fled to neighboring districts. Many children, including 10-year-old Shahana (in blue), were forced to suspend their education for up to two years. Shahana's family returned home to find food scarce, livelihoods disrupted, and schools

heavily damaged by the fighting.

World Vision is helping to return a sense of normalcy to children from Shahana's community. While students resume their pursuit of knowledge, World Vision is rebuilding their school, along with 19 other schools damaged in the conflict.

Pakistan is one of the few countries where female enrollment remains low even at the primary level. Yet Shahana is beating the odds and has big plans for her future: "I want to finish my studies with good grades to become a schoolteacher to contribute in developing a literate and peaceful society." ●



## REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PEOPLE



The number of people fleeing conflict and disaster is expected to continue to rise over the next decade—including a steep rise in the number of those displaced within their own countries—according to the United Nations refugee agency. Here's a look at two countries with large numbers of both internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees.

**SYRIA** | Since fighting began in March 2011, more than **710,000 Syrians** have fled to neighboring Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, and Lebanon to escape the violence. In Lebanon, most of the 100,000-plus refugees are in the north and Bekaa Valley, where World Vision has worked for 10 years and is preparing long-term solutions. Unlike most refugee situations, Syrians in Lebanon aren't living in camps; instead they are staying with host families or in rental accommodations. Lebanon's public schools are now open to Syrian children, and World Vision operates Child-Friendly Spaces to give refugee kids a safe place to learn and play. An additional **1.2 million Syrians** are displaced within their own country.

**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO** | The central African country is "in the midst of one of the most complex humanitarian crises in the world," says Valerie Amos, U.N. Under-Secretary General. Since April 2012, more than **220,000 people** have fled their homes to escape conflict between government forces and the rebel group. More than **650,000 IDPs** have settled in temporary camps in Kivu province, located in northeastern Congo. An additional **43,000 refugees** have fled the country and settled in makeshift camps in neighboring Rwanda and Uganda.

### WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A REFUGEE, AN INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSON (IDP), AND AN ASYLUM SEEKER?

A **refugee** has been forced to flee his or her country to a different country because of war, violence, or persecution due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in certain social groups. Usually refugees aren't able to return home or are afraid to do so.

An **internally displaced person (IDP)** has also been forced to flee his or her home for the same reasons as a refugee but has not crossed an international border. IDPs, unlike refugees, are not protected by international law or eligible to receive many types of aid. The number of IDPs has increased significantly in recent years as the nature of war has changed and internal conflicts replace wars between countries. Because IDPs remain within the borders of their country, the responsibility for helping them falls on their national government. In many cases, governments of developing countries lack the capacity or the will to aid marginalized, displaced groups.

An **asylum seeker** is someone who has moved across an international border, applied for refugee status, and is awaiting the determination of his or her case. Refugees are granted protection status outside of their host country, while asylum seekers ask for protection after arriving in a host country. ●





CRISTINA JOYA / FEELGOODWORLD VISION

## PHILIPPINES | NEW HOPE FOR PEACE IN THE SOUTH

An agreement signed in October 2012 marked the end of a 40-year insurgency between the Philippine government and Muslim rebels. The peace agreement sets the stage for new economic and social development for the Mindanao island group in the southern part of the country.

Philippine President Benigno Aquino and representatives of the Moro Islamist Liberation Front—the country's largest Muslim rebel group—signed the peace deal that will give the Muslim-dominated region more political independence and control over its resources.

World Vision has worked in this area since the late 1980s and, through child sponsorship, has helped improve the quality of life by reducing poverty and encouraging dialogue between battling parties.

In December 2012, Typhoon Bopha struck the Philippines. The Mindanao region was especially hard-hit by the storm's torrential rains and 100 mph winds. Extensive flooding and landslides killed more than 1,000 people in the Philippines. ●

## UNITED STATES | Millions struggle with hunger



**NEARLY 15 PERCENT** of U.S. households are considered to be food insecure at some point in the year—that's **more than 50 million Americans, including 16.7 million children.** According to a recent USDA report, the rate of food insecurity in the U.S. has climbed nearly 5 percent since 2000, with a notable uptick in 2007-2008. While the effects of hunger aren't always obvious, chronic undernourishment can lead to physical problems in children such as anemia, stunted growth, frequent sickness with slow recovery, and fatigue. World Vision works in 14 urban and rural locations across the U.S. to provide services and

resources to families that help break the cycle of poverty and hunger. ●

**Twenty states have food insecurity rates at or above the national average of 14.7 percent. The top 10 are:**

1. Mississippi: 19.2%
2. Arkansas: 19.2%
3. Texas: 18.5%
4. Alabama: 18.2%
5. Georgia: 17.4%
6. North Carolina: 17.1%
7. New Mexico: 16.5%
8. Kentucky: 16.4%
9. California: 16.2%
10. Missouri: 16%

## FAST FACT: WOMEN & LITERACY



**One in four women** in the world can't read a simple sentence in their own language. Women account for **two-thirds** of the 796 million illiterate adults around the globe.



# FROM SPY TO SPIRITUAL LEADER

*New book: A story of faith in the killing fields.*



COURTESY AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST INTERNATIONAL

Barnabas Mam joins other pastors to baptize 590 Cambodians in 2007.



**A** communist sent to spy on a World Vision evangelistic rally in the 1970s instead found faith in Jesus. That faith helped him survive genocide in Cambodia and eventually led him to become a central figure in the rebuilding of the Cambodian church.

In *Church Behind the Wire* (Moody Publishers, 2012), Pastor Barnabas Mam tells the story of his conversion to Christianity after hearing World Vision President Stan Mooneyham preach in Phnom Penh in 1972.

As a member of one of several communist factions that flourished at the time, Barnabas was tasked with identifying

rally leaders to report on them. But when Stan spoke, Barnabas completely forgot his mission. Stan shared Jesus' story of the prodigal son, a character with whom Barnabas readily identified.

Barnabas fled when Vietnamese forces invaded Cambodia and went on to plant 16 churches in a Thai refugee camp along the Cambodian border. The refugee churches' energetic leaders returned to Cambodia in the early 1990s, spreading out to establish more than 400 churches throughout the country.

Barnabas also planted Living Hope in Christ Church in Phnom Penh, which now has 40 satellite churches nationwide. ●

—James Addis



## CHANGE AGENT



COURTESY PAUL RUGGIERO

**NAME** Ruggiero Family | Eddington, Maine

**PROGRAM** Gift Catalog

**THE BUZZ** When Becky Ruggiero read *The Hole in Our Gospel*, she was inspired by World Vision President Rich Stearns' call to Christians to combat abject poverty. Becky doesn't have a lot of free time. She's a full-time mom to preschoolers Benjamin and Elizabeth, stepmom to 14-year-old Lindsey, and part-time college instructor. So Becky involved her family. Paul, her husband, built a chicken coop and stocked it with 15 hens that lay about a dozen eggs daily. The children help care for the hens. The family set up a website and now sells the eggs. As the family's finances grew, they purchased items for families in need through the World Vision Gift Catalog. Recently the Ruggieros introduced four Nigerian Dwarf goats to their mini-farm, which will eventually allow them to add homemade cheese and other milk products to the wholesome food items they sell. ●

“This is like my gift to God while I'm at home. We will do this and make that eternal difference.”

—BECKY RUGGIERO

**TO SHARE YOUR LOVE** through the Gift Catalog, visit [www.worldvision.org/giftcatalog](http://www.worldvision.org/giftcatalog).

## MY WORLD VISION








VICHHEKA SON/WORLD VISION

*Step into your sponsored child's world at [myworldvision.org](http://myworldvision.org).*

**THIS MUST-VISIT WEBSITE** for sponsors provides a treasure trove of information about your child and his or her community—right at your fingertips. New features are being added all the time, so check back often.

The new “My Sponsorship Guide” section provides tips on ways to connect with your sponsored child, as well as lots of videos and stories from around the world. And take a look at the latest innovations for sending email to your sponsored child—choose your own email background design and attach a photo. Visit [www.myworldvision.org/emailmychild](http://www.myworldvision.org/emailmychild).

### WHAT YOU CAN DO ON MY WORLD VISION:

-  Print out your 2012 giving statement
-  Email your sponsored child and send a photo
-  See photos from your child's community
-  Learn how to send a gift to your child
-  Share online with friends

Don't miss out on new opportunities to connect with your sponsored child. Start to explore at [www.myworldvision.org](http://www.myworldvision.org).





Cindy Breilh watches women who have survived gender-based violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo make shopping baskets to earn income.

### Why is focusing on gender equity important?

Gender inequity is at the heart of many issues in developing communities, so that's why it's a cross-cutting theme in all of World Vision's work. Failing to understand and address gender inequity can inhibit the success of World Vision's contribution to the well-being of girls and boys. When children are nurtured, loved, and treated with equal dignity, justice, and respect—regardless of their gender—they experience this as an extension of God's love.

### How do U.S. women engage with gender realities from such a vastly different context?

Recently, when I was in Kenya, one woman was close to tears as she exclaimed, "I want what you women have in the United States. I want to be able to make decisions for myself and my children, have my own money, go to school, choose whom I marry, and make healthcare decisions for my children." We have such opportunity and freedom in the United States, which makes it more difficult to understand what women and girls are experiencing around the world.

My job is to open women's eyes to these very issues. Women of Vision mobilizes Christian women to learn how we can respond, starting with what God is calling us to do. We pray, advocate, serve, fundraise, and go to the field to learn firsthand from the women and children we help. ●



Cindy is the national director of Women of Vision, World Vision's U.S.-based mobilization effort to equip, protect, and advocate for women in developing countries.

# ASK THE EXPERT

*Cindy Breilh talks about gender equality, why it's important, and what can be done.*

**Your career has taken you down many paths—nursing, marketing, business, and education. Why focus on issues that affect women and girls?**

Those opportunities opened my eyes to the connectedness of life and the complexity of community development. But it was while spending time with rural families in Central America that my passion for strengthening women and girls was cemented. I often say that "as go the women in a community, so goes the community." Where women are included and empowered, communities flourish.

**What are women's most pressing needs globally?**

In some countries, a cultural preference for sons means daughters are less likely to survive until birth and, if they do survive, may be neglected, abandoned, or even killed. Girls who survive infancy are more likely to be kept home from school and may be the last to receive food or medical care when resources are scarce. Many women are not entitled to own property or to inherit land. They move from the authority and "ownership" of their fathers to that of their husbands. Social exclusion, violence, female genital mutilation, trafficking, restricted mobility, and early marriage deny women and girls the right to health and fundamentally deny them their individual value.

**How does gender discrimination impact a developing nation?**

Take a look at a map of countries in conflict or in extreme poverty and consider the status of women in those places. There is a correlation between gender inequity, poverty, and conflict. When a country suppresses half its population, it gets half the ideas, half the labor, half the productivity. We know that increasing a woman's earning power has a tremendous effect on her family, community, and nation. The power of the purse works in developing nations, too!

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY** is March 8. Find out how to get involved at [www.womenofvision.org](http://www.womenofvision.org) or see the insert between pages 8 and 9.





COURTESY MADELINE MACKINNON

## WHY I LOVE BEING A CHILD SPONSOR

**MADELINE MACKINNON, 11**  
INDIANAPOLIS, IND.

**One night** I decided I wanted to sponsor a child, so I talked to my parents. We agreed that instead of birthday presents, I would sponsor a girl in Guatemala. I love my sponsored child and immediately thought of her as a member of my family. I also love looking at the pictures of all the children on World Vision's website and wish I could sponsor every one. As I was searching the site, I found out about the Horn of Africa crisis—and I knew I could help more children. World Vision sent me photos and information on 10 children who needed sponsors, plus posters and brochures. During our roller-skating fundraiser, five out of 10 children were sponsored, and I raised \$1,150 for the food crisis. It is a privilege serving Jesus in this way. ●

### TELL US YOUR STORY.

Why do you love being a child sponsor? Write the editors at [wvmagazine@worldvision.org](mailto:wvmagazine@worldvision.org).

## GIVING GIRLS A VOICE

When Academy Award-nominated director Richard Robbins set out to make "Girl Rising"—a film about girls in developing countries struggling to get an education—he was amazed at the girls' strength of character.

"I just couldn't believe they were as strong and as powerful and as capable as they were," he says. "I expected to find people who were more broken."

Despite living in dire conditions, the film's 10 girls from 10 countries demonstrate a surprising determination to rise above their circumstances. Several humanitarian organizations, including World Vision, helped the film producers find suitable subjects. World Vision connected the filmmakers to an Indian girl who lives on the street and an Ethiopian girl who resists early marriage.

While the girls' living situations are often heartbreaking, the film focuses on the girls themselves, not on their circumstances. "I think that Western audiences visiting the developing world tend to see the surroundings because that is what is unfamiliar to us. But the characters get lost," Richard says.

To keep the girls at the center of the film, Richard enlisted prominent women writers in each of the 10 countries, convinced that they could most accurately capture the perspective of each girl.

The writers became closely acquainted with their subjects and wrote their stories. "We really tried to enter the girls' world and see it the way that the girls see it," Richard says.

Two common threads emerged: The girls didn't wallow in self-pity, and they shared a thirst for education. For example, a girl might resent that she has to walk miles to get clean water, not so much for the inconvenience but for the fact that she could have better spent the time in the classroom.

"Girl Rising" is part of the 10x10 campaign to raise awareness and support for girls' education in developing nations. ●

—James Addis



SAM THEODORE/WORLD VISION

"GIRL RISING" will be in theaters in March. To learn more about the film and the 10x10 campaign, visit [www.10x10act.org](http://www.10x10act.org).




A young girl in a bright green t-shirt and dark blue jeans is captured in the middle of a powerful baseball swing. She is barefoot and stands on a dusty ground. In the background, there are several shacks with walls made of mud bricks and roofs of corrugated metal. A black dog is visible in the distance. To the left, the back of another person's head and shoulder is visible, wearing a white sleeveless shirt. The word "GOD" is printed in large, white, outlined letters in the upper right quadrant of the image.

GOD





MADE



A friend to sponsored child  
Beri Enecia, right, Esteban  
Cuevas heard about  
World Vision through  
volunteering at church.  
"I realized I could reach  
more youth through World  
Vision," he says.

# ME FREE

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, TEEN PREGNANCY, AND EARLY  
MARRIAGE CAN DERAIL A GIRL'S FUTURE IN THE DOMINICAN  
REPUBLIC. BUT NOT IN ESTEBAN CUEVAS' NEIGHBORHOOD.

BY KARI COSTANZA PHOTOS BY ABBY STALSEROTEN

**M**ore major league baseball players are born in the Dominican Republic than in any country outside the United States. But the players in an afternoon game in a community near Haiti's border aren't dreaming of a contract with the Yankees. They just want to have fun.

Everyone on the field is a girl.

"Where are your pants?" calls World Vision staff member Esteban Cuevas, 37.

"I couldn't find them," Jesenia Duval yells back after a solid hit sends her scrambling toward first base, her red skirt and bare feet flying.

"She wants to follow in my path," says Esteban, nodding at Jesenia, 23, who is now safe at first.

A crowd is watching the game: mothers juggling babies, shirtless men in lawn chairs, and scads of little boys, one in extremely informal attire for a baseball game—just his underwear and a pair of pink Crocs. He executes a perfect handstand near the batter's box.

—continued on page 14



Work in the sugarcane fields, below, drew a steady flow of Haitians to the Dominican Republic, but today, machines have replaced many workers.

Spewing dust, a motorbike roars by, the driver's cap bearing the initials of the nearby sugar plantation—the backbreaking industry that drew most of the villagers' grandparents and some great-grandparents here from Haiti generations ago.

To reach home plate, Jesenia will have to sidestep a goat that is devouring the grass near first base and a trio of cows that are slowly lumbering through the outfield.

With a *cling!* the metal bat meets the ball. The right fielder catches the pop fly for a third out. Jesenia and all the outfielders run in. Except for the goat, who stays at first.

## THE BATTLE OF THE GENDERS

These empowered, energetic girls don't just play together. Before each game, they pray and talk through issues that keep many Dominican girls from reaching their full potential in a nation where females regularly encounter gender-driven roadblocks, violence, and even death.

Just two weeks before, 80 miles north in Santiago, it happened again. Miguelina Martinez feared her husband so much that she'd gone to court 18 times to get a restraining order. She even made a video and posted it on YouTube. But a justice system slow to protect women let down the 31-year-old mother of four young children.







"THE SERVICES ARE VERY LIMITED—ESPECIALLY IN HEALTH, WATER, EDUCATION, AND GOOD HOUSING."

—EMILIO DESENA,  
World Vision project manager

Left: Jesenia Duval is a youth leader in the community and a role model for the younger girls on her baseball team—a mentor and a friend. Below: As a sponsored child, 5-year-old Flor Claris benefits from the improvements World Vision brought to her community.

limited. When Jesenia needed a birth certificate, it was Esteban Cuevas who took her to the nearby city, Barahona, to fight for her right to paperwork identifying her as Dominican. Today Jesenia is working toward a degree in counseling at a nearby university.

#### EMPOWERING YOUTH

Jesenia and many other youth have grown up in *bateyes*, communities made up of families of Haitian ancestry who worked in the sugar industry. To the newcomer's eye, a *batey* looks like pictures of Oklahoma during the Great Depression. Some families still crowd into *barracónes*, long houses with 12 small rooms on each side. Sixty percent don't have water at home. Two out of three families have no bathroom.

"These communities—the government doesn't pay any attention to them," says project manager Emilio Desena, a 23-year World Vision veteran. "The services are very limited—especially in health, water, education, and good housing." Eighty percent of the population is unemployed after the sugar industry replaced manpower with machinery.

Esteban is committed to these struggling

Her husband entered the beauty parlor where Miguelina worked, bearing a bouquet of flowers. Hidden within the blossoms was a knife. He killed her, stabbing her more than 25 times.

"Statistics show that every 48 hours, a woman is killed by her ex-husband or her husband," says Catalina Encarnación, World Vision's advocacy coordinator in the Dominican Republic. One reason for the alarming statistic is that there is better domestic violence reporting in the island nation of 9.3 million people. "The other reason," Catalina says, "is the Dominican man is not ready to take 'no' as an answer from women."

It's challenging enough to be female, but some Dominican girls, including Jesenia, endure even deeper prejudice because of their Haitian descent. Generations ago, immigrants came to work in the sugarcane fields and stayed, and their Dominican-born children are still often denied citizenship.

World Vision fights for girls like Jesenia; otherwise, her options for education would be







The *barracónes*, long houses where families live together in one room, were built as temporary shelters for the sugarcane workers but eventually became permanent.

communities in part because he knows of childhood hardship. As a child, Esteban was sent to work in Santo Domingo, selling produce in the market from 3 or 4 a.m. to 8 p.m. “I worked every day. There was no Sunday. There was no Saturday.” Yet he still managed to go to school, and today he is working toward a university degree in counseling. “So far it has taken 10 years,” he says.

To help rebuild these struggling communities, Esteban created a dynamic outreach that attracts what he calls “a big net of youth.” He invites young people into a range of clubs that target their interests. Youth can participate in baseball, soccer, and even chess; there’s a club for caring for the environment and clubs to build kids’ faith.

Esteban meets with club leaders like Jesenia next to an old school bus parked by his house. They sit in white plastic chairs and talk through the issues facing the teens in the neighborhood.

Repairing the gap between genders is Esteban’s primary focus. He works with boys and girls to build their self-esteem and respect for one another.

“I’ve learned how to stop domestic violence and how to treat women right,” says Wascar Peña. The 19-year-old, who hopes to become a doctor, says he is learning things from Esteban that his parents did not know. “I am different from the former generation.”

In churches and homes across the *bateyes*, Esteban counsels couples whose marriages are in trouble. He leads by example. “He’s a good father,” says his son Emanuel, 15. “He’s a good husband. I’ve learned many things—how to treat a woman well.” Daughter Génesis, 13, agrees. “I have never seen a father like this,” she says.

Esteban is different because of his faith. “[God] is the reason I breathe,” he says. Faith infuses World Vision’s work. “Since we promote the values of God’s kingdom in everything we do, this helps a lot. People learn easier to accept



Once shy and withdrawn, Beri has learned to preach in her community, right, and in her church, below.

differences,” he explains. “You start seeing how Dominicans accept the Haitians in their community. When people see how we work, how we promote acceptance, they quickly adapt to this way of thinking.”



World Vision®



EUGENE LEE/WORLD VISION

# EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO A BETTER LIFE FOR GIRLS.

Educated girls live fuller, healthier lives—and future generations benefit as well from their skills and wisdom. Together we can equip women and girls to add their voices and gifts to their communities' efforts to break the cycle of poverty.

Learn more about how education impacts Beri and other girls—and ways you can pray for them—on page 20.

## TEACHING OUT TO BERI

Esteban has become a father figure to Beri. Estefany Peña Enecia, 16, a sponsored child who lives with her grandmother, Nonona, 80; her mother, Laura, 34; her sister, Yocabelys, 13; and several cousins. Laura got pregnant when she was Beri's age, and like so many women here, he is now a single mom. After a tumultuous relationship, her husband left the family nine years ago.

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To help rebuild the community ties, Esteban created a program that attracts what he calls “young people” and invites young people to target their interests. He focuses on baseball, soccer, and education for caring for the environment and kids’ faith.

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Esteban's work comes at a cost. "Sometimes I forget to eat because I'm moving around so much," he says. Not eating and worrying about kids have created health issues for Esteban, but there is so much to do.

"I've been able to see the difference," Esteban says. "Teens that marry after being involved with World Vision prepare for marriage. They don't live from today to tomorrow. They plan for the future."

This kind of planning comes out of frank talk with teens about gender issues, especially the hardships that come with teen pregnancy and how to avoid this pitfall. Elena Ramirez runs the lab at the local health center, where World Vision is one of a team of partners. She says there are now fewer instances of teen pregnancy in the *bateyes* than a decade ago. "It's being controlled," she says. "I think it is because of the information that World Vision is giving to teenagers."



#### REACHING OUT TO BERI

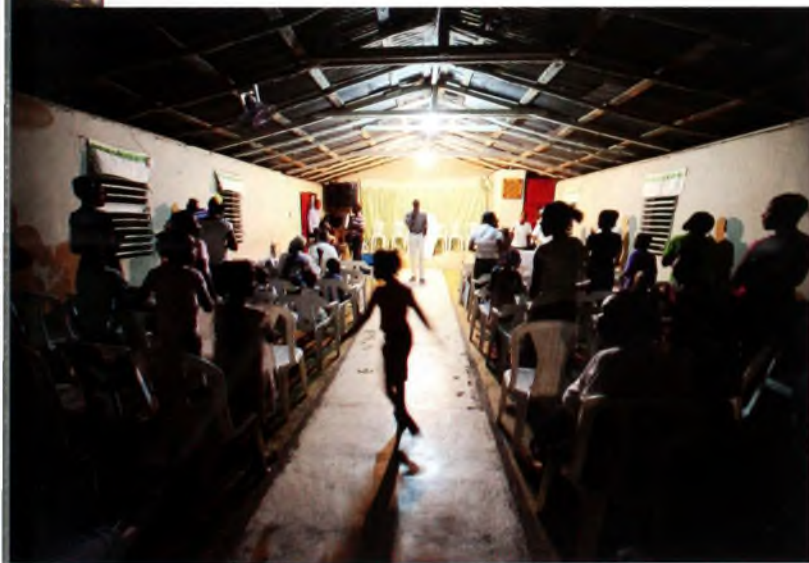
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—BERI ESTEFANY PEÑA ENECIA, 16, a sponsored child

you feel? How are things going? It helped break the ice. For me, he is a special person.” After that, says her mother, “she began to change.”

Esteban worked with his friend and colleague Pastor David Perez Julis to involve Beri in church activities. She teaches a children’s Sunday school class, helps lead the women’s services, and preaches on Friday nights in the *bateyes* to anyone who will listen. For Beri, free time is an opportunity for ministry. “She should take her bed to church,” laughs Laura.

At the heart of World Vision’s success in Beri’s *batey* is integrating the youth clubs with the church. World Vision provides curriculum and training to local churches. “In the past, the churches never got together for anything. World Vision helps the churches work together,” says Pastor David.

#### COUPLING FAITH AND WORKS

Since 1997, child sponsorship has fostered transformation in the Dominican Republic, with more than 5,000 children currently benefiting from child-focused programs in this community alone. Every activity integrates spiritual nurture and engages both genders. Before World Vision began sponsorship, healthcare was nonexistent for the population of 40,000. Today, pregnant mothers and children pack into the health center for prenatal care and treatment.



Before sponsorship, washing and hygiene were arduous and sometimes dangerous for *batey* families. Beri’s family had no running water and no bathroom. “I always guarded [my girls] when they went to the bathroom in the sugarcane fields,” says Laura, for fear they could be attacked. Washing clothes used to be a day-long affair at a nearby river. Three years ago, World Vision worked with community members to build a tank for the *batey*. Now the family bathes and washes dishes and clothes at home. “That was a blessing from the Lord,” Laura says.

Beri has been blessed with opportunity. In one week alone, she traveled with Esteban to the capital, Santo Domingo, to advocate against an initiative that would add 15 years to juvenile crime sentences. She attended a workshop on emergency response, where she emerged with marching orders to help prepare her school for disasters, especially hurricanes and flooding. On Sunday, in a recreation center World Vision helped the community build, Beri taught nearly 100 children the story of Joshua and Caleb—pausing just once to break up a little-boy fistfight. She loves to work with children.

Beri may be patient, but she is driven. “I want a clear path. I don’t want any obstacles in my way,” she says. Beri plans to marry at age 24 but

To help girls overcome challenges in the Dominican Republic, World Vision balances its work between genders, working through clubs, schools, and the church.





will wait several years to have children. Her goal is to marry an educated Christian man.

Once paralyzed by sorrow, Beri now defines faith as a verb. "It is the movement of a person," she says. "I used to be shy and closed. I have been opening myself up to the world. Through World Vision, I have been learning so much. As I learn, my faith grows."

It doesn't mean Beri is out of the woods. "Sometimes she gets depressed," says Pastor David, "but she asks for help when she needs it." That's when Pastor David goes to Beri's side—with prayers, a little advice, and Bible verses to bring her comfort. There will be setbacks, but the worst, says her mother, has passed.

Beri expresses it simply: "God made me free," she says.

This is what sponsorship is all about—freedom for youth of the *bateyes*—from poverty, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, and the allure of poor choices. For Esteban, it's hard work, the kind that makes him forget to eat sometimes and other times sick with worry. But there's always a friend like Pastor David to lean on, a whispered prayer—and somewhere in this *batey*, there's bound to be a baseball game. ●

—Anneli Herrera and Claudia Martinez  
of World Vision in the Dominican  
Republic contributed to this story.

## READ

how World Vision's Kari Costanza discovers strength in the midst of poverty while covering this story: [www.worldvisionmagazine.org](http://www.worldvisionmagazine.org).

Beri spends time with her favorite people, the children of her *batey*. "They are the future," she says.





# WALKING WITH THE WORLD'S WOMEN

Pray for women and girls all over the world who face obstacles—some even before they are born—that prevent them from living the abundant life God intends for them. Around the world millions of women and girls lack access to nutrition, education, legal freedom, and healthcare—perpetuating the cycle of poverty. We invite you to join World Vision in praying for the challenges that keep women and girls from reaching their full potential.

ILLUSTRATION BY OWEN GATLEY



## CHILDHOOD

**Two out of three** out-of-school children worldwide are girls. Nearly **two-thirds** of the world's 796 million illiterate adults are female.

*Pray for parents to see the wisdom of sending their daughters to school, and ask God to honor the desire of girls' hearts to become educated. Thank God that more girls around the world are attending primary and secondary schools.*

## ADULTHOOD

Women in sub-Saharan Africa collectively spend about **40 billion hours** a year collecting water.

*Pray for women and girls who spend hours each day transporting sometimes unclean water to their homes. Ask God to protect them on these treks and to bless the work of organizations that provide clean water to communities.*

Women work nearly **two-thirds** of the world's working hours, yet earn only **10 percent** of the world's income. Educated women re-invest **90 percent** of their income in their family; men re-invest **30 to 40 percent**.

*Pray for women to be equipped to start their own businesses and gain positive influence in family decision-making so family members can live healthier lives. Bring to God the hope that all cultures will more fully recognize the value and rights of women and girls.*





## BIRTH

Neonatal mortality accounts for almost **40 percent** of deaths among an estimated **9.7 million** children younger than 5.

*Ask God to protect baby girls, providing them with the support and resources they need to grow strong and healthy.*

## ADOLESCENCE

Every year, an estimated **10 million** girls become teenage brides, hindering their chances of attending school and exposing them to an increased risk of sexual and domestic violence.

*Ask God to provide parents with the resources they need to resist offering their young daughters in marriage to older men. Pray also for the release of girls who are trapped and abused in the commercial sex trade or in child labor.*

## MOTHERHOOD

**More than 350,000** women die each year due to complications from pregnancy or childbirth, and **99 percent** are in developing countries. Most deaths can be prevented with access to proper nutrition and medical care.

*Pray for the health of pregnant women, especially those who face the risks of childbirth without doctors or midwives.* ●

SOURCES: UNICEF, UNESCO, U.N., AND USAID



# PRIDE & PREJUDICE

SOUTH AFRICA'S PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY DENIES WOMEN A VOICE ON ISSUES AFFECTING THEM MOST: GENDER EQUALITY, CHILD ABUSE, RAPE, AND HIGH HIV RATES. BUT NOW MANY ARE STANDING AGAINST THE DENIAL AND PREJUDICE ASSOCIATED WITH HIV BY LEARNING TO LIVE PRODUCTIVE LIVES.

BY DEAN R. OWEN

PHOTOS BY EUGENE LEE



Above: Emily Mphahlele waits at the hospital for a doctor to review her anti-retroviral prescription.

Left: A personal progress chart tracks Emily's monthly dosage.





**T**his month—and every month—Bikeledi Emily Mphahlele, 43, walks an hour on dirt roads and through fields strewn with cow dung and garbage to reach the nearest community health clinic.

She makes her way down a dark hallway with others staring at her, a gauntlet of embarrassment Emily must endure before she finally arrives at the building for HIV patients, which is separated from other patients.

She waits—sometimes several hours—to spend a few fleeting minutes with a physician.

The doctor reviews Emily's latest test results, asks a couple of questions, and hands her a small piece of paper that represents the distinction between life and death. As she leaves, she clutches this prescription for her next government-funded monthly regimen of anti-retroviral medications (ARVs).



Like thousands of other women in Botshabelo, a sprawling township of 210,000 black South Africans, Emily is living with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Diagnosed in 2009, she began taking ARVs in early 2010.

Unlike many in Botshabelo, Emily is open and candid about her HIV status. Her transparency is rooted in the belief that she can help others overcome the relentless stigma still associated with AIDS. But it comes with a price.

"I am sometimes afraid of my husband," she says, tears forming at the edges of her eyes. "He has told his sister, 'I will kill her, and I will kill myself.' I have been sleeping alone for six years since HIV. I have not gone outside our marriage."

### DENIAL'S DEADLY LEGACY

Emily is one of more than 5.6 million South Africans infected with HIV, compared to 1.2 million Americans. Nearly 1,100 South Africans will contract HIV today, and tomorrow, and

the next day. More than 314,000 die every year, according to UNAIDS.

In contrast, in countries such as Uganda, HIV infection rates—while still devastating—have stabilized due to strong government leadership and timely public health campaigns.

Some contend AIDS persists in South Africa largely because many don't understand the pandemic and deny its pervasive presence. Many attribute the nation's culture of denial to former South African President Thabo Mbeki, who publicly questioned the link between HIV and AIDS during his time in office from 1999 to 2008. The president's views slowed the public health response to rising HIV infection rates and perpetuated the social stigma against testing.

Such denial is evident in Botshabelo, especially among men today.

"The problem is men are secretive," says Teboho Motseki, a counselor and chair of the Men's Forum, a community-

Emily carefully checks food prices at the township grocery store, where she buys supplies for her catering business.







based group seeking to educate and enlighten local men. "They do not want to reveal themselves; they do not want to be open about their status."

World Vision has worked in South Africa since 1967 and today provides a wide range of services to people affected by HIV. That work includes assisting Teboho in reaching out to local men, encouraging them to participate in the forum. In many rural South African communities, the stigma of HIV remains strong, a prejudicial stain on a person's life and a persistent strain on relationships.

"If a man here is HIV-positive, he is ashamed," says Teboho. "He does not want to talk about it with his wife or partners. In fact, men do not want to be blamed for infecting their partners. They insist 'It is you who came up with HIV,' even though most of the transmissions here are from men."

#### **'IT IS NOT THE END'**

Sarah Masondo\* knows the realities of living with HIV in South Africa. The single mother is certain her boyfriend of more than 12 years infected her with HIV. A petite woman wearing a stylish wool cap and jeans, Sarah looks a decade younger than her 32 years. Even while her 3-year-old son is down the street at preschool, she speaks cautiously about her life, livelihood, and living with HIV.

Sarah's reluctance is rooted in fear of the prejudice she likely would encounter from her community.

"I thought it was the end when I learned I was HIV-positive," says Sarah. "But some people told me, 'It is not the

*\*Name changed to protect identity.*



Top: Grace of God Ministries meets under a corrugated tin roof. Large rocks prevent the wind from blowing the roof off. Above: Six-year-old Tumelo is one of 3.37 million children in South Africa who are growing up without one or both parents.





South African children participate in an art class led by a local church member.

end.' And now I see. It is not the end of the world."

Initially, Sarah was worried her son was infected, but she has since found out he is not. Her son's father calls from time to time to make sure the child has food, Sarah says, but he rarely sees or speaks with the boy. Her former boyfriend also insists he doesn't have HIV. "He told me 'That thing [HIV] is yours,'" she says.

The father's attitude reflects the denial Teboho deals with every day among the men he counsels.

Living with HIV, as Sarah and Emily will attest, takes diligence, persistence, and courage. When World Vision organized a women's catering cooperative, both women joined. The women have learned to cook lunch for 500, host elegant dinner parties, and more. World Vision's micro-lending and education programs make this and many other local businesses possible.

Martha Gwabeni, a World Vision volunteer who trained the women, personifies compassion. She conducts home visits, checking on the physical and emotional well-being of children and caregivers. Using money she earns from catering, Martha also purchases school uniforms for children whose parents can't afford them.

Emily and Martha practiced their craft one afternoon in Martha's covered patio. Amid a flurry of whisks, wooden spoons, and paring knives, the two women sliced, diced, and chopped lettuce, cheese, fruit, and vegetables. A closet nearby is packed with glass and ceramic bowls, tablecloths, china, shining serving trays, and elaborate centerpieces. After 20 minutes, they proudly announce their culinary creations: fruit compote and a mixed green salad with almonds and other garnishes.

### ROOM TO CELEBRATE

On Sunday mornings, Emily and many living in Botshabelo attend church, often learning about opportunities to serve their neighbors. The congregation of Grace of God Ministries, 60 to 70 people, gathers in a wooden building with a corrugated tin roof. Tarps and blankets cover the dirt floor. As prayers and worship songs erupt spontaneously, the

sounds of the 90-minute celebration echo through the surrounding unpaved streets.

"A priest is not a priest because of what he does in front of the congregation," Bishop M.R.J. Lephatoe tells the gathering, "he is a priest because of what he does outside the church."

The bishop, visiting from a church a few miles away, urges the congregation to "please God and serve the community... Look for the woman in need, the child who does not have food." He speaks in a melodic, rhyming style punctuated by members shouting, "Amen!"

Like nearly 40 other local churches, Grace of God Ministries works with World Vision in Congregational Hope Action Teams (CHAT) to care for people on both ends of the AIDS spectrum: the terminally ill, and orphans and vulnerable children. CHAT, which is replicated in World Vision





programs in many sub-Saharan nations, includes training boys and girls in life skills and preventing HIV infection. The program also hosts sports competitions at local high schools. CHAT is just one of many church-based interventions World Vision facilitates to provide training, educational materials, support, and encouragement.

The encouragement is foundational to Emily's courage, especially as she endures the long treks to the hospital and frustrating delays waiting to see a physician. Once again, her determination and perseverance pay off. As she leaves the HIV clinic and walks down that dark hallway, she holds her head high. She ignores those staring at her. Grasping the prescription for ARVs, Emily dignifies the victory of pride over prejudice. ●

*—Dean R. Owen is senior advisor for corporate communications at World Vision International.*



Left: Sarah Masondo and her 3-year-old son walk home from preschool. Above: Mapaseka Mabe, 21, who grew up without either parent, today leads art classes and conducts home health education visits for vulnerable children.

#### GO BEHIND THE SCENES

Read about Dean's visit to a cemetery in Botshabelo township at [www.worldvisionmagazine.org](http://www.worldvisionmagazine.org)





COURTESY JOHN VICKORY

## MAASAI WARRIOR

A FORMER SPONSORED CHILD FIGHTS FOR JUSTICE.

BY JAMES ADDIS

**C**hallenging the ruling authority can be dangerous—just ask Kenya's Ben Koissaba.

After addressing students from Nairobi University in July 2008, Ben planned to deliver a report to the Kenyan Human Rights Commission on extra-judicial killings by police. Two colleagues set off for the commission as Ben lingered with students.

The friends never made it. Unidentified assailants sprayed their vehicle with bullets, killing them both. Ben went into hiding, fearing for his life.

The murders were just one of several attempts to silence Ben. Previously, the police had seized his computer, confiscated files from his home, and hacked his phone.



The harassment stems from Ben's advocacy for land rights among the Maasai, a semi-nomadic people who live in Kenya and Tanzania. Ben is the founding chairman of the Maa Civil Society Forum, an umbrella organization assisting those seeking redress for Maasai grievances.

Ben's encounters with injustice stretch back to his childhood. His earliest memories include police raiding his home and taking his father, Sironka, to prison. Sironka had resisted eviction from a piece of land coveted by a local official.

After his mother left to marry another man, Ben found himself in the care of a succession of mean-spirited foster mothers. He was often hungry and neglected. "In some instances I had to sleep in the sheep corral," he says.



**"WE ARE ALL MADE  
IN THE IMAGE OF GOD;  
WE ALL DESERVE  
TO HAVE WHAT WE**

programs to discourage the practice of female genital mutilation.

During his time with World Vision, Ben realized that political change would be needed before significant transformation could take place among the Maasai. Determined to help bring about that change, Ben left World Vision in 2004 to devote himself to his work with the Maa

**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.

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World Vision's  
**women  
of VISION**

**RESTORING  
THEIR RIGHTFUL  
INHERITANCE**



**BRENDA SHAW**  
South Puget Sound Chapter


"It has been such a blessing to *help girls recover physically, spiritually, and emotionally* from horrific, oppressive circumstances. Women of Vision helps me join with other women willing to stand up and demonstrate the love of Christ to others."



**JULIE DUIM**  
Co-Chair, Eastside Chapter

"Women of Vision has changed me forever in my views of the poor, what my calling is, and my response. *I can no longer sit and be the audience, I am now an advocate and a change agent.*"

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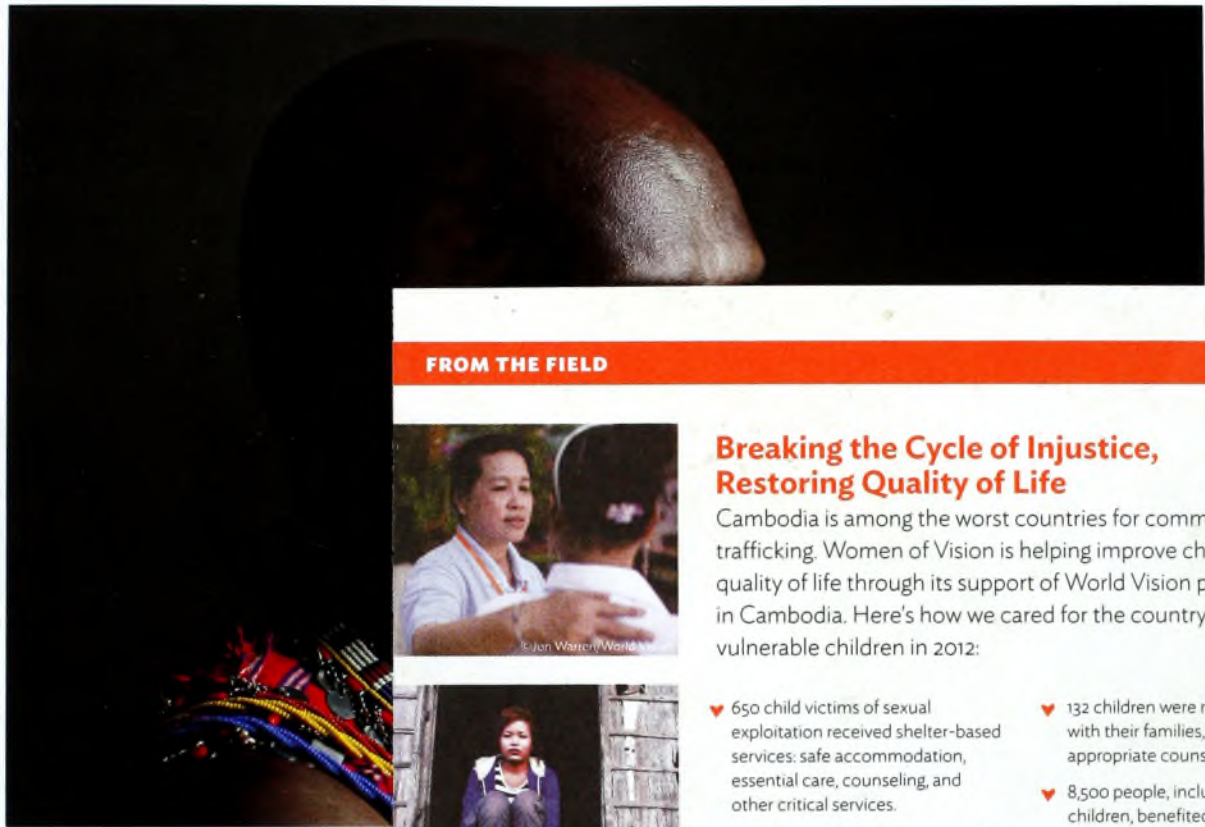
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OR call Women of Vision toll free at **877.968.4968**  
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FROM THE FIELD



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**Breaking the Cycle of Injustice, Restoring Quality of Life**

Cambodia is among the worst countries for commercial sex trafficking. Women of Vision is helping improve children's quality of life through its support of World Vision programs in Cambodia. Here's how we cared for the country's most vulnerable children in 2012:



© Jon Warren/World Vision

- ♥ 650 child victims of sexual exploitation received shelter-based services: safe accommodation, essential care, counseling, and other critical services.
- ♥ 175 girls received assistance with legal processes and testifying in court.
- ♥ 261 girls were assisted by World Vision's Trauma Recovery Center and three partner shelters.
- ♥ 132 children were reintegrated with their families, after appropriate counseling.
- ♥ 8,500 people, including nearly 3,000 children, benefited from awareness raising and training on child rights, domestic violence, human trafficking laws relating to abuse, prevention of child exploitation, accessing assistance, and protecting survivors.

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*Achievements like these are possible because of the partnership of women with Women of Vision.*

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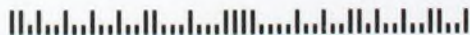
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**C**hallenging the ruling authority can be dangerous—just ask Kenya's Koissaba.

After addressing students from Nairobi University in July 2008, Ben planned to deliver a report to the Kenyan Human Rights Commission on extra-judicial killings by police. Two colleagues set off for the commission as Ben lingered with students.

The friends never made it. Unidentified assailants sprayed their vehicle with bullets, killing both. Ben went into hiding, fearing for his life.

The murders were just one of several attempts to silence Ben. Previously, the police had seized his computer, confiscated files from his home, and hacked his phone.





## "WE ARE ALL MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD; WE ALL DESERVE TO HAVE WHAT WE NEED TO LIVE."

When Sironka was released from prison, he regained custody of Ben, who recalls clinging to his dad following the custody trial. The reunion is his most joyful childhood memory.

The pair settled in Kajiado, in Kenya's Rift Valley, where Sironka became a hired herdsman. Ben traveled for miles with his father in search of pasture for the cattle, making school attendance difficult.

World Vision, which worked in Kajiado, offered Ben the opportunity to become a sponsored child. Ben recalls receiving letters from his sponsor in the United States. "It was fulfilling to write thank-you letters to a person I had never met, but whom God had worked through to give me an education," he says.

Through sponsorship, the family received cattle to improve their living situation. Eventually Ben was able to go to boarding school—all expenses paid.

Although he knew about Christ as a child, Ben says he committed to following Christ in 1987. "From then, I have desired to learn and to share my testimony in helping others know and follow the teachings of Jesus Christ," he says.

The Rev. John Mpaayei, a noted Maasai evangelist and church planter, helped nurture Ben's faith and awareness of injustice.

After graduation, Ben taught for several years, but he yearned to work among those who are poor and oppressed. In 2002, Ben became the program manager of World Vision's Maasai People's Program, which helped Maasai develop their cattle businesses. Ben also managed educational

programs to discourage the practice of female genital mutilation.

During his time with World Vision, Ben realized that political change would be needed before significant transformation could take place among the Maasai. Determined to help bring about that change, Ben left World Vision in 2004 to devote himself to his work with the Maa Civil Society Forum.

His desire to see his people transformed is a natural outcome of his faith. "We are all made in the image of God; we all deserve to have what we need to live," he says. "It's human systems that have denied some of the opportunities and abundance that God has provided."

Ben says the tide is turning in Kenya. The Maa Civil Society Forum and other organizations have influenced Kenyan land policy so that historic grievances must now be taken into account. Some land wrongfully taken from the Maasai has been returned.

In 2004, Ben led the Maasai's first peaceful protest in Nairobi. Five years later, as his views continued to clash with the Kenyan government of the time, Ben sought political asylum in the U.S.

Ben recently graduated with a master's degree in social entrepreneurship at Northwest University in Kirkland, Wash. He is now pursuing a doctorate in international family and community studies at Clemson University in South Carolina. He plans to return to his homeland to use his knowledge to further the cause of his people.

Ben also is the author of the book *Advocacy to National Activism: Maa Civil Society Forum, Kenya*, published in 2012.

Ben's work springs from the philosophy that it is better to teach people to fish rather than give them a fish. "To teach a man how he may learn to grow independently and for himself," Ben says, "is the greatest service a man can give to another." ●

**TO SPONSOR A CHILD** see the envelope between pages 16 and 17, or go to [www.worldvision.org/ReadandRespond](http://www.worldvision.org/ReadandRespond).

World Vision®

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# Five Loaves and Two Fish

BY MARGO DAY

**W**hat you have is enough." This simple phrase started me on a journey that would lead to

the North Rift Valley of Kenya, where 34 special girls lived in a rescue center.

My journey started in 2009. I had been in turmoil for months, feeling a deep calling to step out in faith and be used to show God's love in the world. But I couldn't figure out how I was actually going to do that.

Then in May 2009, God said so clearly, "Five loaves and two fish: What you have is enough." I was reminded of the miracle in John 6, when a boy offered all he had—five loaves and two fish—because people were hungry. The disciples were skeptical, asking, "What is this among so many?"

But Jesus took the food, gave thanks, and handed it to his disciples to distribute among the people. They all ate and were filled. As I recalled this miracle, I immediately had peace. I knew that if I brought everything to God in childlike faith it would be enough.

Three months later, I traveled to Kenya's North Rift Valley to see World Vision's work firsthand. On our first morning, I joined the World Vision team for devotions. The leader started by saying, "As I was praying last night about this devotion, God put on my heart the story of five loaves and two fish." I burst into tears of gratitude, knowing this was confirmation that this place was where God was calling me to show his love.

On that trip, I visited the Morphus Rescue Center for girls, where I met 34 young girls, ages 8 to 12. They are part of the Pokot tribe, which practices female genital mutilation and early marriage. The girls at the center had either fled their homes or were rescued from abusive situations, because they refused to be genitally mutilated or married too young. When I looked into their eyes I saw two things: fierce determination for a better life through education, and the longing to have someone validate they are valued and loved.



COURTESY MARGO DAY

Margo encourages girls at St. Elizabeth school.

While these girls could complete primary school at the center, without access to a secondary school their prospects remained bleak. I knew in my soul that God wanted these girls to know he had heard their prayers, knew each girl uniquely, loved each deeply—and through this situation he would show his love.

Back in the U.S., I shared these girls' yearning for education beyond primary school. Others joined me in raising the funds to build St. Elizabeth Girls Secondary School. The school has four classrooms, a dormitory, sciences and computer labs, and other necessary facilities. When the school was commissioned, I was privileged to experience the girls' deep joy born of tangible hope for a better life.

Today, 165 girls attend the secondary school—and this number is continuing to grow. Their parents chose not to marry

their girls early. Foregoing the traditional dowry, they are investing in their daughters' future by paying tuition.

Educational facilities for girls are powerful, giving families an alternative to the centuries-old practice of early marriage and the pregnancies that result before a girl's body is ready to bear a child. What's more, World Vision is embarking on the Kenya Child Protection and Education program, which aims to transform the lives of 17,000 children in five areas of the North Rift Valley.

What has transpired is nothing short of a miracle—one that God is multiplying, just as he multiplied the five loaves and two fish so many years ago. ●



Margo Day is a Microsoft vice president who recently took a yearlong sabbatical to partner with World Vision in addressing education for girls and child protection in Kenya's North Rift Valley.



# RETROSPECT



KIT BHANGALANG/WORLD VISION

## INDIA

TWO WHEELS, TWO PEDALS, A SET OF GEARS—and two sisters from India's Rogolo village are on the move. Sashmita, 19, and Chirasmitta, 15, grew up in poverty, until World Vision gave their family a cow. That was the beginning of the family's thriving milk business. Today, their father runs the business; their mother is active in the community's microfinance group. And the girls are excelling in school. Sashmita, a former sponsored child who now attends college, is studying to become a teacher. In a nation where only six in 10 adults can read, Sashmita is inspired to help others learn. As the sisters ride into a promising future, their lives are serving as beacons to other girls along the way. ●





**Rich Stearns**  
 President, World Vision U.S.,  
 and best-selling author of  
*The Hole in Our Gospel*

Coming April 30, 2013!

# UNFINISHED

BELIEVING IS ONLY THE BEGINNING

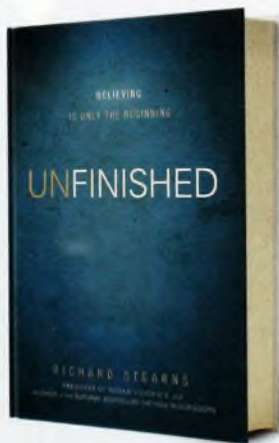
"God created you intentionally to play a very specific role in his unfolding story."

—Rich Stearns, *Unfinished*

From Rich Stearns, best-selling author of *The Hole in Our Gospel*, comes a new book exploring how we can rediscover our calling to embrace the whole gospel and find the meaning, purpose, and significance we long for.

Join Rich as he shares his personal journey and asks the question, "What do you do *after* you believe?"

*Unfinished* is an invitation to recapture the urgency of Christ's revolutionary mission and, in so doing, to experience the life that God created you to live.



Visit [www.worldvision.org/unfinished](http://www.worldvision.org/unfinished) for a video message from Rich Stearns and to download a free sample from the book!

At the author's request, all royalties due to the author will benefit World Vision's work with children in need.

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