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SPRING 2014

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Children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have little idea what it's like to live without conflict. What do they know? Poverty . . . and the struggle to survive.

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 JON WARREN/WORLD VISION



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

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 Syrian refugee girls make the most of life in Jordan's Za'atari Refugee Camp.



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

Dipshikha Roy cares for vulnerable children in Bangladesh.

What Brings Us Together

BY RICH STEARNS

‘**T**he things that separate us are not nearly as big as the things that bring us together.’ So true, I thought, listening to my wife, Reneé, as she spoke to a reporter about *He Walks Among Us*, the devotional book we co-authored.

I thought back to Reneé’s first trip with World Vision, when she visited a dump in Guatemala City and struck up a conversation with a young boy. He had been eating yogurt from a cup he found among the trash. You might be thinking that there isn’t much similarity between people who store their food in a refrigerator and those who pull it out of a garbage dump. But Reneé looked up and saw the boy’s mother smile, pleased to see that someone had taken an interest in her son. It was a feeling that any mother could identify with.

Reneé was struck that day by the fact that we aren’t so different after all. We’ve all experienced moments when walls between ourselves and a stranger crumble after we discover a personal connection. This happened to me recently with a Syrian refugee I’ll never forget.

Like most Americans, I felt disconnected from and confused by the unfolding crisis in Syria, and the scant media attention hasn’t helped. A decade of war in the Middle East has left Americans weary.

You might remember the outpouring of compassion for victims of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. But as I write, humanitarian organizations have less than half the funding necessary to meet the needs of Syrian refugees.

Yet this disaster dwarfs the Haiti crisis. Roughly 1 million people were affected in Haiti. In Syria, it is estimated that as much as half the country’s population of 22 million is, or soon will be, in need of emergency aid.

Instead of trying to wrap our heads around what it means for 10 million people to be suffering, allow me to take you into the heart and mind of just one girl I met on my visit.



Rich Stearns visits with Haya and other Syrian refugee children in Irbid, Jordan.

Haya is only 10 years old, but already she has seen and suffered more than most girls twice her age. Her father died in the Syrian conflict, and her family fled south to Jordan. Like other Syrian refugees, Haya and her family were middle class. Her father was a businessman. They lived in a nice house and took family vacations. Her mother helped the children with homework. But when I met her, Haya told me that until World Vision came, she didn’t even have a blanket to sleep under, despite the desperately cold nights.

Haya told me her story, and then she sang me a song she wrote just a few days before: “Syria is in pain. ... Her children were her candles, and they have faded out.” (See the facing page for Haya’s full song.)

When my children were little, I used to tuck them into bed every night. I’d check on them later, and if they had kicked off their blankets, I’d pull them back up to keep them warm. Listening to Haya, I wondered who checks on her during the night if she gets cold. Her story broke my heart. Although language and culture separate us, I felt a father’s protective love for Haya.

I remember Haya telling me, “We fear you are forgetting us.” And then she asked, “Have you ever thought of the children of Syria?”

We all need to know that someone is thinking about us. When a loved one or even a stranger shows us that we have not been forgotten, it is a priceless gift. I hope this issue of *World Vision* magazine reminds you of the power of reaching out to children in heartbreaking circumstances. Caring for a child like Haya is an act both of you might never forget. ●

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

—PSALM 10:12

FOR MORE FROM RICH
and information about
his latest books, visit
richstearns.org.

FRONTLINES

SORROWFUL SONG



In a complicated crisis, nothing breaks through the mind-numbing statistics and perplexing policy discussions like the voice of a child. When a young person speaks with innocent eloquence about loss, pain, and—incredibly—hope, the best we can do is listen and let the words sink into our hearts.

Haya, 10, a Syrian refugee in Jordan, wrote and sang this song to Rich Stearns during his visit to the region:





*Syria is in pain.
Syria is bleeding.
Syria is crying for her children.
Her children were her candles, and
they have faded out.
Now we are all everywhere outside Syria.
We are crying, and Syria is crying blood
because her children are missing.
Syria misses her people—the children.
We, the children, want things to be
better again.
We want to get back to our country
and rebuild it.
We want to be in our country
rebuilding again and again.
We want to be in our country
rebuilding again and again.*

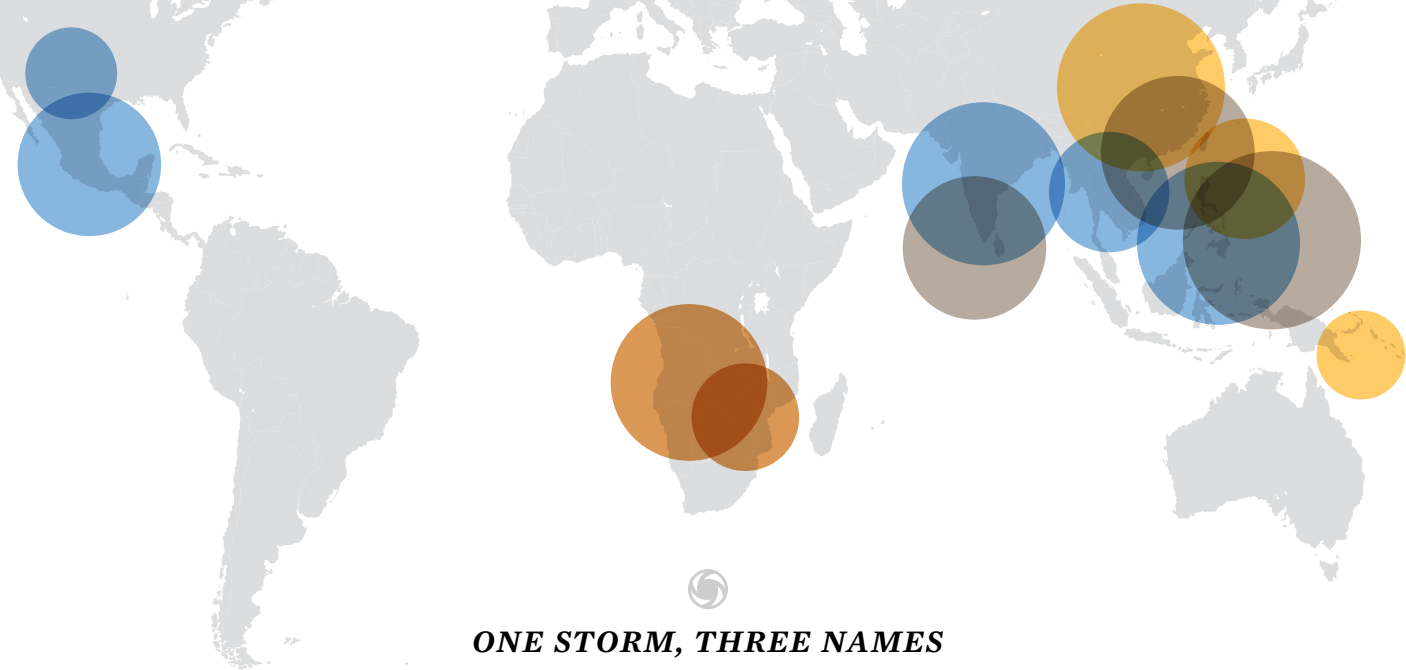
Read more about Syrian refugee children and families on page 12. ●

WHEN DISASTER STRIKES

Since the middle of the 20th century, recorded disasters have increased tenfold, with the majority stemming from weather. When natural disasters hit, World Vision is already on the ground, equipped to respond quickly with life-saving aid—and prepared to stay for the long term to help families recover.

RECENT NATURAL DISASTERS

			
FLOODING India, Philippines, Indonesia, U.S., Mexico, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar	CYCLONE/TYPHOON India, Vietnam, Philippines	EARTHQUAKE Philippines, China, Solomon Islands	DROUGHT Angola, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, Lesotho, Zambia



ONE STORM, THREE NAMES

Hurricanes, cyclones, and typhoons are all the same weather phenomenon, named differently depending on where the storm develops. ●



BY THE NUMBERS

WORLD VISION'S RESPONSE TO TYPHOON HAIYAN

14 MILLION
people affected

5.5 MILLION
children affected

456,000
people World Vision has reached with shelter, food, clean water, or nonfood items

20
World Vision development program areas affected

40,000
sponsored children affected

40
Child-Friendly Spaces World Vision plans to create for 18,400 kids affected by the storm

55
years World Vision has worked in the Philippines ●



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

TYPHOON HAIYAN RAVAGES THE PHILIPPINES

Typhoon Haiyan, the most powerful storm to make landfall last year, hit the Philippines on Nov. 8. Cutting a swath of destruction through the island nation, Haiyan affected 14 million people, including 5.5 million children.

World Vision launched an emergency response to provide relief aid to 456,000 people hardest hit by the deadly storm.

Distributions of food, hygiene kits, and nonfood items helped thousands in the first week after Haiyan hit, and a week later, World Vision launched its first of 40 planned Child-Friendly Spaces for Typhoon Haiyan survivors in Tabugon, northern Cebu. At least 400 children played and took part in activities in tent spaces set up on the grounds of a badly damaged elementary school.

World Vision has worked with the people of the Philippines since 1954, and is often one of the first organizations to respond when disaster strikes, including a magnitude-7.2 earthquake that rocked the same area just a month before the typhoon. With its global pre-positioning resource network, World Vision provides emergency relief supplies to the most vulnerable in the immediate aftermath of a disaster like Haiyan—and builds on the initial response with

long-term recovery and rebuilding plans. ●

FOR COMPLETE COVERAGE of Typhoon Haiyan—including stories about sponsored children and recovery efforts, photo slideshows, and videos—visit www.mag.org/typhoon.



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION



ALL THAT IN ONE APP

Stay informed on the go with **World Vision Now**, a free iPhone app. Your personal passport to news and stories from the developing world, World Vision Now features voices and images you won't see in mainstream media. There's also an extra for child sponsors—just hit the center icon and log into My World Vision to connect with your sponsored child. Search for "World Vision Now" in the iTunes store, or update your current version for access to My World Vision. ●



LEFT: Greg Hansen and Dennis Moore stop to celebrate as they enter each state on their journey.

As funds mounted for the cause, Greg, Sue, and Sue's brother, Dennis Moore, began to plan their cross-country cycling tour to raise more money for Kenya water projects. With Sue and their church providing vehicle and logistics support, Greg and Dennis hit the road on April 2, 2013.

Their church, Salem Church on Staten Island, supported the team as it progressed mile after mile. Pastor Ed Cole says, "As soon as [Greg] shared it with me, I thought, 'This is a fantastic thing for the whole church to get in on. God put something on his heart, and he said yes.'"

For seven weeks, the cyclers traversed 70 to 90 miles a day. Between Coronado, Calif., and Staten Island, Greg and Dennis faced a multitude of challenges—from pneumonia and dehydration to equipment breakdowns.

Despite setbacks, a handful of incidents that seemed divinely orchestrated made the team realize that a special story was unfolding.

In the middle of New Mexico, they met a water truck driver who gave them four cases of bottled water for the journey. Then, after a long day in Virginia, the team had no place to stay—until they encountered a local missionary who had been a bike mechanic. He provided them with lodging and bike tuneups.

"Each morning we prayed together. I believe that brought us through," says Greg.

Ed says there's power in the team's willingness to step out to follow Jesus.

To date, Greg has raised more than \$110,000. Beyond galvanizing the church community, the journey inspired Greg's rock star brother-in-law, Keith Richards, to give \$50,000 to the cause.

What's more, putting Greg's "crazy idea" into action has been a great example, says Ed. "My hope is that people will look at this and ask, 'What about me—what's my vision?'" ●

—Chris Huber

BE INSPIRED LIKE GREG. Look for an updated edition of Rich Stearns' *The Hole in Our Gospel* in May.

COURTESY GREG HANSON (5)

CROSS-COUNTRY COMPASSION

A dream inspires a retired carpenter to cycle across America for water.

One night, in the summer of 2012, Greg Hansen awoke with a crazy idea.

"What do you think about cycling across the country for clean water?" the 64-year-old Staten Island, N.Y., resident asked his wife, Sue.

The couple had recently finished studying *The Hole in Our Gospel* by World Vision U.S. President Rich Stearns. Greg was floored when he read the statistic in the book about how 1,400 children die each day because they lack access to clean water.

"Sue and I have eight children," Greg says. "Children have always been an incredible part of our life. That is at the forefront of what has touched my heart: the number of children that are living desperate lives because of a lack of clean water."

At first, the family sought donations to develop a well for about \$14,000. They prayed, told their book study leader about it, and, within a week, support exceeded the goal.

CHANGE AGENT



COURTESY JIM ADAMS

The Rev. Jim Adams visits with Maasai people in Tanzania.

NAME The Rev. Jim Adams
HOME Raleigh, N.C.
PROGRAM Gift Catalog

THE BUZZ When the Rev. Jim Adams gives a wedding gift, he writes on the card, "You may get two toasters, or you might get two sets of candlesticks, but you won't get two pigs."

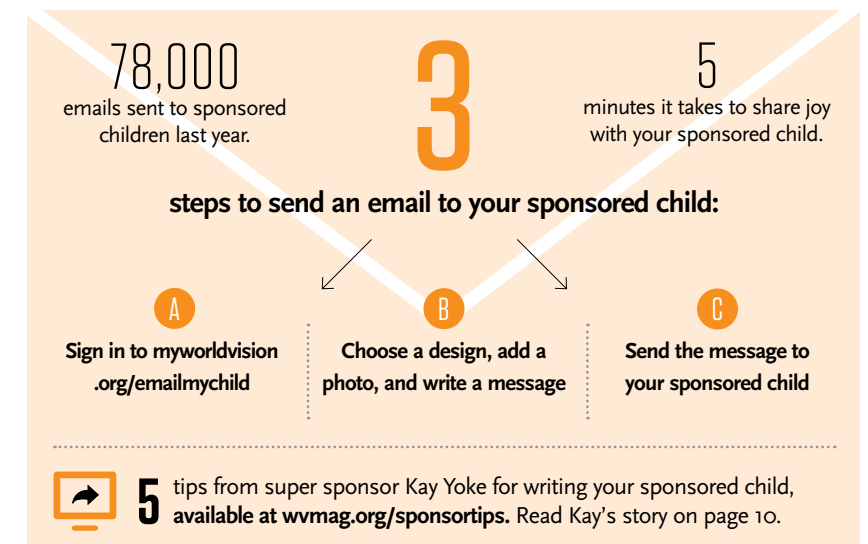
As a minister, he isn't obligated to give presents when he officiates weddings, but about 10 years ago, he performed a wedding for a couple he knew well, so he felt a gift was appropriate. Jim didn't want to simply buy another registry item—so he gave livestock instead.

Today, because he thinks highly of World Vision's work and accountability, he always chooses a wedding gift of a pig, sheep, or goat from the World Vision Gift Catalog. The couples appreciate the unique present and have even sent him notes thanking him for helping them see beyond themselves.

"It enlarges your heart to give like that, and it has the potential to do that for the other person as well," Jim says of his gift giving. "What someone gives you for a gift tells you what they think of you."

"There's some kind of respect that comes when you give someone something from the World Vision Gift Catalog. You're saying, 'I think you're the type of person who would appreciate this.'" ●

EMAIL YOUR CHILD AT MYWORLDVISION.ORG



BOOKMARK THIS

WORLDVISIONMAGAZINE.ORG is your go-to source for humanitarian news, stunning photography, and inspiring stories—and now it's even better with two regular columns: God Space and Life Frames.



GOD SPACE, a weekly devotional column by Marilee Pierce Dunker, bears witness to the extraordinary ways God uses his people to share the gospel and care for the poor. Like her father, World Vision founder Bob Pierce, Marilee shares stories and reflections about God's promises and the seemingly impossible possible. **Be inspired by Marilee at wvmag.org/godspace.**



LIFE FRAMES shares the stories behind iconic World Vision photographs—including many from these pages over the years. How was the shot captured? What was the atmosphere like? Get the scoop straight from World Vision's award-winning photographers, who travel the globe to inspire and educate supporters with images of the reality and hope of those living in poverty. **Read more at wvmag.org/lifeframes.** ●

LIFE-GIVING LETTERS

A U.S. sponsor's words encourage a lonely girl in India's slums.



PETER ROISE/GENESIS PHOTOS

ANNILIA HARRIS/WORLD VISION

Deep in the slums of New Delhi, in a gray and dusty landscape of crowded, weathered apartments, hope seemed far off for Maya.

The 9-year-old suffered seizures—her limbs stiffened and her mouth foamed as her mother looked on helplessly. After a few episodes at school, Maya was told to stay home.

Maya feared the seizures. Her father, a laborer, scraped up money for medicine and even a witch doctor. Nothing worked. And the longer she stayed away from school and fell behind in her studies, the more withdrawn she became.

"I used to sit around, and there was nothing to do," Maya says. "My head was heavy all the time."

Then one day, hope arrived in the form of a letter from 7,000 miles away, from

Kay Yoke, a grandmother in Spokane, Wash. Kay came across Maya's picture at a Women of Faith conference and decided to sponsor her. She started writing to the girl about once a month, sending affirmation and encouragement.

Maya held onto Kay's letters like a lifeline. From the stoop of her apartment in the slum, she read from one: "I just received your beautiful letter. Thank you very much for the [bracelets]. They are beautiful, and I will treasure them forever. ... I pray for you, your brothers, and your mother and father every day. Keep smiling every day, Maya. You have a wonderful smile that makes me very happy."

As she read the letter again, Maya began to weep. Those simple words changed her life.

"The prayers of my sponsor have

healed me," Maya says. "Kay said, 'Don't fear. Count on God, and everything will be okay.' I listened to Kay."

That was about three years ago. Today Maya has emerged from her shell. She is back in school and thriving. She regularly joins other children at World Vision's after-school center. The formerly forlorn girl is writing, studying, and learning to care for herself. She even speaks at World Vision youth events.

It all started with a letter and prayer. "She's part of our family," Kay says. "My whole family knows who Maya is." ●

—Phil Manzano

READ MORE about World Vision's work in India's slums on page 27, and sponsor a child using the envelope between pages 16 and 17, or go to wvmag.org/sponsor.



ERIC MOONEYHAM/WORLD VISION

WITNESS TO A VISION

Thirty-five years ago, Ugandan dictator Idi Amin was overthrown after a brutal reign from 1971 to 1979. Amin's regime killed up to 500,000 people, persecuted Christians, and left Uganda a broken nation. In the aftermath, World Vision worked with the African Evangelistic Enterprise and other partners to provide emergency supplies, and then-World Vision President Stan Mooneyham (pictured) promised \$500,000 for relief and reconstruction. "I see tens of thousands of people who have forgotten how to trust, who now must somehow, in some way, attempt to regain a sense of their own personal dignity and pride," he wrote.

Development programs, which World Vision began in 1980, have made a big difference in Uganda. Today, 35,600 children thrive with support from U.S. sponsors, and World Vision's Campaign For Every Child is improving millions of lives through water and sanitation, economic development, health, and Christian witness.

Read Stan Mooneyham's account of his Uganda trip, written for July 1979 World Vision magazine, at wvmag.org/Juganda1979. ●

WORLD VISION ON WHEELS

World Vision is on the road, crisscrossing the nation to bring essential school tools and lively learning opportunities to U.S. communities from coast to coast.

EQUIPPING EDUCATORS

World Vision's mobile **Teacher Resource Center** rigs are packed with classroom supplies for U.S. teachers in schools serving low-income neighborhoods and communities recovering from disaster. To help struggling schools and teachers restock their classrooms following disasters like Hurricane Sandy and the tornadoes that hit Moore, Okla., last year, Teacher Resource Centers pull into recovering communities and distribute free educational resources to teachers—everything from pencils and paper for students to books and learning materials for teachers.

JOURNEY TO TANZANIA

Housed in a semitruck, the **World Vision Experience: Kisongo Trek** brings to life the trials and hopes of a Maasai community in Tanzania through a simulated bus journey on an off-road adventure to Kisongo, near Mt. Kilimanjaro. A World Vision team in Tanzania outfitted cameras on the front, rear, and sides of a vehicle to provide a 360-degree viewing experience, and the vehicle traversed the actual route to Kisongo. Exhibit visitors meet Babayetu, a 13-year-old World Vision sponsored child, who serves as the guide. The Kisongo Trek experience demonstrates the real impact of sponsorship in a community—improved education for children, access to clean water, and healthcare. ●



ANDREA PEER/WORLD VISION

TO FIND OUT if Kisongo Trek is coming to your community, or to request information, visit worldvisionexperience.org.



COURTESY JENNIFER ERICKSON

WHY I LOVE BEING A CHILD SPONSOR

JENNIFER ERICKSON | CHICAGO

As a **third-grade teacher**, I had the opportunity to share with a room mom (parent volunteer) about my trip to the World Vision Child Ambassador conference and my two experiences visiting my sponsored child, Roxana, in Mexico.

I didn't know it, but the Lord used our conversation to plant a seed. My room mom was so inspired that last year she sent a note home with all of my students just before Valentine's Day, inviting them to bring an extra Valentine addressed to Roxana. We took some class pictures, and my room mom compiled the cards and photos into a care package that was sent to Roxana.

After the Child Ambassador conference, I felt God impress me with the desire for a broken heart. I prayed, as World Vision founder Bob Pierce did, "Let my heart be broken with the things that break the heart of God." And he responded in a way more incredible than I could have asked or imagined. ●

TELL US YOUR STORY.

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



CRYING *for* THEIR COUNTRY

Of the 8 million people displaced by Syria's war, more than half are children. Many arrive in neighboring countries with little more than the clothes on their backs and memories of friends and home. Here in Jordan, they take refuge with their families in a crowded camp or suffocating accommodations, mourning lost loved ones and yearning for their former lives.

Each child has a story.

BY SEVIL OMER | PHOTOS BY JON WARREN



Sedra, 7, her parents, and her six siblings, ages 1 to 11, feared for their lives as they fled their war-torn nation, running away with only the clothes on their backs as they headed to the Jordanian border. They now live in Za'atari Refugee Camp in Jordan.

❖ A Syrian family receives a tent at Za'atari Refugee Camp, where at least 120,000 people are registered. Za'atari is the second-largest refugee camp in the world and the fourth-largest population center in Jordan. Chain-link fences, some topped with razor wire, protect the mobile units belonging to international aid agencies and food distribution sites. Routine food shortages in the camp have prompted demonstrations.



❖ Mohaned, 3, was holding his father's hand when gunmen opened fire, instantly killing his dad. Mohaned rarely speaks and refuses to leave his aunt's side. World Vision has programs to provide counseling for children.



❖ Nura, 25, escaped war with her three children. "We were sitting down for our holiday meal, and I heard the noise, one that I have never heard before: a whooshing, a howl, a whistle. Then, everything I ever knew and had—all of it was gone," she says. The family now lives in a tiny basement in Zarqa—10 people sharing a space no larger than a storage shed. Nura says, "We are among the invisible."



❖ Once, Israa thought her life mattered. On the day of her final exam, warring parties destroyed her school in Syria, shattering her dreams of earning a high-school diploma. The 18-year-old remembers glass flying everywhere, hitting students in the face. As many as 4,000 Syrian schools have been attacked or destroyed. The honor student now spends her time confined to a tiny flat with at least 10 others in an impoverished section of Zarqa. She says, "I want to return to Syria, my Syria, a Syria free of war."



❖ With nowhere to go and nothing to do, Syrian refugee children and siblings, Adel, 5 (right), Semer, 2 (center), and Islam, 1, are thin and lethargic. They spend their days on a cot inside a dilapidated basement room in Jordan. Their mother, Nura, (seen in photo on facing page), worries for their health.



❖ This Syrian refugee child was able to get a prescription and new eyeglasses while enrolled at World Vision's remedial school in Irbid. Children at the school also are given a meal—savory pies with cheese and herbs and a drink—before they are released for the day. Children are often seen taking one of the two pies home to share with their family.



❖ Children in World Vision's remedial class in Irbid have reason to smile: Notes tucked inside their new backpacks from the U.S. tell them they're cherished. One note from Timothy of Las Vegas reads: "Enjoy, and remember you are important."



❖ After an afternoon of reading, writing, and math, scores of children head back to their families in Irbid, where World Vision funds a remedial school for 200 Syrian and Jordanian children. The organization also pays for transportation. For the children, the nearly two-hour class, offered three times a week, is the bright spot in their lives. Children often show up even on days when there are no classes.



❖ Certified teachers at the remedial school instruct children in math, English, and Arabic. Here, a boy learns basic Arabic words and numbers. Most Syrian refugee children have missed so much school that catching up has proved difficult. "We try to help them any way we can to give them confidence to learn," says Sawsar Othman, who teaches English. ●



WORLD VISION RESPONDS

To meet the increasing needs of war-affected children and families, World Vision is scaling up programs in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan. Work will include:

- » Remedial education classes for children
- » Child-Friendly Spaces, providing children with a safe place to play, learn, and recover from emotional scars
- » Psychosocial counseling for parents and children
- » Distributions of food vouchers, basic hygiene kits, and clean water for families
- » Winterization assistance—providing families with stoves, fuel, and shelter improvement

PRAY

... for each of these children by name.
 ... for peace in Syria.
 ... for continued funding and growing generosity for international relief efforts.

 **READ MORE** ABOUT WORLD VISION'S RESPONSE TO THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS AT WVMAG.ORG/SYRIA.



In Bangladesh,
World Vision
provides a refuge
for children
trapped with
their mothers
in the sex-trade
environment—
and weaves a
safety net against
child trafficking.



BY KARI COSTANZA
PHOTOS BY JON WARREN

CHILDREN *of the* BROTHEL

Tumpa doesn't know

who her father is. She was just seven months along in her mother's womb when he slithered out of her life. Tumpa's* mother is a prostitute. Her father was a client. He made promises to Tumpa's mother that he didn't keep. Now the 3-year-old lives with her mother in a bustling brothel in Jessore, Bangladesh.

A child's life in a brothel is unimaginable. Tumpa and her mother live with a madam in a giant cement condominium with rooms for sleeping and rooms for sex—sometimes one room serving both purposes. In this place, dozens of women sleep, wake, eat, and conduct soul-scarring business with a steady stream of men as their children look on.

In the open communal space, where brothel workers primp for the next client or consume a hurried lunch of rice and vegetables, Tumpa and the other children fight boredom amid the squalor, playing near stoves leaping with flames, crawling on floors dirty with cigarette butts and empty potato chip wrappers, maybe tossing a rubber ball until a madam screams at them to stop.

The brothel is on Hat Khola Street. In Bengali, *hat khola* means “the marketplace,” and the street is a vast marketplace indeed. You can buy everything—balls, sugar, tea,



LEFT: Dipshikha listens with compassion to sex workers at the brothel. Their children are often left unattended at the busy brothel.



At World Vision's Child-Friendly Space, Dipshikha Roy comforts Tumpa after a fall.



biscuits, clothing, screwdrivers, pliers, door hinges, nails. And at the brothel, you can buy people, like Tumpa's mother.

But just across Hat Khola Street, there is a heavenly respite.

World Vision runs a Child-Friendly Space staffed by Dipshikha Roy, 35. When Tumpa's mother, Moyna, brings her over each day, the little girl crawls right into Dipshikha's arms. “Tumpa is so happy here,” Moyna says. “She can play with the other girls.”

Dipshikha begins each day by making sure the children's uniforms are correctly buttoned, shirts properly tucked, and shoes firmly tied. “We start our session by singing the national anthem,” which the children perform with unbridled joy, Dipshikha says.

“How are your moms?” she asks the children gathered around her in a circle. “Oh, they are still in bed,” says one little boy.

Sojib, whose mother, Jolly, works at the brothel, arrives. “Have you had breakfast? Did you brush your teeth?” Dipshikha asks him. She carefully buttons his orange shirt and helps him climb into his blue shorts, gently smoothing his black hair. Tumpa, who arrived early, stumbles into a table and begins to cry. Dipshikha reaches out to provide instant comfort.

There is constant activity in the Child-Friendly Space, alive with color, sound, and life. “First we count, then we

learn letters,” says Dipshikha. “We teach through games. We use posters to teach about fruits and vegetables. We're now learning to count from 1 to 20.”

After the children's hot lunch, they are supposed to rest. “It's actually not rest, it's running,” she says, laughing.

Every evening, the children return to the brothel and Dipshikha goes home to her daughter, Chitra, 8. Dipshikha's husband, Binoy, died five years ago, she says, of a hole in his heart. In a sense, Dipshikha now has a hole in her heart as well. “I miss him,” she says.

Chitra, as well as the nine boys and three girls at the Child-Friendly Space, help fill that hole.

Loving Society's Rejects

Dipshikha is a friend to the women who work at the brothel, such as Tumpa's mother, Moyna.

“I am happy because World Vision keeps my child all day,” Moyna says. “Dipshikha is a wonderful lady. She treats these children like they are her own.”

Moyna, 30, has been at the brothel for five years. She is from Barisal, east of Jessore on the wide Bangladesh delta plain. She was tricked by a friend into joining the brothel—a common occurrence.

“[My friend] had a job for me, a housecleaning job. I would be able to send money home,” Moyna says, closing her



teal-painted eyelids for a moment. “She brought me to the brothel and said, ‘You stay here.’ My friend never came back. I never got a housecleaning job.”

Moyna hates being a sex worker and dreams of becoming a cook. “If I can get a source where I can make money, then I would like to leave this place,” she says. “I want a different life.” Gazing out the window at a wedding ceremony on the street below—a raucous event with loud horns playing—Moyna says she will never marry.

“The workers think they have no future. They don’t think they have a chance. But their children have a future,” says Provash Chandra Biswas, 48, the director for World Vision’s Bangladesh Child Protection Program. A trained attorney, Provash has been with World Vision for two decades, working with those whom society has rejected.

Provash says the madams of the brothel are extremely powerful and that they target the children. “The madam who is running the business, [her] target is the girl child,” he says. “Most of the sex workers, they do not want to bring their children into the profession. But sometimes they have to do that because there are no opportunities.”

It all becomes more frightful at night, says Provash. “You see a lot of criminals. They plan crimes in the brothel. Smugglers also use the brothels.”

Sex workers become prisoners. “If they come out, they face stigma,” says Provash. “What options do they have?”

When Provash visits the brothel to check on the sex workers, he pays keen attention to the children. “They see everything,” he says. “Sometimes they sleep under the beds. The rooms are very small. My observation: Most of the children of sex workers are different than normal children. They have stress.”

Protecting the Vulnerable

Child-Friendly Spaces are part of a comprehensive plan World Vision has implemented in Bangladesh to prevent child trafficking, protect those who might be harmed, and restore those who have suffered. The plan focuses on awareness, advocacy and networking, victim support, and income-generating activities.

World Vision staff meet monthly in Jessore with community members to ensure they are monitoring children. Child protection “point people” are trained to report missing children immediately—setting in motion an Amber Alert-type response.

Staff members work on the border between India and Bangladesh to plug the holes through which people are trafficked, educating law enforcement officers and journalists to recognize what trafficking looks like and to tell the story.

Representatives from World Vision sit on committees at the highest levels of government and engage with the media, developing dramas for television about trafficking.

Through partner organizations, World Vision supports victims with medicine, clothing, testing for disease, and counseling.

And staff train and equip vulnerable families in income-generating activities, such as sewing and raising poultry. Increasing a family’s income lessens the likelihood that the children will be sold.

“In 19 years with World Vision, this is my hardest job,” says Provash. “We do not have any weekends. We do not have any holidays. This is a great challenge for us.”

But it’s a worthwhile challenge for this team of dedicated servants—fighting to stop trafficking, helping restore victims, and protecting children like Tumpa by creating safe, joyful spaces where they can play, learn, and be loved. ●

** Last names of women and children in the brothel withheld to protect privacy.*



FAR LEFT: Moyna, holding Tumpa, watches a boisterous wedding. ABOVE AND LEFT: Dipshikha uses songs, rhymes, and games to teach the attention-starved children, and often walks them back to their brothel home after school.

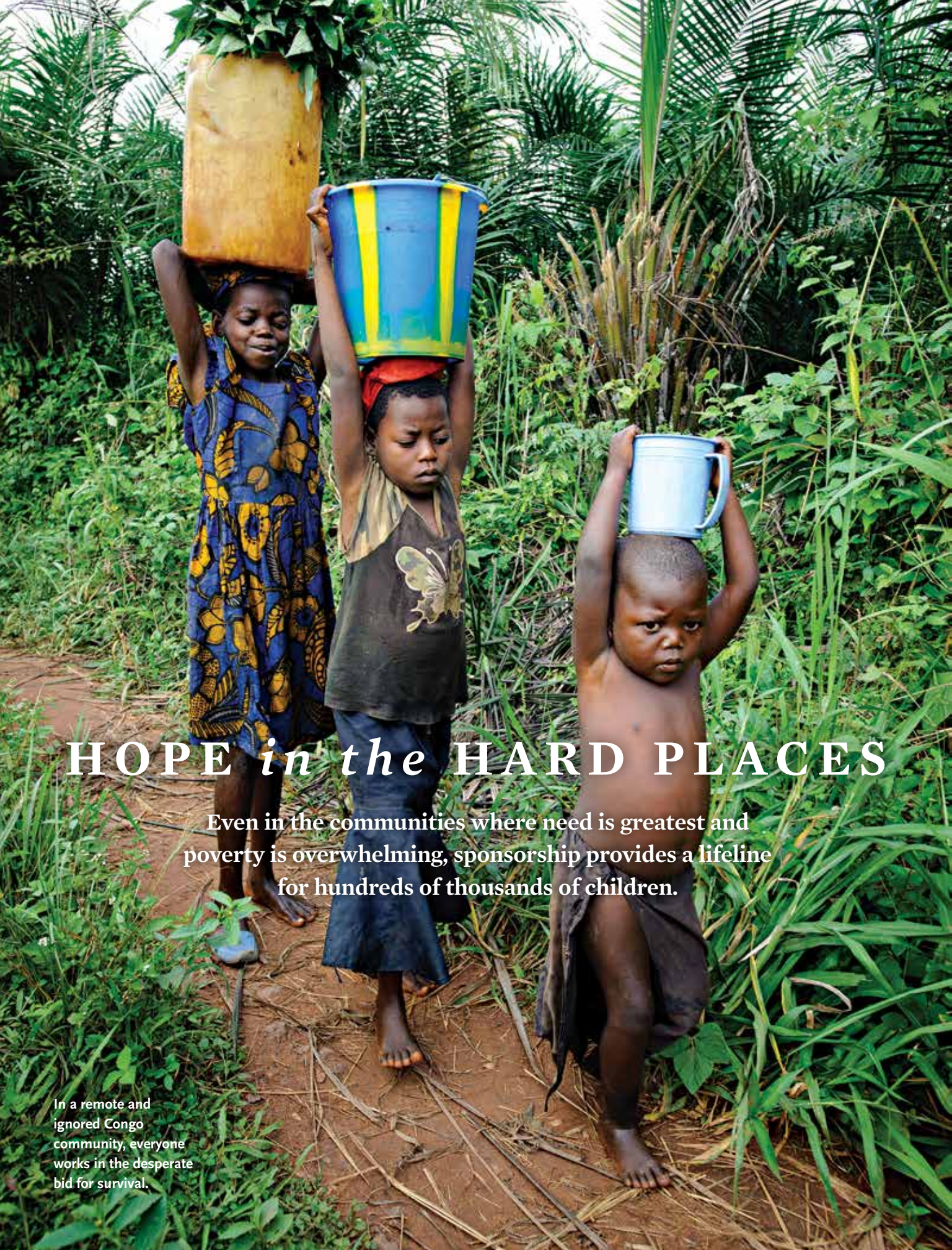
 EXPERIENCE THE BREADTH OF WORLD VISION’S CHILD PROTECTION WORK IN BANGLADESH AT WVMAG.ORG/BANGLADESH.

THE BIG PICTURE

More than 36,600 children in Bangladesh receive support from U.S. sponsors. In addition, child protection programs through World Vision’s Campaign For Every Child aim to reach more than 2.6 million people in seven countries, including Bangladesh. For more information about For Every Child, go to worldvision.org/ForEveryChild.

PRAY

... for women trapped in the sex trade.
 ... for children, especially girls, vulnerable to exploitation.
 ... for the tireless, exhausting work of World Vision staff in Bangladesh.

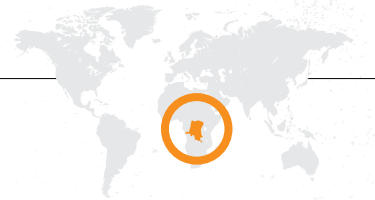


HOPE *in the* HARD PLACES

Even in the communities where need is greatest and poverty is overwhelming, sponsorship provides a lifeline for hundreds of thousands of children.

In a remote and ignored Congo community, everyone works in the desperate bid for survival.

THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO



MIRACLE IN THE MAKING

THE NORTHWESTERN CORNER of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a forgotten land on the road to nowhere. Overshadowed by ongoing conflicts to the east and controversial mining to the south, this isolated region seldom makes the news.

Gemena, the area's largest city, has no paved roads, running water, electricity, banks, or post offices. Poor sanitation fuels disease; one child in 10 dies before reaching age 5. Only one-tenth of the population has access to clean water.

In a desperate attempt to survive, isolated families flock to Gemena, only to realize there are no jobs, economic opportunities, or agricultural land. They build temporary mud huts on parcels they hope no one else will claim and scavenge for temporary labor that pays 50 cents a day.

Parents wake up early to beat thieves to the family's precious crops, grown on rented land. They pick whatever meager fruits and vegetables have ripened—often the only morsels separating them from starvation.

Too often, grieving families can be seen carrying tiny caskets to an overcrowded graveyard. Tragically, most of these deaths could have been prevented.

Yet through the prayers and sacrificial giving of a growing group of U.S. child sponsors, these families are daring to believe that a miracle is possible. Ledia, the new sponsorship program in Gemena, means "A new thing is coming to the village." And it is.

Parents share their excitement as they see improvement

in their children's health through water and sanitation programs. Already accomplished in World Vision's first year: three schools and two maternity centers are serving children and their families—erected and equipped with plenty of help from community members.

Trained community volunteers also visit sponsored children's families to ensure they have the basic resources they need and to remind parents about upcoming trainings. Grandmother Elise Zembe is among those learning how to ensure her grandchildren have good food to eat.

"There have been many days when we didn't have enough food for our grandchildren," Elise says. "But I learned how to feed them the right types of food, and they don't get sick as often. Now, with even a few peanuts or beans, look at how much energy they have."

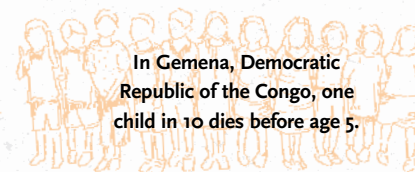
Another grandmother, Zelekumbi Zembi, recently watched as her grandson, Muke, masterfully rolled a bicycle rim around their dirt yard. Her face broke into a broad smile.

"My dream for my children is that they follow God and that they have a better life than we have been able to give them," she says. "With the World Vision program, they will not suffer in poverty."

Thanks to the generosity of faithful child sponsors, the miracle is materializing.

—Jeff Brown,

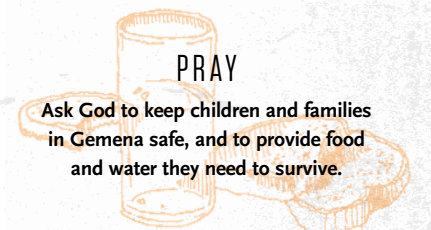
World Vision senior adviser based in the United States



In Gemena, Democratic Republic of the Congo, one child in 10 dies before age 5.

1,214

children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo need sponsors.



PRAY

Ask God to keep children and families in Gemena safe, and to provide food and water they need to survive.



GUY VITAL-HERNE/WORLD VISION (2)

DARRYL KONYNENBELT/WORLD VISION

ANNILA HARRIS/WORLD VISION

HAITI

RISING FROM THE RUBBLE



FOR ONE SINGLE mother and her five children in Haiti, sponsors have made a big difference.

Jean Menela, 28, formerly lived with her children in a rickety hut built of plastic, branches, and metal sheets. Like many Haitian women, Jean learned the hard way that dropping out of school often leads to early motherhood and limited prospects, especially when the children's father runs away. She regularly reminds her three daughters that their priority is education. "If they don't prevent themselves getting involved with boys, they end up in my situation," she says.

Her resolve grew out of World Vision's emphasis on the importance of education for children. These messages became especially important after 2010. "Post-earthquake Haiti has been challenged with a new set of problems with a high percentage of children who are not going to school," says Valerie Noisette, head of education for World Vision. "If we don't focus on educating young people, we will not see any change in Haiti."

Child sponsorship allows Jean's four school-age children to

study. Caroline, 10, and Wifmy, 11, both want to become teachers. Their sister, 14-year-old Lovenie, says, "I want to live in a beautiful country where all children can go to school."

Thanks to child sponsorship, Jean and her children have a new home—one that doesn't roast in the sun and flood in the rain. Jean calls the gift "a miracle."

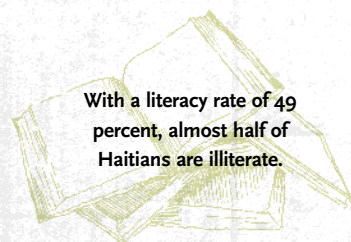
Jean also participates in a mothers club, where she learns about health, hygiene, and nutrition. "We talk about how we can support each other and make sure our children stay in school," Jean says. "And how, if they don't, this is a failure not just for themselves, but for our community and for our country."

Just a few years ago, less than half of Haiti's elementary-age students were in the classroom.

Today, elementary school attendance has climbed to 77 percent as communities embrace education for children—with mothers like Jean leading the way.

—Michelle Rice,

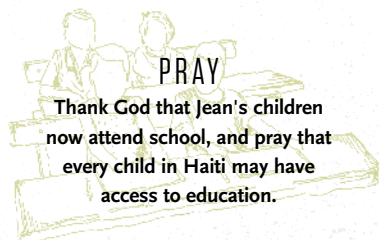
World Vision communicator formerly based in Haiti



With a literacy rate of 49 percent, almost half of Haitians are illiterate.

570

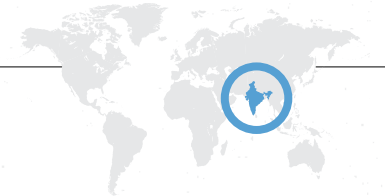
children in Haiti need sponsors.



PRAY
Thank God that Jean's children now attend school, and pray that every child in Haiti may have access to education.

INDIA

SUNRISE OVER THE SLUMS



AS DAWN BREAKS over a New Delhi resettlement colony, Gulabi is already off to the wholesale market. She jumps in a minivan for the 7-mile journey, determined to arrive early, so she can pick the best vegetables and fruit.

Selling produce used to be her husband's job, but no longer.

Life is seldom easy—or fair—in India's teeming slums, where the family lived earlier. A few years ago, Gulabi, her husband, Chabilal Shah, and their three children were forced out of the shack they called home—displaced along with their entire "slum settlement."

"Life had its challenges, but I could face them all because I had my husband by my side," says this once-timid homemaker, who uses no last name.

Moving to a new resettlement colony, Chabilal invested all the family's savings in a piece of land, and they were starting to pick up the pieces when he was diagnosed with jaundice. Despite spending every penny on medical treatment, Chabilal died.

"Our world came crumbling down," says 17-year-old Pinki, the oldest child. "We were reduced to nothing"

Gulabi was in no position to replace her husband as breadwinner. "I used to beg and plead for 60 rupees [\$1] just to sustain ourselves," she recalls. "No one around us cared. As a mother, I was upset that I was unable to provide basic meals for my children."

When life looked grim and hopeless, World Vision heard about their need and provided a vegetable cart so Gulabi could earn an income. Along with constructing a brick house for the family, World Vision enrolled Pinki's two brothers in sponsorship. Now the boys are thriving in school. Amit, 12, says, "Studies are good, and when I grow up, I want to be a teacher."

"We were left all alone. We had no one," Gulabi says. "But now we have World Vision. It feels good to have someone care for us." ●

—Annila Harris,

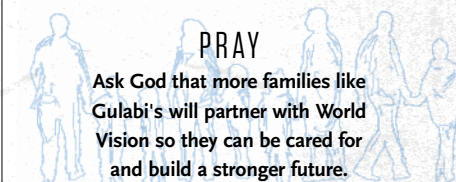
World Vision communicator based in India



More than 80 percent of Indians live on less than \$2 per day.

7,253

children in India need sponsors.



PRAY
Ask God that more families like Gulabi's will partner with World Vision so they can be cared for and build a stronger future.



EL SALVADOR

TOUCHING THE HEART OF GOD

SPONSORSHIP LAYS FOUNDATION FOR A LIFE OF MINISTRY.

BY KATIA DALILA MALDONADO



In the late 1970s and early 1980s, José Santiago Avelar's family was swept up in a tide of hardships, due largely to El Salvador's military dictatorship. Through the decades that followed, 44-year-old José discovered a new path to freedom that no form of oppression can derail.

His journey started humbly. The eldest of four children in a poor family, José's parents wanted the best for him. In 1978, they made a decision that would change his life.

Because they couldn't afford school fees for José or his siblings,

his parents were forced to pull their children out of public school and enroll them into a school at the family's church—a fortuitous decision.

"The school's principal sought sponsorship to benefit all of us," says José. "There were around 50 children who became sponsored by World Vision."

José's school fees, uniforms, shoes, and supplies were paid for up to sixth grade. "My life was impacted by knowing there was someone interested in me, in my well-being," says José,

remembering the thrill of writing to his American sponsor.

"I remember that once I made a drawing for him of the cartoon Pow Wow. I don't think I did it very pretty, but I drew it with love," he says.

World Vision's educational support "pushed me to move forward more and more. The most important thing was to know that someone behind me was interested in making my dreams come true," says José.

In 1988, José pursued those dreams by moving to Guatemala to study teaching at an Adventist training institute. He graduated as a primary school teacher in 1991 and went to Costa Rica to earn his bachelor's degree in theology.

Returning to El Salvador, José married Elizabeth, who was also sponsored through World Vision as a child.

Since then, José has served as a pastor in several churches and prison ministries, and was a principal at a Christian school. Now, he is president of an Adventist association that supports 140 churches. José is the first and only professional in his family.

Despite losing two of his siblings during El Salvador's civil war, José moves forward with a positive attitude. He sings the praises of sponsorship's effectiveness.

"I would like to bring together all of my community's past and current sponsored children to show the world that sponsorship works! We all need an inspiration in life, and being sponsored was mine," he says. "Do not be afraid to invest. The best investment a human being can make is to invest in another human being."

The assurance that sponsorship support provides taught José that God was



KATIA MALDONADO/WORLD VISION (2)

OPPOSITE PAGE: José baptizes a new believer. LEFT: The Avelar family gathers at the Adventist association headquarters, where José is president.

"THE MOST IMPORTANT THING WAS TO KNOW THAT SOMEONE BEHIND ME WAS INTERESTED IN MAKING MY DREAMS COME TRUE."

—JOSÉ AVELAR

giving him the opportunity to be whoever he wanted to be. He says, "Do not abandon your desires; God is giving you the victory."

José is passing down his faith to the next generation—his two children, David Alexander, 13, and Elizabeth Alexander, 12, are both active in their church and part of El Salvador's National Youth Philharmonic. "I am proud of my children," says José. "Our dream is for them to be useful to God, to the church, and to society."

"If you want to touch the heart of God, there is only one way: by helping others," says José. "Remember that God gave us his greatest offer of love—the greatest giver is our Father." ●

TO SPONSOR A CHILD fill out the form between pages 16 and 17 and enclose in attached envelope, or go to wvmag.org/sponsor.



WHO WE ARE | World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to 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 worldvision.org. ●

I Ran, She Won

BY PASTOR KEITH STEWART

The very nature of the kingdom of God is paradoxical, running counter to popular opinion. Paradoxes are the polar opposite of the way we think, and the Bible is filled with examples:

To find our life, we must lose it.

There is strength in weakness.

We die so that we might live.

The rich are poor, and the poor are rich.

Power and influence don't reside in the center, but in the margins.

But do we live these truths? One man did, and his name was Bob Pierce, World Vision's founder. Bob believed that the kingdom of God could be advanced through the smallest, weakest, and most vulnerable among us. He saw, through kingdom eyes, the potential of orphaned children to transform the world.

I know from personal experience just how transformational a relationship with the so-called "weak" can be. For the last seven years, I have been "sponsor Dad" to Caroline in Kenya. This experience has taught me so much. I thought I was supposed to bless her. Turns out, what has come back to me has been exponentially more than I have given.

I get so much joy in reading her letters and watching her grow. I'm deeply touched every time she dares to confide in me her hopes and dreams. But without a doubt, the single greatest consolation I have is in knowing that Caroline prays for me. Undoubtedly, my life is blessed because she has blessed me to God.

So when I was asked to run a marathon that would benefit her and her community, there was no question what I would do. The thought of Caroline has kept me motivated through long runs, sore muscles, and the impulse to give up. I don't particularly enjoy running—especially not 26.2 miles. But I run for love of Caroline.

Caroline lives in southwest Kenya, in the nation's poorest province. Her community has battled malaria, HIV, dysentery, and more for years. Even though disease and death are commonplace, every time I have looked into her eyes, I see hope.



COURTESY KEITH STEWART

Pastor Keith Stewart runs a marathon for Caroline, his sponsored child.

I run because, in her part of the world, water is neither abundant nor pure. It seems unimaginable, but people today are still dying from lack of clean drinking water. Caroline's community is awash in desperate poverty. Apart from the intervention of others, hope of a better tomorrow remains just that: a hope, but not a reality. I run to make her hope a lasting reality.

Jesus once said, "The last will be first, and the first will be last" (Matthew 20:16). In the paradox that is the kingdom of God, first and last as we know them are reversed. Those we assume are at the head of the line are actually closer to the end,

and those we place last are really first.

In light of this, I confess that as tremendous as it feels to complete a marathon and receive a finisher's medal, nothing compares with the deep sense of soul satisfaction I felt when I gave those medals to my Caroline. She deserved them much more than I did because even though I ran, she won.

While society applauds the winners, God remembers the "also-rans." The "last" and the "least" have a special place in the heart of God, and that is first place.

So this little girl in a forgotten village tucked on the backside of nowhere is the real winner. She is of first importance to God. The question is, do we live in such a way that Caroline and her many brothers and sisters around the world get first place with us? ●

"The last will be first, and the first will be last."

—MATTHEW 20:16



Pastor Keith Stewart is senior pastor at Springcreek Church in Garland, Texas, and a passionate advocate for the world's most vulnerable people.

TO SPONSOR A CHILD fill out the form between pages 16 and 17 and enclose in attached envelope, or go to wvmag.org/sponsor.

RETROSPECT



ENKHBOLD BY ANB, JAY/WORLD VISION

MONGOLIA

The dressing room buzzes with energy as girls from the Children of the Blue Sky choir fix their makeup and adjust their costumes before taking the stage at Mongolia's annual Vision Star Festival. Since 2001, this World Vision event has brought together talented youth from across Mongolia to perform. Many of the boys and girls who participate in Vision Star come from impoverished households in both rural and urban areas of Mongolia. Practicing, rehearsing, and finally performing before an audience boosts self-confidence, helps the children discover and develop their talents, and instills a sense of empowerment that lasts long after the spotlight fades. ●

UNFINISHED

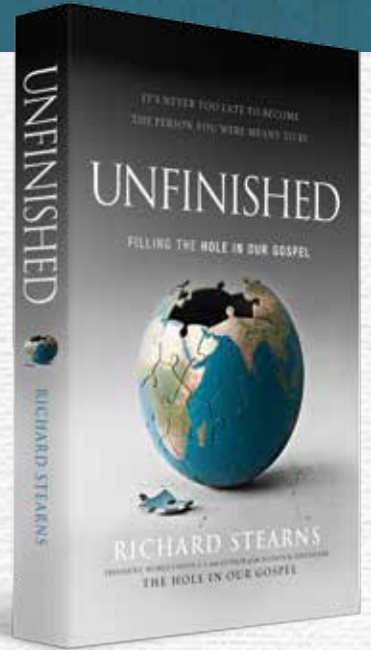
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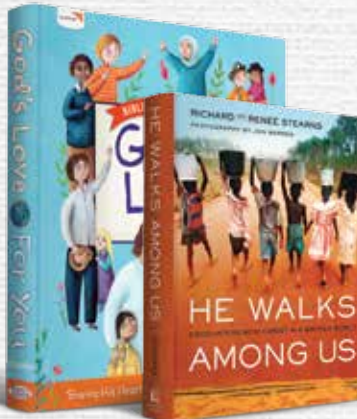


"Unfinished just might challenge everything you thought you understood about your Christian faith. ... If every Christian read this book and took it seriously, the world would never be the same again." —Bill Hybels, senior pastor, Willow Creek Community Church

Plus, check out the new devotional and children's book by Rich Stearns and his wife, Renee:

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Rich Stearns, president of World Vision U.S. and best-selling author of *The Hole in Our Gospel*, 2010 ECPA Christian Book of the Year

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

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