

# World Vision

AUTUMN 2019

**12**  
CURRENT  
DISASTER  
RESPONSES

BACKPACKS  
LOADED  
WITH PRAYER

**32**

Creating a home in  
the world's largest  
refugee camp

**14**

## NOWHERE TO BELONG



# PROTECT REFUGEE KIDS



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**ON THE COVER**  
 Jannatul Firdous, 5, lives in the world's largest refugee camp in Bangladesh.  
JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

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• President's letter



CHRIS HUBER/WORLD VISION

World Vision U.S. President Edgar Sandoval Sr. consoles Armando, 16, as he shares his story of fleeing Venezuela with his family.

## Leaving home

By Edgar Sandoval Sr.

**I'LL NEVER FORGET** returning to the country where I was born but barely knew. It was 1982, and I was 18. Arriving alone, I stepped off the plane in New York with everything I owned stuffed into my dad's green army duffel—\$50 in one pocket and my U.S. passport in the other.

My life in Venezuela—my home for 14 years—had fallen apart under the strain of my father's unemployment and my parents' divorce. I had just graduated high school, but there was no money for college. We couldn't even afford rent and food.

I returned to the U.S. in hopes of studying here. I didn't speak English. I felt lost, lonely, and poor.

Compared with others who come to America, I had advantages—starting with my U.S. citizenship. And my older sister was already here. But we had to scrimp and save and live on \$13 a week for groceries. I worked low-paying jobs and learned the language. I felt like an immigrant in my own country.

I learned something true of all people: Nobody wants to leave home and the people they love. It's tough to start over in an unfamiliar and often unwelcoming place, where you're not treated the same as others and you have to work twice as hard for everything. But my situation was a far cry from the way some people leave their homes today.

More than 30 years since I left, 4 million people are leaving Venezuela due to economic catastrophe, political turmoil, hyperinflation, and widespread hunger. Venezuela has gone from the once-prosperous and stable country I knew to a

place where parents can't feed their children. My heart is with them.

For others, leaving home is a terrifying life-or-death choice, as it was for 1 million Rohingya people now taking refuge in Bangladesh. They escaped extreme violence, only to end up living in flimsy shelters in overcrowded camps, vulnerable to monsoons and cyclones. My heart breaks for them.

I thank God that I'm in a position to help people in such dire need. World Vision is caring for Venezuelan migrants in four neighboring countries—Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru—providing food vouchers, cash transfers, child protection, education, and other programs. In Bangladesh, World Vision is working to improve living conditions for Rohingya refugees by supplying clean water, mother and child healthcare, cash for work, child protection, and more.

This is among the most difficult work World Vision does. For us, it is an act of faith.

Our Lord Jesus knew how it felt to be a refugee—a stranger. As a child, he fled with his parents to Egypt to escape the wrath of King Herod. The Son of God willingly took on the painful experience of living in exile. He did it because he loves us.

It's this powerful and transforming love that propels all of us at World Vision to serve others, especially those the world neglects, like refugees. We care for them in the ways Jesus specified in Matthew 25:35: "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger and you invited me in..."

Maybe the Holy Spirit is prompting you to do more for strangers—globally or locally. Inspired by Jesus' love, how might you reach out to people in need? 📌



**Edgar Sandoval Sr.** is president of World Vision U.S. Follow him at [twitter.com/EdgarSandovalSr](https://twitter.com/EdgarSandovalSr).

**FIND MORE**

Experience scenes from the countries where World Vision works at [wvmag.org/photos](http://wvmag.org/photos).

# Embark

COME IN AND SEE THE WORLD

**ONLINE**

Read more about World Vision's response to Venezuela's crisis at [wvmag.org/venezuela](http://wvmag.org/venezuela).



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

**Uganda**

In Hoima, World Vision-trained volunteers weigh and measure the babies of mothers who are learning to prepare nutritious food for their malnourished children.

● Embark

126,000+

PEOPLE FROM VENEZUELA  
HAVE RECEIVED LIFE-  
SAVING AID AND SUPPLIES  
FROM WORLD VISION.



**Venezuela–  
Colombia border**

At an informal border crossing near Cúcuta, Colombia, people from Venezuela stream across the Tachira River. Most people come for the day—to work or shop for goods they're unable to find at home, for medical appointments, or to attend school.

About 4 million have left the country to find work, food, better healthcare, and stability. Each day, an estimated 5,000 of the people who leave Venezuela stay and seek work in Colombia or nearby countries. World Vision is providing emergency food, Child-Friendly Spaces, and support for small businesses for Venezuelan migrants in Colombia.

JON WARREN/WORLD VISION





**116,003**

*PEOPLE IN PUERTO RICO  
RECEIVED EMERGENCY  
AID FROM WORLD VISION*



**Puerto Rico**

A World Vision emergency response team and members of the local Calvary Church organized and distributed relief supplies at a church in Utuado four months after Hurricane Maria devastated the island territory in September 2017. As relief operations scaled back, World Vision ramped up training for students, teachers, and community leaders in disaster risk reduction and emergency response to help prepare residents for future disasters.

CHRIS HUBER/WORLD VISION



### Democratic Republic of the Congo

Moments to play were rare for 13-year-old Kapinga. The nation's strife orphaned Kapinga and conscripted others to serve as soldiers. A bright spot in Kapinga's life is the nearby World Vision Child-Friendly Space, where she's one of 2,000 children benefiting from our care and support. Kapinga's days are now unfolding with songs and dancing with friends.

JON WARREN/WORLD VISION



# Discover

EXPLORE THE ISSUES FACING PEOPLE IN POVERTY

### COVER STORY | 14

For Rohingya children, living in the world's largest refugee camp is a far cry from home.

"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."  
—MATTHEW 19:14



A girl peeks through a fence in a Bangladesh refugee camp. Learn more about our response on page 14.

JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

# Disaster response life cycle

Disasters are devastating events in lives of people who are impoverished. Recent crises are not only affecting more people but also are lasting longer, an average of nine years. Most long-term crises, like that originating from Syria, are caused by conflict, though natural disasters also play a large part in displacing people and causing suffering. World Vision is a deep-rooted and active member of society in each of the nearly 100 countries where we work—positioned to immediately respond to disasters. We are on the ground before, during, and after a disaster to help children and families not just cope, but thrive.

1



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

## Risk reduction

🕒 Months or years

*With good community development and disaster planning, we help families and communities prepare for likely disasters.*

### BEFORE AN EMERGENCY:

- Gather locals to determine risks
- Empower community to reduce risks
- Help build family and community economic resilience
- Pre-position relief supplies
- Equip governments for coordination and first-responder roles

4



FLORENCE JOY MALLUYO/WORLD VISION

## Rehabilitation

🕒 Typically five years or more

*We partner with communities to build back better—lives, livelihoods, and infrastructure.*

### BEFORE AN EMERGENCY:

- Help communities return to predisaster conditions or better
- Train and empower people to increase and diversify their incomes
- Support long-term development goals such as water systems and healthcare facilities

2



THEODORE SAM/WORLD VISION

## Relief operations

🕒 Typically 45 days

*World Vision responds quickly to assess needs and coordinate actions with governments and other aid organizations.*

### AFTER AN EMERGENCY EVENT:

- Distribute aid to meet basic needs: food, water, temporary shelter
- Protect children through Child-Friendly Spaces
- Support family nutrition through women and young child feeding spaces
- Provide case management to protect children, reunite families, and give them access to services

3



HIMALOY JOSEPH MREE/WORLD VISION

## Recovery

🕒 Typically three years

*We provide long-term assistance based on local and national goals and priorities.*

### LONG-TERM ASSISTANCE:

- Restore schools and educational opportunities for children
- Help families revive livelihoods
- Establish permanent housing
- Provide improved access to sustainable food sources



TREY INGRAM

## WORLD VISION: THE SWISS ARMY KNIFE OF DISASTER RESPONSE

Like an all-in-one tool, World Vision staff combine the unique skills and expertise needed to address complex issues of disaster relief and recovery. We provide effective solutions that help families and communities not only recover but also be better prepared to face future risks.

Depending on the situation and needs of the community, our holistic response may address:

- Water, sanitation, and hygiene
- Food assistance, then food security
- Shelter
- Child protection
- Livelihoods and income generation
- Health
- Social cohesion/peacebuilding
- Disaster risk reduction

We may also use cash-equivalent cards, which are used in contexts where goods are locally available and markets are functioning and accessible. They are not only efficient and cost-effective, but they also give families more independence and choices.

# Current disaster responses

By Chris Huber

Your generous gifts helped World Vision assist 16 million children and their families affected by 143 disasters and emergencies in 44 countries in 2018. In the United States alone, more than 230,000 disaster survivors also benefited from our programs. Explore the map to learn more about our largest recent responses.

## PROTRACTED

Ongoing complex crises of five years or more

- SYRIA
- MYANMAR
- SOUTH SUDAN
- MALI
- DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

## SLOW-ONSET

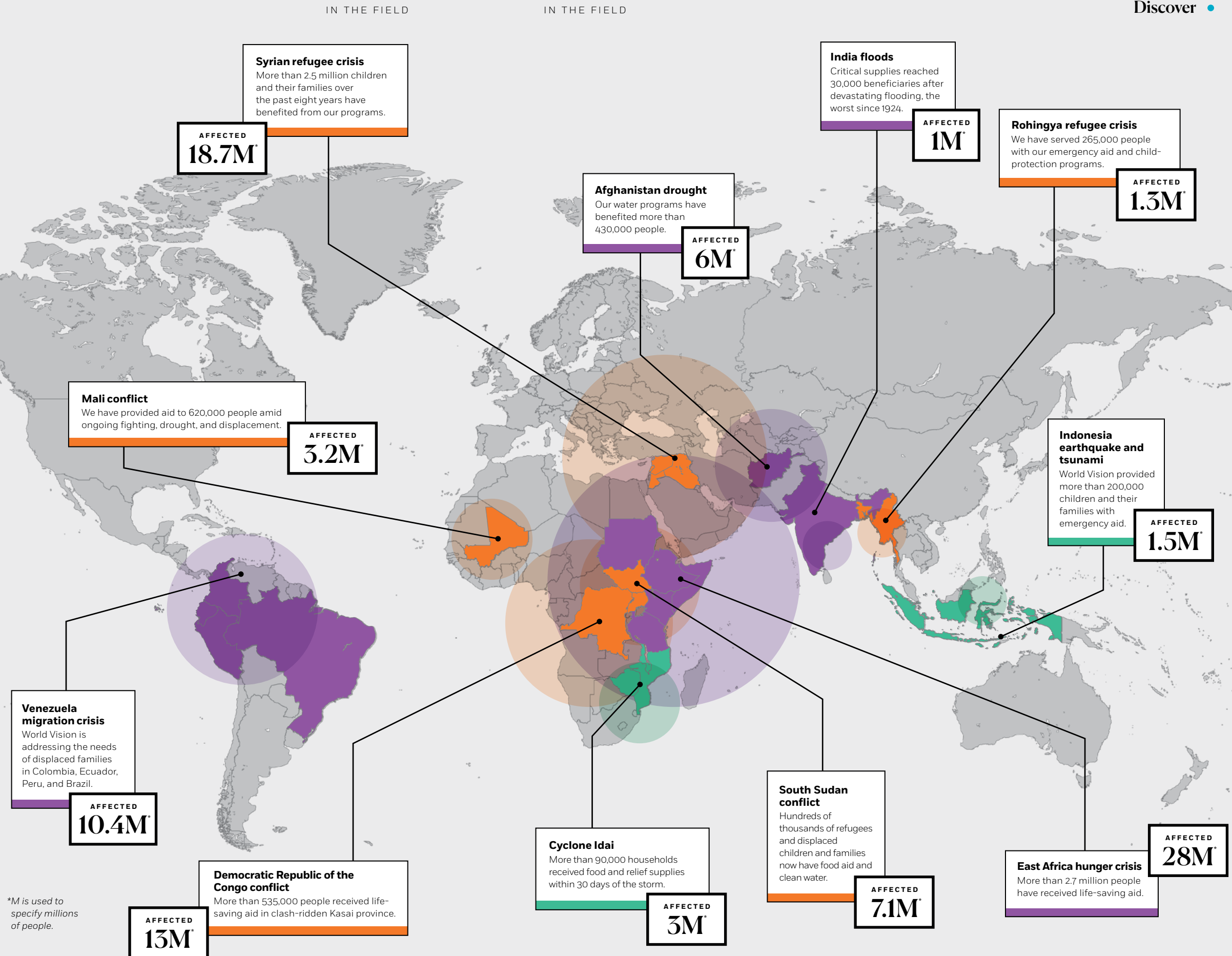
Long-term or recurring natural disasters, conflicts, food insecurity

- EAST AFRICA
- INDIA
- AFGHANISTAN
- VENEZUELA

## RAPID-ONSET

Sudden natural disasters

- CYCLONE IDAI
- INDONESIA EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI



\*M is used to specify millions of people.



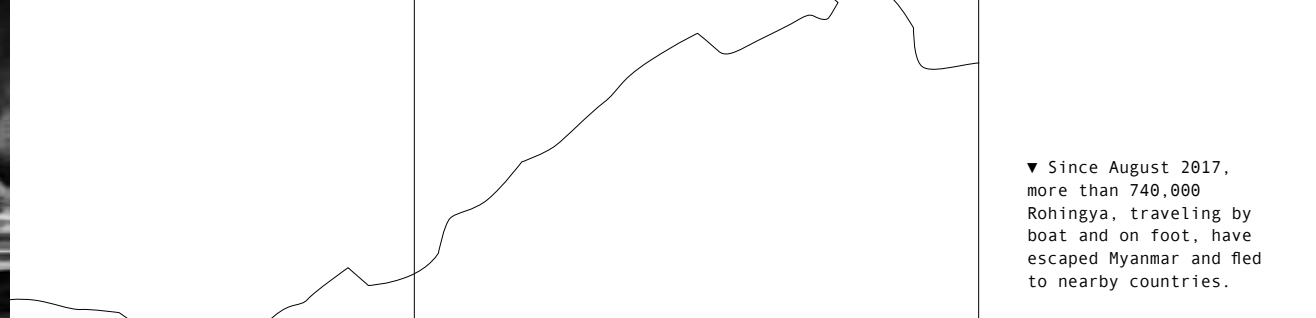


Citizens

of nowhere



Jannatul (center) fled Myanmar with her mother, Salima (left), and her grandmother. They now live in a shelter in the world's largest refugee camp.



▼ Since August 2017, more than 740,000 Rohingya, traveling by boat and on foot, have escaped Myanmar and fled to nearby countries.



▼ Refugees settled in Cox's Bazar, a district in Bangladesh, which was already home to 200,000 Rohingya.

## Five-year-old Jannatul Firdous is deep in thought. How best to describe the meaning of her name? Jannatul Firdous means heaven—the best heaven—so she wants to get it right.\*

“Heaven is a place where children can play,” she begins as her 26-year-old mother, Salima\*\*, gazes at her with a sweet half-smile. “There are many flowers,” continues Jannatul. “There is a big pond of water. Heaven is a happy place.”

Camp 13, where Jannatul now lives, is no heaven. Children play in the dirt, kicking up dust that floats in the hot afternoon air. It’s a far cry from the lush, green countryside surrounding the home she fled in Myanmar. Here, there’s no playful splashing in big ponds. Instead, Jannatul must lug heavy metal water containers from a pump up a steep hillside staircase that leads to her family’s makeshift shelter. In Camp 13, some people sweat under a hot sun, breathing in the diesel fuel stink of trucks loaded with bamboo poles. Amid

\*Jannah is often translated in the Qur’an as “heaven.” Jannatul Firdous is Islam’s highest level of heaven.  
\*\*Name changed for protection





▲ Salima holds up her cellphone that shows the last picture taken of Jannatul (center) with her brother and sister before they were killed.

the cacophony of clinking shovels and pinging hammers, they lay bricks and fill burlap bags to shore up steep hillsides in preparation for the coming monsoon season.

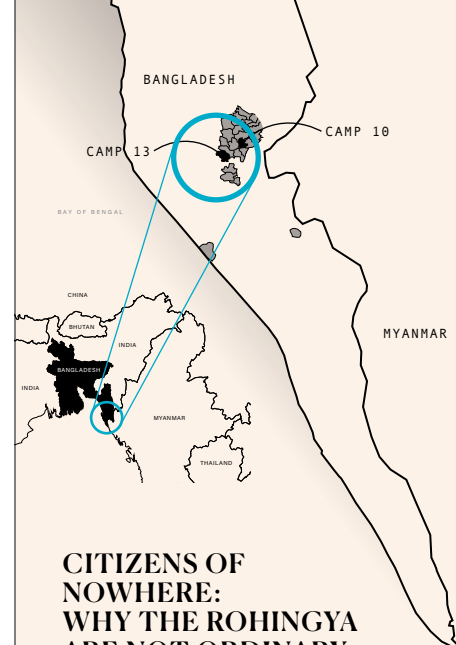
Jannatul lives in the world's largest and most densely populated refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Of its nearly 1 million residents, more than half are children. Most of the people here are Rohingya, a persecuted, predominantly Muslim minority group from Myanmar who have faced decades of discrimination there, including the denial of citizenship. Since August 2017, more than 740,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh, driven from their homes by extreme violence in Myanmar's northern Rakhine State. They joined about 200,000 Rohingya refugees who had fled in the 70s and 90s.

Camp 13 is one of 33 sprawling sub-settlements within the "mega-camp." Squalid and overcrowded, it is home to 41,000 people who are citizens of nowhere—the antithesis of the happy place Jannatul dreams of. What can be done to help girls like her live fuller lives, as God intends? The answer lies in World Vision's three areas of focus in the camps: provision, partnering with the host community, and protection. World Vision staff in Bangladesh work to meet refugees' basic needs and those of the surrounding community, helping to ensure that children and their parents are safe and their rights are protected.

PROVISION:  
**Tackling the basics**

The mass exodus of the Rohingya from Myanmar is a story of hell on earth. Girls and women, especially, arrived in Bangladesh with both physical and emotional scars. A 2018 United Nations High Commission for Refugees report titled "Culture, Context and Mental Health of Rohingya Refugees" details how women were molested, raped, and forced into prostitution in Myanmar.

When violence erupted in their village in August 2017, Salima's family of five became separated. "Jannatul was with me, but I didn't know what had happened to my husband and my [other] children," she says. "Later, I saw them dead." Mohamed, 30, was shot; their 2-year-old son, Hafej, and 1-year-old daughter, Kalima, were stabbed to death. Her



**CITIZENS OF NOWHERE:  
WHY THE ROHINGYA  
ARE NOT ORDINARY  
REFUGEES**

In 1982, Myanmar passed a law that excluded many ethnicities, including the Rohingya, from status as an official national race. As a result, the Rohingya were denied citizenship—making them one of the world's largest groups of stateless people—and subjected to restrictions in marriage, family size, employment, education, religious choice, and freedom of movement. For example, in two northern towns in Myanmar, Rohingya were allowed to have only two children. While they are safer and have more freedom in Bangladesh, they face restrictions in the country that is not a signatory to the United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention and therefore does not recognize the Rohingya as refugees. The convention defines what a refugee is and what rights they have, including freedom of religion and movement, the right to work and education, and access to travel documents. A key component is the stipulation that refugees should not be involuntarily forced to return to a country where they fear persecution. Without legal refugee status, Rohingya in Bangladesh are not allowed to work, move outside the camps, or immigrate to other countries. Children are not allowed to go to school, and women and children are targets for abuse such as human trafficking, child labor, child marriage, gender-based violence, and other forms of exploitation.



Salima hopes that a sweet bedtime song will stave off nightmares for her daughter.



▲ Jannatul's teacher, Farjana (in purple), pays extra attention to her student.

expression clouded by sadness, Salima holds out her phone to show a photo of Kalima and Hafej, smiling as they press against their big sister, Jannatul.

Provision—meeting basic needs—was the goal when World Vision began helping Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh in August 2017. Jannatul and Salima were among the first beneficiaries. “World Vision gave me shelter,” says Salima. The shelters built by new arrivals were erected hastily, made from chopped-down trees and covered with tarps handed out by the U.N. Then in April 2018, World Vision provided bamboo poles, cement, and additional tarps to fortify the shelters against the seasonal monsoon rains.

Salima was one of 150,000 people campwide who received essentials like hygiene kits, cooking equipment, and feminine hygiene products—desperately needed by people who arrived with little more than the clothes they wore.

Water was another essential need. In Camp 13, World Vision installed deep-tube wells, pumps, and latrines. By the end of 2018, 158,000 people had access to water and sanitation services in Salima's camp and 12 others.


Urgent health issues were also addressed. A study by the Bangladesh Ministry of Health revealed that 10% of the children under the age of 5 in the camps had moderate acute malnutrition, which can lead to death if left untreated. World Vision, working in partnership with the World Food Programme, opened malnutrition prevention and treatment centers in three camps to reach more than 13,000 at-risk children with supplementary food.

No one in the camp has money, and it's illegal for Salima and other refugees to work outside the camps. Instead, she participates in a World Vision cash-for-work project that provides short-term jobs for refugee men and women to build much-needed roads, bridges, and drainage systems in the camp. Salima helps fill burlap sandbags that will be used to prevent landslides during the annual monsoon rains that turn the camp into a muddy, hazardous mess.


Salima didn't expect this assistance. When they left Myanmar, Salima says, “We were just trying to save our lives. We didn't think we would get support like we do now. For everything, I am grateful.” As members of an organization founded and rooted in faith, World Vision


### SPECIAL TREATS: WHAT CASH-FOR-WORK CAN BUY


Salima and many other refugees work inside the camp to help provide for their families through World Vision's cash-for-work program, earning 300 taka—about US\$3.50—a day. Men and women work for eight days and then another group rotates through to give as many people as possible the opportunity to earn something. Here are a few examples of what they can buy with their earnings.

 1 banana = 5 taka

 1 egg = 10 taka

 1 bag of chips = 10 taka

 1 soccer ball = 20 taka

 1 chicken = 400 taka



Activities at a Child-Friendly Space give Jannatul a reason to sing.



◀ Nearly 3,000 children attend World Vision's 12 Child-Friendly Spaces in the camps.

staff undergird their labor with love—love that is evident to Salima. “World Vision people are good and kind to us,” she says.

Jannatul is one of nearly 3,000 children who attend World Vision's 12 Child-Friendly Spaces in six camps—each one an oasis of fun. By providing psychosocial care and structured activities, Child-Friendly Spaces support kids whose lives have been turned upside down by emergency situations. The spaces are now being transitioned into learning centers, giving Rohingya children an opportunity for informal education.

Situated in the heart of the camp, Jannatul's Child-Friendly Space is a lively, happy—often noisy—space that's painted a cheerful orange. The children named this space themselves—*Surjoful*—after something they'd left behind in Myanmar: sunflowers. Jannatul shines at the Child-Friendly Space, singing, dancing, and reciting rhymes such as “Rain, rain, go away” in English.

The energetic little sprite is a staff favorite, says her teacher, Farjana Faraz Tumpa, 20. Jannatul doesn't miss class. Some kids prefer to stay with their mothers, lining up for daily relief supplies.

But Jannatul is an eager learner. Says Farjana, “When I teach [the children] something, she follows me very carefully.” Farjana holds Jannatul’s mother in great esteem, too. “She is a very good lady. Whenever we call a parents meeting, she comes. She has only one child, so she is very careful with her.”

**PARTNERING :**

**Working with the host community**

Farjana is a member of the host community of 330,000 Bangladeshis in Cox’s Bazar district, home to a fishing port and a tourist destination that features the world’s longest natural sea beach: 75 unbroken miles of gently sloping sand. Two years ago, Farjana watched as hundreds of thousands of refugees converged on 8 square miles of green hills—about six times the size of New York’s Central Park—and began cutting down trees for shelter and firewood.

While the Bangladeshis gave what they could to the distressed Rohingya—many of them leaving their dinner tables to share food

with exhausted travelers arriving at night—the new arrivals caused stress. People in the area were already poor, even by Bangladeshi standards, with 33% living below the poverty line and 17% below the extreme poverty line.

▼ As part of World Vision’s cash-for-work program, Salima (in orange scarf) helps fill burlap sandbags used to shore up hillsides and prevent landslides during the annual monsoon rains.



◀ Although crowded with malnourished children, no children at World Vision’s nutrition center in Camp 10 have died.

There are always tensions when people compete for finite resources such as firewood, land, and water. Locals see big trucks moving into camp, laden with relief supplies, and wonder why their own families still don’t have enough to eat. So assisting host community members became an essential element of World Vision’s work.

World Vision hired hundreds of residents like Farjana to run its programs in the camps, providing income for locals and helping build understanding between the two populations. Soon World Vision will also begin a child sponsorship program—a proven poverty-fighting approach—in Cox’s Bazar. Sponsors in the United States will be able to connect with a child in the host community, providing support for essentials like education, health, and economic opportunities for their parents.

To help protect the environment and prevent conflict, World Vision operates 42 community kitchens, where up to 1,000 refugee women can cook each day in shifts. Cooking in a safe space on gas stoves, rather than using firewood, keeps people from cutting down trees. The community kitchen in Camp 19 smells of delicious food. “I love to cook here,” says 22-year-old Muchena, also a refugee. “Even if I don’t have anything to cook, I come to have fun with other women. The kitchen is like our home.”

Community kitchens are bright spots in an otherwise harsh existence for women like Muchena, and cash-for-work programs give a boost to mothers like Salima, although she misses the days when she could be a stay-at-home-mom. “If I didn’t have to work, and if I could take care of my daughter [all the time], I could create a heaven on earth,” says Salima. And with that, it’s time to sing Jannatul to sleep. The best part of the day has arrived, a time to close her eyes and pull her daughter close, tasting heaven for a moment in a place that’s anything but.

**PROTECTION :**

**Preventing violence against women**

Protecting women is an important component to World Vision’s work with Rohingya refugees. This involves keeping children and their families safe in the camps and advocating for their rights.

Women and girls are particularly vulnerable. Women in the camp



“

ATA ULLAH, 27

What World Vision is doing about education and violence is important. With violence, the community cannot have a better life.”



► World Vision operates 42 community kitchens, where more than 1,000 women cook and socialize daily.



Ata and his 23-year-old wife, Sahnewaj, recently welcomed their second child, Rahaena. “It was difficult,” says Sahnewaj about being pregnant in a refugee camp. “I fetched water from down the hill and climbed back up. I couldn’t breathe for a while. I felt really bad.” When she went into labor late at night, it was unsafe for her to leave their shelter, so she delivered the baby at home, assisted by a neighbor rather than a nurse. Despite the challenges, Rahaena arrived at 2 a.m., and she is adored by her parents. “She is beautiful,” gushes Ata.

Sahnewaj has seen a transformation in her husband since he started helping other men change the way they view, and behave toward, women and girls. “Sometimes he would get mad at me, but now he’s different,” she says. Ata agrees: “I didn’t treat my wife well earlier. I have learned to treat her equally. We have equal rights in our family.”

Ata particularly wants to help boys in the camp change their attitudes toward the women in their families. Thirteen-year-old Sirajul is one of 80 boys who recently

▼ Although giving birth in a camp was a struggle, Ata Ullah and his wife, Sahnewaj (in yellow), love their new baby girl, Rahaena.

have reported physical and sexual assault, psychological abuse, and forced marriage. Of the reported cases of gender-based violence, 71% of the incidents occurred in the survivor’s home, and 74% were committed by intimate partners.

In Camp 13, World Vision runs a safe space for women where they can talk about such issues and get help from trained counselors. Salima and her neighbors learn what gender-based violence is, how to protect themselves, and how to get professional help should they need it. Men and boys are also engaged so they can be part of the solution.

Ata Ullah, once an eighth-grade teacher in Myanmar, now works with World Vision teaching gender-based violence prevention classes for boys and men.

“It is important to stop conflict between people,” says Ata, 27, sitting cross-legged and cradling his 18-month-old son on his lap. “What World Vision is doing about education and violence is important. With violence, the community cannot have a better life.”

Ata arrived with his wife in the huge influx of Rohingya in the fall of 2017. Crossing the Naf River by boat, he carried his newborn son high over his head, struggling to reach the shoreline of Bangladesh. Around them, crescent-shaped boats loaded with too many passengers capsized in deeper waters, drowning women and children.

▲ Sirajul (center), who attended a World Vision class on gender-based violence, sits with his siblings and mother. Modesty dictates that his sister, Samira, turn her back to the camera for a family portrait.



SIRAJUL ULLAH, 13

**We are really concerned about our sisters. The women are not safe.”**



finished World Vision’s two-day course, led by Ata, on preventing gender-based violence. They learned how inequality between men and women and boys and girls breeds injustice and physical and sexual violence.

“We are really concerned about our sisters,” says Sirajul, sitting next to his sister Samira. “The women are not safe.” He knows that Samira is vulnerable to abuse in the camp. She leaves the house only to visit the latrine. At home, she steers clear of the front room, where she could be seen. “We are shy of men here,” she says. “That’s why we stay in the back.”

It was different for Samira in Myanmar. While she had to live by the norms of a culture that keeps girls at home from the time of their first period until they are married, there was space to be free. “I miss my home,” she says. “I could go outside of my home and run. Here, I just have to stay in this room.” She worries about the heat. “Summer is coming,” she says. “I don’t know what it will be like here.” She misses the flowers, especially the marigolds. “In our homestead, just before the fence, we planted many flowers and had fruit trees,” she says. They would go out in the cool of the evening to tend to the flowers and trees. Now Samira is trapped inside.

The workshop helped Sirajul see his sisters, including 16-year-old Fatema, in a new light. “Earlier, when I asked for food and they couldn’t make it, I scolded them,” he says. “Now I don’t. They asked me, ‘What happened to you? What did you learn at that center?’”

Sirajul loved the classes and the teachers, like Ata. “We like World Vision. They gave us an opportunity to learn,” he says.

As a teacher, Ata is concerned for the boys like Sirajul. The curious, talkative, thoughtful boy was in the top quarter of his class of 80 in Myanmar and misses going to school. Formal education is not permitted for the 540,000 children and youth living in the camps. Almost half of the children ages 3 to 14 years do not have access to any kind of learning, nor do 97% of adolescents and youth ages 15 to 24—leaving them vulnerable to child marriage, child labor, human trafficking, abuse, and exploitation. World Vision is opening 21 learning centers for adolescent boys and girls—the first will be in Camp 13.

“Without education, they must learn something to earn a living,” says Ata. “If they don’t have education, they may be involved with theft or robbery.”

With his skills, experience, and passion for people, Ata is wasting no time in addressing this urgent need. Learning is critical for the next generation of Rohingya. Ata stays focused on what matters—youth and his family. “When I have time, I visit my relatives,” he says, smiling. “There are many in Camp 13.”

A breeze blows through the family’s small house, rustling a red curtain and creating a rosy glow that dances across his wife’s face. Her beauty shines through the darkness. Camp 13 may not be heaven, but for now, it is home. 📍

**Give to the refugee children’s crisis fund to help provide life-saving care. See the envelope between pages 16 and 17 or call 1.866.962.4453.**

*Karen Homer and Himaloy Joseph Mree, World Vision staff members in Bangladesh, contributed to this story.*



## FROM SPONSORED CHILD TO COMPASSIONATE LEADER

**ATUL MRONG, 42**, is deputy operations director for World Vision's response to the Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh. Atul, who grew up in a poor Christian family in Bangladesh, says he feels a connection to the displaced Rohingya. "They remind me of me," he says. "Our financial situation was not good. I had six sisters. I was the only son. My parents were not educated; they were illiterate. My father could only sign his name."

Atul's life changed when he was sponsored through World Vision. "The sponsor who helped

me came into my life as an angel from God," he says. "From class three to now, my education, tuition, moral education, school fees, tuition all came from World Vision. They really helped me grow."

Atul was surprised that someone would invest in him. "The sponsor did not [meet] me," he says. "He was just looking at my picture." "Based on that, they trusted me. Out of that trust, they sent generous support. That generosity and confidence in me changed my life."

What Atul's sponsor poured into him, he now pours out. "Sponsored children become good people," he says. "It makes us good employees." And working for World Vision is different, he says. "It is not just work. It is the call of God. God chooses us to work with the vulnerable. It's a call we must answer." 🙏

“  
That generosity and confidence in me changed my life.”

### WHERE ARE THEY NOW? | 28

Fighting violence with love is key for a former sponsored child in Colombia.

# Inspire

MOTIVATING YOU TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

“The King will reply, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”  
—MATTHEW 25:40



Former sponsored child Mayerly Sanchez is a World Vision communications officer in Colombia. Learn more about her fight for a peaceful life on page 28.

JON WARREN/WORLD VISION



Mayerly Sanchez (center) enjoys conversations with kids in Caracole, a low-income community near Cúcuta on the Venezuela border.

JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

# A sponsored child's life in Colombia comes full circle

By Kathryn Reid

**MAYERLY SANCHEZ SHAKES** her head in sadness as she watches Venezuelans streaming across a border to enter Colombia. Mayerly, a World Vision communications manager in Colombia, hurts for children and families fleeing hardships. In their faces, she sees her young self.

She grew up during some of Colombia's most dangerous years. The country had been suffering from internal violence and conflict since the civil war of the 1950s, but by the late 1990s, more than 30,000 people were dying violently each year, and more than 1 million people had been displaced in just over a decade.

Mayerly's low-income and violence-prone community near Bogota, the capital, didn't escape the tensions. But when she was 6 or 7, World Vision came, and she became a sponsored child. "From then, my life changed," she says.

**Tragedy and a peace movement** World Vision opened Mayerly's mind to a more peaceful life. She learned to speak up, help others, and take responsibility for herself. She and other youth started a children's peace club in the early 1990s to advocate for these values. They used games to steer kids away from drugs, crime, and violence.

But the violence still struck close to home. In 1996, when Mayerly was 12, her friend Milton, a peace club member, was stabbed to death by gang members. Mayerly mourned the loss of one of her closest friends and redoubled her peace work.

That same year, she was among 27 Colombian youth attending a UNICEF children's peacebuilding conference. With two other sponsored children, she was elected spokesperson for the nationwide Children's Peace Movement. They mobilized almost 3 million children to vote for their right to live peacefully. The following year, 10 million Colombian adults also voted for peace.

Mayerly and her friends organized rallies, lobbied officials, and advocated peace. In 1998, the children's movement was even nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

**Creating a different world**

At 17, Mayerly poured her heart into studies and seeking peace. She also looked forward to college; World Vision

**"I'm a peacebuilder; that's my life's work."**

had taught her about different career opportunities that she hadn't previously known about, and journalism caught her attention.

But then her father died in a vehicle accident, and in the heartache, she considered giving up her college dreams. Instead, she pushed through, and with scholarships from World Vision and CNN, she earned a journalism degree and then got a master's degree in strategic marketing.

Education gave her the tools to be a lifelong peacemaker. "I'm a peacebuilder; that's my life's work," she says.

The peaceful life that she advocated so hard for has become her reality. Now 35, Mayerly is married to Carlos Andries, and they have two children. Their girls, Maria Jose, 1, and Isabella, 2, are now growing up in more peaceful country. Homicides are at a 40-year low, though still five times higher than the U.S. But



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

At age 15, Mayerly led children's peace demonstrations, which earned her a Nobel Peace Prize nomination in 1998.

they enjoy the peace, security, and innocence that eluded her childhood.

And in her communications work for World Vision, she continues to use the power of words to change her country and advocate for children.

"Kids are what makes me love this work," Mayerly says. She wants all to be protected so they will reject violence. She wants all to grow up knowing they are loved, with unlimited potential.

She says, "With love, everything is different in your life." 🍌



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

Mayerly (center) leads a children's game in an afterschool program in Caracole.

**You asked, we learned.**

We've updated My World Vision to include a fun scrapbook of the photos you cherish from your previous sponsored child. Log into your account and take a moment to reminisce and remember the impact you had during your time as their sponsor. And while you're strolling down memory lane, be sure to send an email to your current sponsored child. Go online at [wvmag.org/myworldvision](http://wvmag.org/myworldvision).





LAURA REINHARDT/WORLD VISION

Bristy (second from left) can now attend school thanks to World Vision's child protection work in Bangladesh.

# Lives transformed in Bangladesh

By Lyné Brown

About seven years ago, my husband, Pat, and I read “The Hole in Our Gospel” by World Vision President Emeritus Rich Stearns. As I read, I felt God say, “This is important! These people are real, and they’re suffering. Now you know the statistics. If only my people would share, there would be enough for everyone.”

Not long after that, a friend approached Pat and me about partnering with World Vision to help bring clean water to an African community. We agreed and have since traveled to many African countries with World Vision.

But a trip for me to Bangladesh in January 2017 felt different.

We met beautiful children and mothers and fathers who lived almost on top of each other in the slums of Khulna, the third-largest city in Bangladesh. My most vivid memory from this trip is of a group of young girls who worked at a shrimp factory.

After a traditional greeting of flowers, songs, and dancing, we broke up into small groups to hear their stories. Their initial shy smiles vanished as they told us about their work in the shrimp factories. They squatted—sometimes for 12 to 14 hours—in a cold, dark, smelly room.

Bristy, a tiny 11-year-old girl in a red dress, talked about the razor-sharp part of the shrimp that so often cut her hands. She showed us the palms of her hands that were covered with tiny scars from those cuts. She also shared how her bosses would hit and curse at the girls if they didn’t work fast enough.

I choked back tears as I listened to this smart, articulate young girl describe the heartbreaking life she now lived.

But there was hope. World Vision staff had identified children, like Bristy and the other girls, working in hazardous situations and then invited them to be a part of World Vision’s new child protection program. Through the program, children would attend a center, where they could learn, play, and be safe. I knew this intellectually, but I confess that in the darkness I’d seen, I wasn’t sure how things could ever be different.

Still, when I got home, I told Bristy’s story to anybody who would listen.

Last November, I returned to Bangladesh. This time, I brought Pat. I wanted him to meet the girls and to see them again myself.

I couldn’t believe the transformation I witnessed in such a short time. Radiant girls and parents shared how their lives had changed.

Then, on our last day in Bangladesh, I saw Bristy in school. Her uniform was red.

I sat next to her in the classroom. She wrote our names on the board in Bengali. Every time I think of that, it brings tears of joy to my eyes.

Bristy is ready to take on the world. She’s passed sixth grade and was sixth in her class after final exams. She dreams of becoming a teacher, working with access-challenged children in her community.

Meeting the children, hearing their stories, and seeing the lives changed has touched me, and Pat, deeply. This last trip strengthened our resolve to tell their stories. In fact, we’re returning to Bangladesh this November to see the work that World Vision is doing with Rohingya refugees (see page 14).

God wants children and their families everywhere to know how precious they are and how much he loves them. They have not been forgotten. We have the opportunity to be his hands and feet and to bring hope and transformation into their lives. +



Lyné Brown is a World Vision donor and National Leadership Council member. She is the former vice president of ecommerce at Clorox.

## BACKPACK PRAYER | 32

Learn how to pray for children’s education.

# Delight

FINDING MEANING IN EVERYDAY MOMENTS

Great are the works of the LORD: they are pondered by all who delight in them.

—PSALM 111:2

## IN THE KITCHEN PAPADUMS

Ten-year-old Shohug Ali Munshi and his mother, Morgina, make a crispy and glossy cracker, called papadum, on a daily basis in Bangladesh. He sells the treats as a way to increase his family income, which ensures he can attend school. While it’s far from ideal for children like Shohug to sell snacks for a living, World Vision started a child protection program nearby, where he can play and learn more about how to stay safe in his community.

For the full recipe, visit [wvmag.org/papadums](http://wvmag.org/papadums).



LAURA REINHARDT/WORLD VISION

# Backpacks loaded with prayer

By Laura Reinhardt

As autumn draws near in the United States, families prepare for kids to return to school. But around the world, school is not a given. Financial hardship, hunger, and lack of clean water keep many children from getting the education they need to have a chance at a better life.

As you fill your child's backpack, use this guide with your family to pray for other children who face big obstacles to getting a good education. When you pray, don't forget to thank God for the blessings you have.

## Water

Heavenly Father, we pray for the 570 million kids who don't have clean water at their schools. Provide for and protect the many girls who miss school because they spend too many hours collecting dirty water for their families. Bless them with clean water at home so they can get an education.

## Books, notepads, and pencils

God, we pray for the children who miss out on education because they don't have school supplies. Let generous people give to provide what kids need so they don't have to stay at home.

## Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

—Romans 12:12 (NIV)

## Jacket

Jesus, we pray for the more than 700 million people in the world who live on less than \$1.90 a day. Equip and empower parents to learn how to better run their business or farm, so the income can buy required school uniforms and sturdy shoes for their children to wear.

## Lunch

Lord, we pray for the nearly 66 million children around the world who attend school hungry. When they can't focus because of their rumbling tummies, their learning suffers. Lift their parents out of poverty so they can provide nutritious food for their children.

## Money

Abba, we pray for the nearly 58 million elementary-age children not enrolled in school around the world because their parents can't afford to pay the entrance or exam fees required to keep them in school. Help children reach their full potential as You provide ways to lift their families out of poverty.



Find more ways to pray for children's education at [wvmag.org/pray-education](http://wvmag.org/pray-education).



# Adoption

LUCY SITS NEXT to 9-year-old Dakota at their home in West Virginia; he needs help with his homework. The adoptive mother of eight has had a long day but finds the strength to patiently shepherd him.

Lucy adopted Dakota and his two younger sisters in 2016. Lucy's brother and the children's mother surrendered custody. Drug addiction had taken over their lives. The local church and World Vision helped Lucy meet state guidelines to accommodate the children.

Dakota and his sisters had returned from school, ahead of the rest. The house was still calm.

As the late-day sun shone through the kitchen

window onto the dining table, I crouched near the TV to get a good angle. Lucy exudes patience, intelligence, and humility. As a father of two, I was taken by her gentleness and care for her children. That's what I needed to capture. The girls took turns reading or doing their activities on either side of Lucy. Then it was Dakota's turn. This is the intimate moment I had been waiting for—the son, relaxed, focused, looking to his mother for help.

This moment embodies the power of adoption to bring new life. Human adoption is a symbol of what God did for all people through Jesus Christ (Galatians 4:4-5).

Dakota didn't used to get this kind of caring attention. But he needed it. And now his life is getting so much better.

Written and photographed by Chris Huber

Canon EOS 6D Mark II

24-70mm lens, 1/100th at f/2.8, ISO 1250



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