

12

## Born to be more

Goats help a  
family flourish

10

THE INDIAN OCEAN TSUNAMI,  
20 YEARS LATER

22

SUDAN: A CRISIS OF  
GLOBAL PROPORTIONS



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"I take chance to thank you for the gift of money that you sent to me. Through the money, my mother bought two goats for me ... I'm going to take care of them to assist me in [the] future in a special way ... May almighty God bless you in all your ways."

—Felix, Kenya

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ON THE COVER

Vinety, 9, in Zambia holds Mutinta, one of the goats donated to her family through World Vision's Gift Catalog. LAURA REINHARDT/WORLD VISION

# Contents

WORLD VISION MAGAZINE | WINTER 2024 | VOL. 28, NO. 1

PRESIDENT'S LETTER | 2

Edgar Sandoval Sr. reflects on his experience meeting Sudanese refugees in Chad.



**3 Embark**  
 Guatemala | 3  
 Bangladesh | 4  
 Peru | 6  
 United States | 8

**9 Discover**  
 Mongolia | 9  
 World watch | 10  
 Twenty years on, find out how World Vision has helped communities recover from the devastating Indian Ocean tsunami.

**COVER STORY**  
**Irresistible: How goats brought back their smiles | 12**  
 How does a gift of goats help people thrive? A family in Zambia finds out.  
**Crisis in Sudan: Unsettled and uncertain | 22**  
 As families flee violence, they arrive at the Sudan–Chad border exhausted and worried for their futures.

—Caristo

**31 Inspire**  
 In the kitchen | 31  
 Try making zacusca, a Romanian dish that repurposes extra veggies into a tasty spread.  
**Q&A: Actor and World Vision Celebrity Ambassador Melissa Joan Hart | 32**  
 Hear about the power of sponsorship and why she loves partnering with us.  
**Yessica in the mirror | 34**  
 A woman in Honduras sees herself differently thanks to her participation in a World Vision program.  
**5 resolutions for 2025 | 36**  
 It's never too early to start thinking about God's calling for you in 2025.  
**Life frames | 37**  
 A photojournalist experiences the genuine joy of a child in Cambodia.

**EXPLORING OUR WORK**  
 Each icon below corresponds to an area of World Vision's work. Use these to guide you topically as you explore this issue.

- Advocacy
- Child protection
- Child sponsorship
- Christian faith
- Clean water
- Disability inclusion
- Economic empowerment
- Education
- Emergency response
- Gender equality
- Health
- Hunger and food security
- Poverty in America
- Prayer
- Refugees





JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

## Bridge the distance

By Edgar Sandoval Sr.

**NOTHING COULD HAVE PREPARED ME** for the chaotic scene in Adré, Chad, where hundreds of people crowded under a bridge. It was not a real bridge, only a partially built structure near the Sudan border that provided some shade from the unforgiving sun (read more starting on page 22).

The majority of the people around me were women and children who had fled violence in Sudan, escaping with little more than their lives. They were exhausted, hungry, thirsty, and traumatized. A few told me stories of walking for days to reach Chad, suffering theft and beatings along the way.

I saw one mom cradling a baby who appeared lifeless. I prayed the child was only sleeping.

The sight of a suffering child never fails to break my heart. I know it's not what God wants. Kids deserve to grow up healthy, full of energy, going to school, playing, and discovering their God-given potential. Instead, forces like war, displacement, and hunger cut them off from fullness of life. The bridge in Adré, connecting nothing, is a fitting symbol—there's seemingly no way out of their misery.

That's why God wanted me there in Chad. I believe He invited me to see the suffering He sees—a forgotten crisis. To have my heart be broken with the things that break His, as World Vision's founder, Bob Pierce, famously prayed. And to pick up the shattered pieces of my heart and do something for these children who are so precious to Him.

Edgar experienced both heartbreak and hope on his recent trip to Chad, where he met with refugees fleeing Sudan.

**Edgar Sandoval Sr.** is president and CEO of World Vision.

**FOLLOW HIM ON SOCIAL MEDIA**  
@EdgarSandovalSr  
@EdgarASandovalSr

At the Farchana refugee camp, I found a more hopeful scene. World Vision operates a school feeding program here—one of our emergency food programs in 69 schools across Chad, altogether feeding 70,000 children.

Refugee women cooked all morning to prepare a hot meal for the students. The kids waited patiently while I helped spoon out and serve the beans and rice. They love this makeshift school—a safe haven where they can fill their bellies, feed their minds, and play until sunset.

One of the students I met, 13-year-old Isra, dreams of becoming a pilot. She watches World Food Programme planes take off and land nearby. To her, being a pilot means bringing hope.

I also met Rachida, 8, a remarkable girl with a horrifying story. In Sudan, her entire immediate family—her parents and three brothers—were killed. Rachida fled to Chad with two of her aunts, one holding her by the hand and the other carrying Rachida's grandmother on her back. Initially, the women fashioned a rough shelter made of little more than sticks and cloth—poor protection against the elements. But now Rachida and her relatives live in two sturdy shelters that keep them cool and safe. That's thanks to generous donors like you who gave to provide homes for vulnerable children through World Vision's Gift Catalog. Rachida hopes to go to school, perhaps to become a doctor.

A plate of food ... a sturdy tent ... these things may seem small. But they make an enormous impact for children living without the basics—much less the comforts—of home. These kids are no different than my own, full of potential and deserving the chance to unleash it. In their dire circumstances, their dreams must seem far away.

That's why our heartbreak must turn into action. We start with saving lives—in the Sudan crisis, that's critical. But by God's grace, we can do more for kids like Isra and Rachida. In a real way, we can help bridge the distance to their dreams. +

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.  
—2 PETER 3:18

# Embark

COME IN AND SEE THE WORLD

See photos of displacement from around the world in our virtual gallery at [wvmag.org/uprooted](http://wvmag.org/uprooted).

## Guatemala

Five-year-old Yesica peeks through the curtained doorway of her home and grins. She is ready to play after filling her belly with a hearty, nutritious lunch cooked by her mother, Telma.

Yesica used to be underweight because Telma couldn't afford to buy a variety of healthy ingredients. Then World Vision sponsorship staff invited Telma to attend a nutrition training called Common Pot. At the trainings, mothers in the community learned from each other and our nutrition experts ideas for incorporating readily available local vegetables into their traditional recipes to make nutrient-packed meals for their families. Today, Yesica is growing well—and loves her mom's cooking.

LAURA REINHARDT/WORLD VISION



WORLD VISION AIDED OVER  
**6.5M**  
PEOPLE IN BANGLADESH  
THROUGH OUR RELIEF AND  
RECOVERY PROGRAMS IN 2023.



## Bangladesh

📍 In Wazipur, children sheltered from sun by World Vision umbrellas step nimbly across a log bridge on their way home from school. Child sponsorship has been supporting children like them in Wazipur since 2019. The work has focused on strengthening education, health, livelihoods, clean water access, nutrition, and child protection.

In partnership with the local community, we established Learning Roots, a play-based early education program that not only prepares preschool children for elementary school but also nurtures a supportive environment at home. Through this effort, 27,945 parents and caregivers have been trained in positive parenting practices, and kids have been given the opportunity to develop the social skills and confidence they need to thrive in elementary school and beyond.

BEN ADAMS/WORLD VISION





● Embark

WORLD VISION  
SUPPORTED  
**11,115**  
CHILDREN AND THEIR  
COMMUNITIES IN PERU  
THROUGH OUR SPONSORSHIP  
PROGRAMS IN 2024 ALONE.\*

\*AS OF AUGUST 2024



Peru

📍 In the Amazonian town of Iquitos, where World Vision recently launched child sponsorship programming, children gather for snacks beneath a store window. To the left, World Vision staff visit a community member—a common sight as World Vision gets to know a new community.

Life is challenging for many in Iquitos. Because it's accessible only by air and boat, commerce is limited. Monsoon season brings floods annually, washing away crops and livelihoods. Families struggle through an endless cycle of poverty, and children are vulnerable to diseases, violence, trafficking, exploitation, and neglect. But with sponsorship comes hope, and thousands of children in the area are newly registered to be sponsored.

ARLENE BAX/WORLD VISION







## United States



📍 The sun highlights crosses draped in leis against a cloudy sky in Maui, Hawaii. They are part of a memorial to those who died in the wildfires that ravaged the island in August 2023.

Immediately following the fires, World Vision partnered with Pukalani Community Church of the Nazarene, and that partnership continues today. With the support of our donors and corporate partners, World Vision has sent shipping containers filled with hygiene supplies, household items, clothing, toys, and fresh food boxes, and the church has held monthly distributions of these supplies for families in need.

World Vision has also partnered with the Hawaii Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and Maui Rescue Mission to serve the island's unhoused community with access to storage sheds, showers, laundry, Wi-Fi, and other services.

We remain committed to supporting the people of Maui and our local partners in the long journey to recovery. As Pastor Dylan Nails of Pukalani Community Church of the Nazarene says, after a disaster is in the news for a while, it tends to fade away: "But through the structure of World Vision and then who we are as a church, we're in it for the long run."

WORLD VISION  
REACHED  
**27,178**  
PEOPLE IN MAUI  
WITH ESSENTIAL  
AID IN THE  
YEAR FOLLOWING  
THE FIRES.

LAURA REINHARDT/WORLD VISION

COVER STORY | 12  
World Vision Gift Catalog  
goats change lives in Zambia.

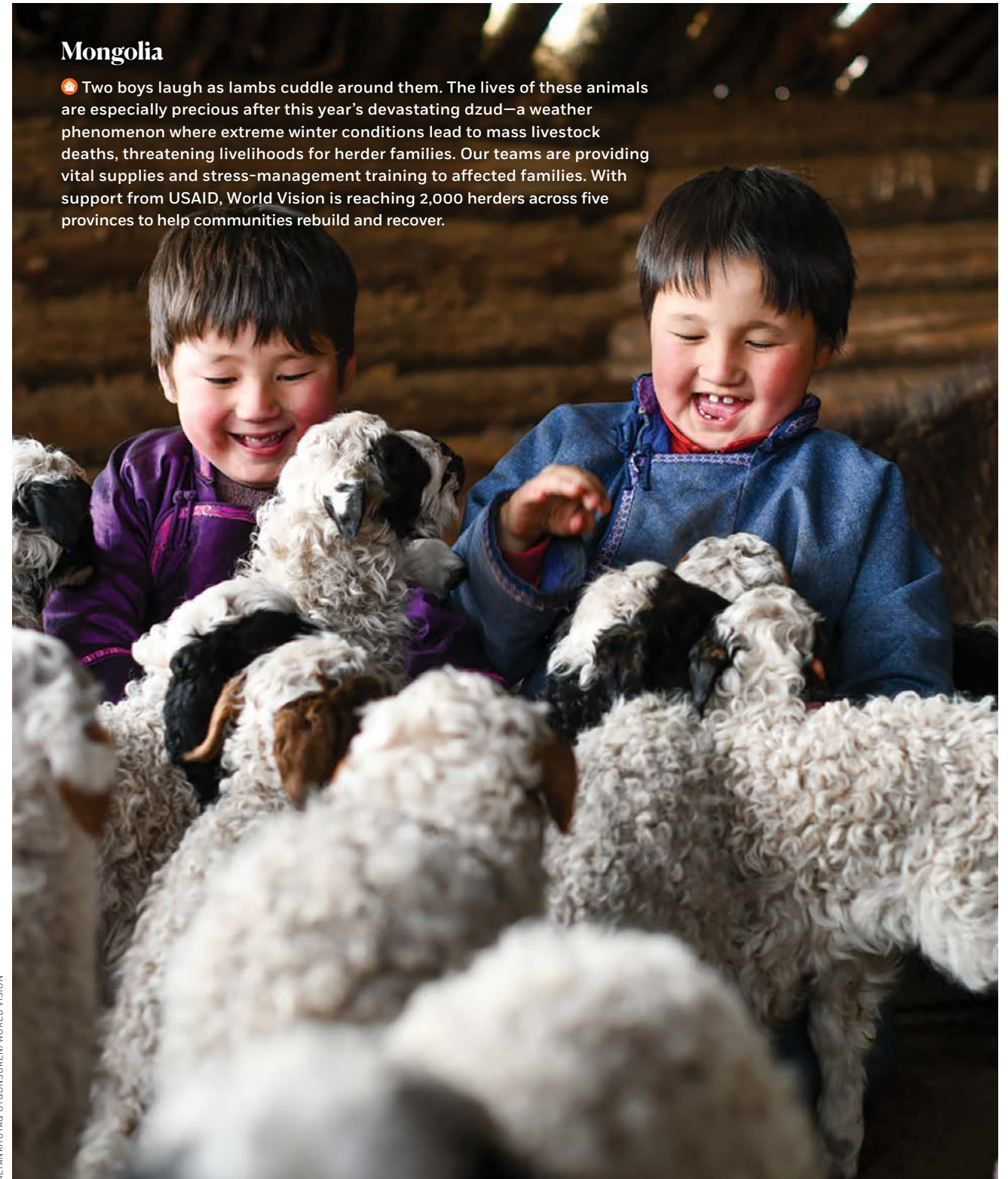
# Discover

EXPLORE THE ISSUES FACED BY PEOPLE IN POVERTY

May the Lord make your love  
increase and overflow  
for each other and for  
everyone else, just as ours  
does for you.  
—1 THESSALONIANS 3:12

## Mongolia

📍 Two boys laugh as lambs cuddle around them. The lives of these animals are especially precious after this year's devastating dzud—a weather phenomenon where extreme winter conditions lead to mass livestock deaths, threatening livelihoods for herder families. Our teams are providing vital supplies and stress-management training to affected families. With support from USAID, World Vision is reaching 2,000 herders across five provinces to help communities rebuild and recover.



ALTANKHUYAG OTGONSUREN/WORLD VISION



# From destruction to hope: 20 years after the Indian Ocean tsunami

By Sevil Omer

PHOTOS BY WORLD VISION STAFF

In 2004, a massive undersea earthquake off the coast of northern Sumatra, Indonesia, triggered colossal tsunamis that inundated coastal areas across the region, catching communities off-guard and causing widespread destruction. One of the most devastating natural disasters in recorded history, the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami impacted multiple countries and claimed hundreds of thousands of lives.

This disaster not only caused immense loss of life and infrastructure damage, but also revealed the lack of early warning systems and the need for greater coordination within the disaster response community to reach and support affected people. The recognition of this need spurred a global movement toward disaster preparedness and international collaboration.

## FACTS

WHAT HAPPENED?

**Date**  
December 26, 2004

**Event**  
At magnitude 9.1–9.3, the Sumatra–Andaman earthquake released the estimated energy equivalent of 23,000 Hiroshima-type atomic bombs.



**Location**  
150 miles off the coast of Sumatra, Indonesia, 31 miles below the ocean floor

**Wave speed**  
Up to 500 mph in the deep ocean

## IMPACT

WHAT WERE THE EFFECTS?

**Death toll**  
Approximately 230,000—one of the deadliest disasters in modern history

**Countries affected**  
India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Maldives, Myanmar, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and others

**Economic loss**  
Estimated at \$10 billion

## EXACERBATING FACTORS

WHY WAS IT SO DESTRUCTIVE?

**Rapid arrival**  
Waves reached Banda Aceh, Indonesia, within 15 to 20 minutes of the quake

**Lack of awareness**  
Few people realized a tsunami would follow the quake

**Scope**  
Deaths were recorded in over a dozen affected countries

**Community vulnerability**  
Entire fishing communities were destroyed



2006 MARIANNE ALBINA/WORLD VISION

## World Vision's response

In the wake of the catastrophe, World Vision launched immediate relief efforts across five nations—India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Thailand—with recovery work lasting until 2007. Today, our development programs, largely funded by child sponsorship—in areas including clean water, food security, health, education, child protection, and income-generating activities—are empowering children and families throughout these tsunami-affected countries.\*

In the years since recovery work was completed, we have focused on strengthening the resilience of affected communities, including through disaster preparedness programs—prioritizing early warning systems, community training, and reinforced infrastructure. In collaboration with governments and other nongovernmental organizations, we've also promoted policies and practices to reduce or mitigate disaster risks worldwide. These joint efforts have led to increased capacity within communities to withstand disasters, as well as significantly strengthened global preparedness and prevention strategies within the disaster response industry. 📌

\*Most or all work in India and Thailand is now funded by in-country donors.



2005 JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

KEY IMPACTS

**SUSTAINABLE RESTORATION**  
56,000 mangroves planted, fishing harbor restored

**CHILD PROTECTION AND EDUCATION**  
Training for 27,000 people on safety and protection of children, educational support for 2,000 teachers and 137,000 children



2006 JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

KEY IMPACT

**INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
12,000 homes, 84 schools, and 60 playgrounds built, 200 Child-Friendly Spaces established, and 27 health clinics set up

OVERALL RESPONSE IMPACT

World Vision has supported over 1 million people through relief and recovery programs in response to the Indian Ocean tsunami.

Visit [wv.link/tsunami](http://wv.link/tsunami) to learn more about World Vision's tsunami recovery efforts in the region.



BY KARI COSTANZA

# Irresistible:

PHOTOS BY  
LAURA REINHARDT

HOW GOATS  
BROUGHT  
BACK THEIR  
SMILES







## 🍷 CARISTO,

a 45-year-old father of four, has an irresistible smile. When Caristo smiles, the world seems to brighten. But when he speaks of his childhood, his brilliant smile fades.

“There was so much poverty,” he says, remembering his time as a boy in southern Zambia. The family would sleep on mats they’d woven from reeds, laying burlap bags over the top to try to soften the dirt floor. The bags didn’t help. “It made it hard to sleep,” says Caristo. He would awaken with pain in his back and his ribs.

His father, Benny, tried his best. “He would always say, ‘Let me see what I can do,’ but at the end of the day, there wasn’t much he could do because it was hard to find resources,” says Caristo.

In school, Caristo was always a star pupil, ranking first or second in his classes. “My biggest dream was becoming an accountant,” he says. But there was no money for college. “When I realized that there was nothing much I could do after graduating, I just stayed home.”

Caristo graduated in 2002, a year when 24.4 million people in sub-Saharan Africa were living with HIV and AIDS—and that number would increase by another million in just two years. The disease ripped holes in Caristo’s community and throughout the region, leaving children orphaned and grandparents as caretakers. The middle generation—the workers—was hit hard. In 2004, 83% of families in rural Zambia lived in poverty.

“There is nothing we can do. There are no cattle to sell. There are no goats to sell,” Caristo recalls his mother saying. Caristo didn’t know how to move forward. “I just sat and contemplated what I could do with my life.”

### Jessy in waiting

In the same village, at the same time, Jessy was contemplating her future as well. “I grew up not knowing my biological father,” she says. “My mother



married another person. They had a hard life, so they couldn’t take care of me.” Jessy lived with her grandmother and dropped out of school at 15 when her grandmother died. She tried to become a housekeeper but was too young to work. “I stayed at home and waited for someone to marry me,” she says.

That someone was Caristo. He liked her smile, and she liked his.

“He seemed to be a very jovial and smiley person,” says Jessy. “He was different from other men because he never went to beer places to drink.”

Jessy was optimistic. “When we got married, my thoughts were that things would be better, we would have a good life, and we wouldn’t face any challenges.”

She couldn’t have been more wrong.

### A family struggles

Caristo smiles ruefully, looking around at the land where he and Jessy have raised their four children, Virginia, 21, Viola, 16, Vincent, 13, and Vinety, 9. A neatly swept plot graced by a sturdy house he built himself, it’s a far cry now from what it used to be.

“When we came here, it was full of grass and shrubs. We made a small structure and covered it with grass.” The family lived in that leaky mud hut, hungry and hopeless. Termites would attack them at night.

“It was very hard to live in a structure like that,” he says. “It was most painful, especially in the rainy season; everything would get wet.”

“We didn’t have enough food to eat,” says Jessy, her face veiled in sorrow. “We could not go to church because we did not have clothes to wear. We had no soap to wash with.”

“Virginia and Viola suffered the most,” says Jessy. “[Viola’s] health was really affected because she lacked nutrients from different food. Her belly protruded. She had to be dewormed. Because of the

same hunger, she used to vomit.” It made Jessy cry. “My greatest fear was that she would die.”

Viola’s childhood memories echo her father’s. “We didn’t have a proper place to sleep on,” she says. “We slept on sacks on the floor.”

She tried going to school, even though she had no shoes. The teacher would turn her away. “Every time I wanted to go to school, and the school demanded fees, I would tell my dad, and he would tell me he didn’t have them,” says Viola.

The cycle of poverty continued.

### A shattered man

World Vision started a child sponsorship program in Hamaundu in 2010 when Virginia was 7 and Viola was 2. At that time, mothers like Jessy were collecting water from dirty ponds for their families’ needs. One ill-equipped health clinic had a single nurse on staff who did her best

It was Caristo’s smile that attracted Jessy. She found him irresistible.

Jessy soon realized that her marriage was in trouble.

**“God answered my prayers through World Vision. When I look back, I suffered a lot. When World Vision came through, they empowered me with knowledge.”**



to serve 15,000 people. Farming felt fruitless. “Seeds used to be a big problem,” Caristo’s mother, Eniah, told *World Vision* magazine in 2014. “We didn’t have any form of income so we couldn’t buy them.”

World Vision’s local livelihoods and resilience specialist Dominic Banda says that when he saw how Caristo’s family was living, he wanted to cry. “How do they fit in that house?” he wondered. “What are they going to eat? Are they going to survive? Maybe the next thing we would hear [about]—is a funeral.”

Compelled by his commitment to serve the most vulnerable, Dominic began to visit the family in 2017 and have heart-to-heart talks with Caristo. He remembers Caristo

telling him he believed he would always be poor: “He said, ‘I feel like God created me like this. And I was meant to live a life like this and probably would die just like this.’”

Dominic also observed that Jessy was afraid of her







husband. She would rarely sit near him. She wouldn't answer questions. When Caristo came home from working menial jobs, they would argue. Jessy didn't understand how Caristo could be busy all day but unable to provide for their needs.

Caristo remembers those days: "My wife used to be scared of me. When she saw me coming, she would run to the kitchen." He says he felt he had to inspire fear in others to be a man. But in reality, the relationship was broken from years of living in poverty.

"I had lost respect for him," Jessy says.

And yet, there was something about Caristo that drew people to him. Maybe that brilliant smile, a trait he'd inherited from his father.

Dominic started to wonder if Caristo would be a good candidate to receive goats donated through

**"If your vision can fit into your pocket, that is not a vision. The vision must overwhelm you. It must give you sleepless nights."**



PASTOR PHIRI

the World Vision Gift Catalog. Other people in the community were raising and breeding them successfully. Although he had his doubts about Caristo—"He never owned a single goat, and he was very poor"—Dominic suggested that Caristo attend two World Vision courses that might help prepare him.

It was a turning point for Caristo. "God answered my prayers through World Vision," he says. "When I look back, I suffered a lot. When World Vision came through, they empowered me with knowledge."

**Learning about love**

Andoni Phiri, a pastor in Caristo's community, teaches World Vision courses in Biblical Empowered Worldview and

From living in a leaky hut and fearing for their children's health to building a stronger marriage, a sustainable livelihood, and a secure home, Jessy and Caristo have truly seen their lives transform.



pastors to help couples learn to heal broken marriages and provide unconditional love to their children.

Through Biblical Empowered Worldview, Pastor Phiri learned what he calls the "Three Ds." Sitting under a tree in his front yard as his grown sons spray the family cows to keep them free from ticks, the pastor's face lights up as he explains.

"The first 'd' is discover," he says. "We want people to discover themselves. Who are they?"

Once they've discovered who they are, people are able to dream—the second "d"—as co-creators with God. "If our God was able to create the heaven and the earth and made us in His image, then we can create heaven's image," he says.

Pastor Phiri dreams boldly. "I sit here today and am dreaming that I should have a helicopter," he says, laughing. "The first in the

Celebrating Families. Biblical Empowered Worldview classes teach that all people are made in the image of God, and that—far from wanting us to be poor—God calls and equips us to thrive as we love and care for ourselves, our families, and our neighbors. Celebrating Families workshops are taught by



village. It is a big dream. But that's the dream process that we move people into in Biblical Empowered Worldview. If your vision can fit into your pocket, that is not a vision. The vision must overwhelm you. It must give you sleepless nights."

Finally, he teaches participants to develop—the third "d": "You can have a dream, but next, write down your vision and run with it. Implement it. Whatever you have in your dreams must come to reality. It must begin to show you are moving in the direction."

Caristo says that what he learned changed his life. He became convinced, in a way he hadn't understood before, that he was made in the image of God. That God didn't want him to be poor.

"We saw a big change immediately after the training," says Jessy. "Especially just his conduct, his way of speech towards me, the wife, and the children. And he was able, for the first time, to show us where he was leading us as a family."

It took a change in mindset for Jessy and Caristo to begin to dream about the future.

Together, the couple took the five-day Celebrating Families training and worked on mending







their broken marriage. They learned to respect and listen to one another and to parent their children with love and tenderness. “I stopped being scared of him,” says Jessy.

**The doctor is in**

Dominic was delighted with Caristo’s progress after Biblical Empowered Worldview training. “When I took him for the training, I was amazed at the rate that he applied the skills.” He remembers thinking, “He might be an example,” a role model for the community.

But he didn’t give him goats. Not yet. In early 2018, he trained Caristo as a volunteer community livestock attendant—or goat doctor. He supplied Caristo with measuring tape to assess a goat’s weight and with medicine to treat any sickness.

It turned out Caristo had a knack for doctoring. Community members began to call on Caristo to visit their goats two or three times a week.

Dominic’s doubts were washed away. Caristo had proven himself capable. He was a changed man, and he was ready to raise goats.

There was only one problem: Jessy didn’t want them.

**Faith over fear**

Jessy was nervous. “My biggest fear was—what if we failed to take care of the goats and they died?” she says. “What if World Vision comes back and charges us? We had no money. I did not know how to take care of the goats.”



**Global impact fact:**  
**More than 1.7 million adults and children in 26 countries benefited from Biblical Empowered Worldview training between 2016 and 2022.**

But Caristo knew how. He was a sponge when it came to learning. And now he knew that God was on his side.

Jessy eventually came around, having seen the change in her husband. And she was not disappointed. “I was very happy to see that he could take care of the goats. I had earlier doubted him. But they multiplied, and our life transformed,” she says.

Viola’s health began to improve thanks to healthy food and a sturdy shelter. “She was always sad because of the pain she was experiencing,” says Jessy. “Since the coming of the goats, her health improved. Now, we can provide her with the required foods. It’s rare to see her sick.”

And she’s happy: “I noticed that she started smiling when we received the goats from World Vision,” says Jessy.

“God answered my prayer through the goats,” says Caristo. “He gave them to me to transform my life.” And they’re changing not only his life, but his



neighbors’ lives as well. When the original five goats from the Gift Catalog became 15, he gave away five. And his goats kept multiplying. Since 2018, he has had between 400 and 500 goats.

When the children asked their father for milk to drink, he sold eight goats and bought a cow. Then another. And another. Today, he has eight cows.

**Back to school**

Jessy and Caristo’s oldest daughter, Virginia, attends boarding school and is preparing to take her final exams. Unlike her father, she will be able to go on to college.

The younger children are back in school, including Viola—now with shoes to wear.

And it’s a new day at the children’s school. In 2022, World Vision built a solar-powered mechanized water system, which provides clean water for the children to drink and to wash with. The school also got new toilets.

“World Vision providing water has

Because of the goats, Vincent now has clothes, shoes, and school supplies.

Vinety gets a cool drink from the water system World Vision provided at her school.

helped to ease our way,” says the head teacher, Christopher Madubeko. “It was, for the students, a challenge to get from the borehole to the toilets and back from the borehole to the classes. It could take 10 or 20 minutes to come back. Twenty minutes is enough to miss a lesson,” he explains.

Now attendance has doubled, and grades are up. The school has even taken on a role in strengthening family relationships. Parents are encouraged to attend classes and see what their children are learning. Head teacher Madubeko says Caristo and Jessy are active in their children’s education.

**“It makes me happy to be empowered like this. I make my own financial decisions.”**



JESSY

**Good things in store**  
 “Goats did this,” says Dominic as he gestures expansively toward all the goods in Caristo and Jessy’s grocery store—the only store in town.

Everything you might need or want is on the counter and the shelves: penny candy, red tomatoes, henna, brightly colored cloth, soda pop, soap, body





lotion, plastic buckets, face cream, cookies, detergent, maize, flip-flops, and toothbrushes.

Jessy works at the store during the day, and Viola comes after school to help or laugh and talk with her mother.

“It’s fun to work with Mom,” she says.

Viola is amazed when children come to the store to buy candy. “It surprises me to see kids with money,” she says. But things have changed since she was young. Families everywhere are transforming in a community with 3,712 sponsored children—including Vincent and Vinety—and access to clean water, World Vision trainings, and animals such as goats from the Gift Catalog. Last year alone, the goat population in this area grew from 11,393 to 18,558.

“It makes me happy to be empowered like this. I make my own financial decisions,” says Jessy. One of those decisions: to properly equip her kitchen.

“I have lovely, shiny pots that I bought. Plates, glass cups, the jug that we use to serve visitors,” she says. “A woman’s pride is her kitchen.”

Viola treasures these moments with her mother, Jessy, in their busy grocery store.

**“There’s more love shown within our family. Whatever we do, we do it together.”**



VIOLA

**Good for business**

In the afternoon, mother and daughter are busy at the store, selling items and greeting neighbors. This family is happy, and that’s good for business.

“Viola’s smile is something that we are happy about because that is one of the requirements when you are dealing with customers,” says Jessy. “If you are not smiling, customers won’t come. But because of her smile and her cheerfulness, we have a lot of customers that come to our shop.”

That smile is also a good reminder for Jessy—that marriages don’t have to stay broken.

“Viola’s smile reminds me of her father’s,” says Jessy. “Even if he’s not at home ... every time I look at her smile, it [is] as if the father is around.”

Caristo is happy, too. “I was an isolated member of the community,” he says. He wouldn’t take the family to church. “I was

afraid people would mock me. Laugh at me,” he says. “Now I started buying clothes and shoes. As a result, we are able to start going to church and worship God.”

Church is not only a place of worship; it’s also where Caristo and Jessy can connect with their neighbors, something they were never able to do before. “We are able to share ideas,” says Caristo. You might think you know it all, but as we worship together, we share.”

**Playing and praying together**

Caristo and son Vincent focus on a game of checkers, playing on a board Caristo made himself. Before the goats came, they never played games.

“It’s very exciting because this is not the way we used to be,” he says, remarking that playing together “has given me a platform to be with my kids, interact with them, and probably help mentor them.” He loves that Virginia is finishing school, Viola wants to become a nurse, Vincent a police officer, and Vinety a teacher. Now, anything is possible.

Mealtimes are different. Before, as tradition dictated, Caristo would eat alone. If there was meat, he would eat it, leaving none for the children. Now

▼  
Dinnertime has become family time.

the family eats together. “There’s more love shown within our family,” Viola says. “Whatever we do, we do it together.”

That includes praying together—giving thanks as a family—something they never used to do.

“I never knew the importance of praying before eating,” says Caristo. “When she prepared the meal, I would wash my hands and dive in.” Celebrating Families training taught Caristo and his family the importance of time spent together. They take turns thanking God every night—sometimes Jessy, sometimes the children, sometimes Caristo.

A new outlook on his relationship with God, his neighbors, and his family has brought back Caristo’s joy. “His smile is irresistible,” says Dominic. “He’s just such a joy to be with.” And that irresistible smile, inherited from his father, is a beautiful legacy that Caristo is now passing on to his children. 📌

**You can give life-changing gifts for families like Jessy and Caristo’s. To learn more, see the insert between pages 18 and 19, visit [wvmag.org/give-animals](http://wvmag.org/give-animals), or call 1.888.852.4453.**





# CRISIS IN SUDAN

BY KARI COSTANZA

PHOTOS BY JON WARREN



# UNSETTLED AND UNCERTAIN



## • Discover

🔥 *ON APRIL 15, 2023*, after years of turmoil, fighting broke out in Sudan's capital of Khartoum, and the crisis quickly escalated, leading to what is currently the largest displacement of people in the world. Ten million Sudanese people are internally displaced. Another 2 million have fled the country.

In Sudan, banking and healthcare systems have virtually collapsed. Conflict has made farming impossible, leading to widespread hunger. "This is the worst hunger crisis that has ever been recorded in Sudan, and the situation is dire," says John Makoni, World Vision's national director in Sudan. UNICEF warns that an estimated 730,000 children under 5 are now at risk of dying. Funding for humanitarian assistance is urgently needed to help save lives.

### Fleeing to Chad

Since April 2023, more than 560,000 people have crossed into Chad, many traversing the sandy corridor between El Geneina in Sudan and Adré, a town on the border of Chad. El Geneina means garden in Arabic, but with so many residents fleeing, some say the garden town has become a ghost town.

Long lines of people move together toward the border, some with children on their backs, some riding on donkeys, and a few traveling by car. There are reports that they were stopped at multiple checkpoints along the way.

Every person who made the journey saw things they never wanted to see.

These are the stories of three people from El Geneina whose lives were turned upside down when the fighting surged in Sudan last year: Adoum, 5, Rachida, 8, and Abdulrashid, 37.

Adoum is too hungry to play. Rachida saw her parents' dead bodies. Abdulrashid, a father of four, lost everything he owned.

### ADOUM

For Adoum and his family, who abandoned their house because of the war, the journey to Chad was terrifying.

Adoum couldn't stop crying. "I asked him to stop crying," says Kaltoum, Adoum's mother. "When he cried, I was afraid." Her fears were well-founded. Kaltoum did not want to attract attention. People endured beatings as they made their escape.

Along the way, the mother and her three children—Adoum, Mariam, 3, and Yahia, 10—passed the bodies of people killed in the fighting. "I have seen four dead bodies. They weren't soldiers," Kaltoum says. She was worried about her son. "I covered his head on my back so he wouldn't see."

In the confusion of the journey, Kaltoum,



Adoum, and Mariam were separated from the eldest sister, Yahia. Kaltoum, a widow who had already lost two children before the crisis, thought she'd lost another child.

### RACHIDA

Rachida's family—the ones who survived—ran for their lives.

"We were sitting at home," says Rachida's aunt Halime, sitting close to her sister Gamara. "[Armed militants] knocked. They said, 'Get out.' They started beating us." Gamara was beaten with an electric cable.

"We started running away," she says. "We ran barefoot. We walked to Adré, our feet swelling."

They took Rachida with them. Everyone in Rachida's immediate family had been killed. "She saw the bodies of her father and mother," says her aunt Halime. Rachida's older brothers were taking care of their sick grandfather when they heard the gunfire. They took him to the mosque where they thought they'd be safe. But instead, Halime says, militants "took him out of the mosque and shot him." Then they killed the boys.

The family's trip from their home in El Geneina to Adré was nightmarish. When they came to a gully, they stopped, thirsty. "We saw bodies in the water, but we had to drink it anyway," says Rachida.

### ABDULRASHID

"When the war started, I was at the hospital," says Abdulrashid. It was supposed to be a time of joy. He was waiting for his twins to be born.

When the bullets started flying, Abdulrashid, his wife, and their four children—including the newborn twins—fled. Eleven of his neighbors had already been killed. Abdulrashid's family's belongings were taken. "I had two cars," he says. "They stole one and wrecked the other. They took all that we had."

The family traveled in the darkness. "Only at night could you escape," he says. "In the day you couldn't. I saw many dead on the street. Many people were injured. They destroyed the hospitals."

### The bridge at Adré

Adoum, Rachida, and Abdulrashid each crossed with their families from Sudan to Chad. Marking the border at Adré is a short bridge that was left unfinished when construction funds ran out. And so refugees wait under the concrete bridge that feels like a bridge to nowhere.

Under the bridge, two staff from Chad's refugee agency record family information from newcomers on an iPad and transfer the data to UNHCR, the United Nations refugee agency. The UNHCR then issues the refugees a registration card so that they can stay in Chad.



## • Discover

A voice over a bullhorn bellows for people to be quiet. But the noise prevails. People sit on the sand, waiting their turn. Picking one's way through the crowd under the bridge, it is hard not to step on people. They are everywhere, hot, sweaty, and afraid.

After registering under the bridge at Adré, Adoum, Rachida, Abdurashid, and their families each walked nearly 4 miles to the spontaneous settlement—a sprawling sandy mass of refugees that has grown to 175,000 people.

At the spontaneous settlement, there is little to do but wait. Families wait here, often for months—sometimes more than a year—to be resettled to a camp in Chad. There is not enough room in the existing camps to accommodate new people.

In the meantime, each family builds a small home of sorts, a shelter constructed simply using what they can find, usually branches and clothing. The families rely on food from the World Food Programme. The UNHCR has provided bathrooms and water, but there are always long lines for both.

### ADOUM

Once at the spontaneous settlement, Adoum's mother created a small hut from sticks for her family. Ten days later, they experienced a miracle. Her missing daughter, Yahia, was found, alive. After getting lost during the escape, she'd made it to Adré. "I took and I held her," Kaltoum says. "I cried."

The family has lost so much. Kaltoum's husband died three years ago. Now she's worried about Adoum, who weighs only 26 pounds, about half the weight of some healthy 5-year-olds.

His ribs show through his thin chest, and he has an infection in his tooth or jaw, the pain contributing to his weight loss.

"He was fat and normal," Kaltoum says, as Adoum lays in her lap, too hungry to move.

### RACHIDA

Rachida and her family arrived at Adré in June 2023 as the rainy season began.

"We slept in a school compound," says her aunt Halime. "We collected pieces of wood and covered them with our clothes." It was a difficult time.

"We were totally dependent," Halime says. "We had no food. We just sat under the shelter in the rain until it stopped."

### ABDULRASHID

Abdurashid arrived in Adré concerned about his newborn twins. They were so sick.

"We went to the hospital," he says. "We met the



TOP LEFT: Chaos under the bridge at Adré as hungry families press in, trying to gain access to Chad from Sudan. TOP RIGHT: At the nutrition center in nearby Farchana camp, a severely malnourished toddler fights for his life. MIDDLE: The camp at Farchana prepares to receive thousands of Sudanese refugees who crossed over at Adré. BOTTOM LEFT: A teen who was shot as he escaped Sudan arrives at Farchana camp with a wounded leg. BOTTOM RIGHT: Under the bridge at Adré, a little girl holds onto an adult's hand.

doctors there. They looked [after] my children and gave them the medicine."

After a week, because of the twins' ill health, the family was transferred to Farchana camp.

### Farchana camp and the challenges in Chad

Farchana camp is about 18 miles from the border crossing at Adré. It's home to a large population of Sudanese refugees, most from Darfur in western Sudan. The first camp opened on January 17, 2004, when violence in Darfur began, ultimately taking the lives of at least 200,000 people and driving more than 2 million from their homes. Since then, there have been two extensions to Farchana camp as refugees flood in, most recently in the fall of 2023. Living conditions are harsh, with food and water hard to come by.

Though serving as a haven of refuge for the Sudanese, Chad has many challenges. The country already has one of the highest levels of hunger in the world. Food prices have soared, making it difficult for Chadian families to buy nutritious food. Refugees live on land that would have been used by local families for farming.

### ADOUM

Back at the spontaneous settlement in Adré, Adoum's mother has food for only four more days—a liter of oil, salt, a cup of okra, millet, and some flour. She has watched people in the camp take desperate measures for food. They find an anthill to dig up and pull out the millet the ants have stored there.

Kaltoum is stuck in Adré. "Because Adoum is sick, I can't go to work." She worries for her son, who used to fly kites with the other boys in the settlement. Now he sits on his mother's lap, his big, brown eyes vacant.

World Vision staff check on the family, helping Kaltoum with medical costs.

She has no idea when they will be transferred to a camp like Farchana or Metché.

### RACHIDA

Rachida and her family were transferred to Metché camp after four miserable months in Adré. The journey to Metché, which is just 25 miles from Adré, is a 90-minute bumpy drive on sand. In eastern Chad, there is very little infrastructure and few roads.

Nearly 150,000 people live in the camp, which opened in August 2023. Some of them, like Rachida and her family, live in shelters provided by donors





## • Discover

through World Vision's Gift Catalog, which features a variety of life-changing gifts for people in need.

On a sweltering day in Metché—more than 100 degrees—it is much cooler inside the house than outside. “I got a very good house,” says Gamara. “Before, I was sleeping under a shelter. We suffered a lot. We are very grateful. We were living in the wilderness.”

Rachida was delighted when she saw the shelter where she now lives with her aunt Gamara. Aunt Halime and the rest of the family live nearby. “I was very happy. I can protect myself from the wind and rain,” she says. Her aunts protect her, too. “I love them,” she says.

### ABDULRASHID

Last October, the university-educated Abdurashid interviewed and was selected as the school director in Farchana camp. He loves his work. “I feel excited. We are lucky. Some of the camps don't have school[s] yet.”

He believes that education will create a better world. “If you want to live in peace we must educate our children,” he says. “It can open many chances for the world.”

Abdurashid doesn't have school supplies. There are only 17 teachers—all refugees themselves—and 10 chairs. “If I had more trees I'd have more students,” he jokes.

He can laugh again. The twins, Sami and Sama, a boy and a girl, are doing well.



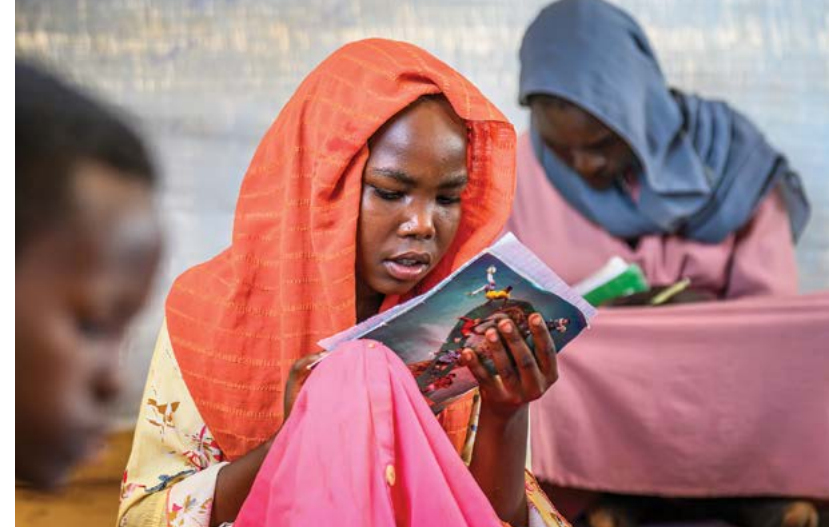
**Global impact fact:**  
World Vision is the largest implementing partner of the World Food Programme.

### World Vision's response

The Sudan crisis is seemingly forgotten by most of the world, and the response is grossly underfunded.

But World Vision is one of the largest humanitarian agencies in Sudan, having worked there for decades. Since the conflict began in 2023, we have reached more than 1.8 million people, mostly women and children, with emergency assistance, including health and nutrition services and water, sanitation, and hygiene solutions.

World Vision is also working in Chad, including at the school where Abdurashid is the director—home to one of 69 feeding programs in four camps serving 70,000 children this year.



TOP: World Vision ensures that children at 69 schools in Chad have a nutritious meal every day. MIDDLE: Finally safe, Rachida and her courageous aunts live in shelters supplied through World Vision's Gift Catalog. BOTTOM: World Vision's Child-Friendly Spaces offer children the chance to play, learn, and be kids.

Emergency feeding programs bring children back to school. They come for the food, and they stay to learn.

World Vision's Gilbert Ngah helps run the program with food that is supplied monthly by the World Food Programme. “We track the information and have trained committees in charge of school feeding,” he says. “The director of the school and the PTA are trained on how to handle food. We also identify cooks. They volunteer. They are trained on hygiene. The cooks start at 6 a.m. The children eat at 9:30. World Vision purchases them a plate and a cup. We also purchased the cooking pots.” Thermal pots help cook the food more quickly and conserve firewood.

The children at Abdurashid's school eating heaping plates of rice and beans is evidence that in the middle of the world's largest displacement crisis, there is hope.

Along with the school feeding programs in Chad and the shelters supplied through World Vision's Gift Catalog, World Vision built four Child-Friendly Spaces in camps where children can go to play, learn, and just be kids.

We also help find families for children who arrive in Chad unaccompanied. In Milé camp in eastern Chad, where 311 children have arrived without parents, World Vision staff have helped reunite 25 children with relatives. The other children are staying with loving host families. World Vision supports 10 host families in Milé camp and another 10 host families in a nearby camp, Konoungou, who take children in and care for them.

World Vision is working in other countries that border Sudan as well. In South Sudan, we're reaching people through our programs focused on health and nutrition; water, sanitation, and hygiene; and food and cash assistance. In the Central African Republic, we're supporting children through child protection interventions, including Child-Friendly Spaces, as well as water, sanitation, and hygiene programs. We've distributed mosquito nets and equipped 2,000 households hosting refugees with latrines and hygiene kits.

For nearly 75 years, World Vision has been committed to caring for children like Adoum and Rachida and families like Abdurashid's. The crisis in Sudan demands we increase our efforts. Now is not the time to look away. 📌

**Help children and families affected by the crisis in Sudan. To learn more, visit [wvmag.org/sudan](http://wvmag.org/sudan) or call 1.888.852.4453.**



## CRISIS WORLDWIDE: MORE REFUGEES' STORIES

SEVIL OMER

📍 In 2024, the number of forcibly displaced people worldwide reached a historic high of more than 120 million, according to the UNHCR, the U.N.'s refugee agency. And a disproportionate number of those—about 40%, or 47 million—are children. This alarming fact underscores the importance of prioritizing children's needs amid conflict and displacement. Here, we introduce you to just a few of the resilient children who help remind us that God is at work even amid the uncertainties of displacement.

**For 9-year-old Sahar in Syria** (top, name changed to protect identity), life has been marked by violence and fear—including frequent bombings near her home and the devastating 2023 earthquake. But at her school in northwest Syria, Sahar attends psychological care sessions supported by World Vision. Through games, art, and storytelling, Sahar has found a way to overcome her fear and experience the joy of school. "I have five friends," she says. "We play together; they're like my sisters."

The sessions have also offered Sahar and her classmates a chance to nurture their aspirations despite the uncertainty surrounding them. One of Sahar's dreams? To help others heal: "I want to finish my education and be a doctor!" she says.

**For Diana** (middle), the journey as a refugee began even before she was born, as her mother, Anna, fled the chaos of war in Ukraine. Pregnant with Diana, Anna left home with her family amid a wave of bombings in the spring of 2022,



RANDI ISHAGAT/WORLD VISION



DAN MUNTENAU/WORLD VISION



LAURA REINHARDT/WORLD VISION

during the escalation of conflict. Diana was born in Moldova, where her family has taken refuge.

Since then, the family has accessed critical mental health services through a program supported by World Vision. Through individual and group sessions, along with games and art therapy, Diana's family, including her older siblings, are learning to navigate the trauma of war and displacement and finding pathways to healing. The program has aided over 103,000 people in Moldova, including 23,000 children, with mental health and psychosocial support services.

Between 2018 and 2023, an average of 339,000 children were born to refugee families each year.

**Despite economic hardships, Erni** (bottom) hopes for the dawn of a new day for his children. Erni fled Venezuela with his wife, Lorena, 4-year-old daughter, Ennei, and 23-month-old son, Jhaverson. The family trekked for two weeks before arriving in Berlin, Colombia, high in the Andes mountains. There, at a shelter run by World Vision and local partners, Erni and his family found both respite and nutritious food. Refugees arriving any day of the week, at any hour, find a safe space here. With support from the World Food Programme, the shelter serves three meals to about 100 people each day. Staff say, "No one goes to bed hungry."

Erni says he wants Jhaverson to be a baseball player one day, following in the footsteps of Erni's father, who was an athlete in Venezuela. It's not just a dream for his son's career; it's a dream of continuing a cherished family legacy of perseverance and passion. But first, the family will need to make their way to Peru, where they hope to settle. Then, perhaps they'll have an opportunity to make that dream come true. 📌

He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will ... enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. —2 CORINTHIANS 9:10

# Inspire

MOTIVATING YOU TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Are you feeling worn out from a challenging year? Learn how to pray when you're tired at [wvmag.org/weary](http://wvmag.org/weary).

## IN THE KITCHEN: Zacusca

By Laura Reinhardt

📌 Farmers in Iasi (pronounced Yash), Romania, once saw their crops used as animal fodder. At harvest time, trees in their orchards hung heavy with fresh fruit, and eggplants and peppers grew plentifully in their gardens. But overabundant harvests caused a glut in local markets, which drove prices so low that farmers couldn't recover their costs. It seemed better to feed the produce to their livestock than to let it go to waste.

From 2008 to 2012, World Vision brought the villagers together in a cooperative where they processed fruits into jams, and peppers and eggplants into an Eastern European spread called zacusca. Families then sold the jams and zacusca in local markets.

Enhancing produce to increase its value helps ensure that families have income year-round instead of only at harvest time. Today, World Vision continues this type of work through its THRIVE (Transforming Household Resilience in Vulnerable Environments) program in Central America, Asia, and Africa by training farmers on ways to diversify their incomes, helping connect them to local markets, and much more.

Through THRIVE, community members in many African countries combine their resources to purchase mills so that in addition to selling their corn, they can also grind and sell cornmeal throughout the year.

Whether repurposing eggplant, peppers, or corn, diversifying income streams means that families can thrive even amid unstable weather and market conditions.

For people purchasing the zacusca in Iasi, they just knew that it tasted delicious. And if that also meant financial stability for families, then all the better. 📌



Get the recipe.

LAURA REINHARDT/WORLD VISION



# Q&A: Actor and World Vision Celebrity Ambassador Melissa Joan Hart

By AnneCatherine Gibbs



COURTESY OF MELISSA JOAN HART

**IF YOU SPEND A FEW MINUTES** with Melissa Joan Hart, you'll quickly learn of her passion to serve others. "I love all kinds of community outreach on a local level and on a wider level," she says. "With World Vision, it's really both because it is domestic and international outreach. I also am the community outreach committee member for my kid's football team. I think it's important to serve our community and to give back because we have been so blessed. It's important to share those blessings."



See Melissa and her family in Zambia and hear how child sponsorship is impacting them.

As a World Vision Celebrity Ambassador, Melissa is all-in for ending extreme poverty. "I first came to World Vision because I wanted to find an organization to make a difference with, and to feel a part of. And I love the idea of knowing where money goes, knowing where efforts are going, and seeing the change being made. I have seen the very complex systems that World Vision has put into place that are sustainable and are life-changing."

From organizing volunteer opportunities to promoting handcrafted gifts in the World Vision Gift Catalog, Melissa enjoys finding creative

and meaningful ways to bless others, especially around the holidays. "My favorite thing about Christmas is the Gift Catalog," she says. "As soon as I get it, I start circling things. What do I want to get and give to people? I love giving teacher gifts from the Gift Catalog."

World Vision recently connected with Melissa to talk more about what it means to be a change maker and how she encourages others to give back.

### Where does your desire to serve others come from?

I've met a lot of different people and learned different ways of life, and it's all fascinating to me. I feel it's our job to take care of our neighbors. Everyone deserves clean water. Everyone deserves food. Everyone deserves safety, sanitation, and education. These are things that World Vision is working towards. I love being a part of that, and bringing in as many people as I can to help.

### What does lasting change mean to you?

The idea of lasting change is the ultimate prayer for peace and for ending poverty. No child being hungry, no one having to die of terrible diseases because they can't get clean water. Putting an end to all of that.

### How have you experienced world change in your partnership with World Vision?

We have seen families develop. When we first visited Zambia, I met a family who was not part of the sponsorship program yet and you could see the poverty. You could see the malnutrition in the children. You

**"Everyone deserves clean water. Everyone deserves food. Everyone deserves safety, sanitation, and education. These are things that World Vision is working towards."**



PHOTOS BY LAURA REINHARDT/WORLD VISION

Melissa visits her sponsored children in Zambia and gets a hug from their mother, Edna.



Melissa and her youngest son, Tucker, sit with a farmer named Caristo (see story on pages 12-21) atop Caristo's abundant corn crop.

could see them struggling. You could see the lack of hope in their faces. Our sponsored child's family struggled with poverty too. But now, four years later, they are thriving. They're healthier. The smiles on their faces told us everything. They were going to school because they had bikes, they had a roof over their heads, they had chickens, and they were getting goats. They had a thriving farm and water nearby. They couldn't stop thanking us for helping them get on their feet. And it just reconfirmed my love for World Vision because I get to see the changes being made.

### What is one way you'd encourage others to get involved with World Vision?

One of the programs I love is the sponsorships. I believe sponsorship truly changes lives. We are lucky enough to sponsor three children. I consider them family—they're our sponsor sisters. I think child sponsorship is the number one way people can help all year because it

not only changes life for that child, but also changes their family and their village. So, if you sponsor a child, like we do in Zambia, you can help. Your money might go towards supporting access to clean water or improved education, or chickens so a family can have fresh eggs. If you want to help with the family's particular needs, like putting a roof on their house for the next rainy season, you can give a Special Gift. You can even send a birthday present, and that is huge.

### Why are you excited to share your handcrafted gift and the Gift Catalog with others this year?

The World Vision Gift Catalog offers all kinds of handcrafted gifts, from bracelets to bowls to scarves, so you can find anything for that person in your life. The money you donate for each gift goes towards World Vision projects; it helps in so many ways. You can give something very meaningful. Or if the person doesn't need anything, I can send gifts to World Vision's

programs in honor of them. I love to give goats, chickens, medical supplies, or school supplies. I know I can always get my friends and family something from World Vision's Gift Catalog and they'll know it's going to help someone else.

### What are you looking forward to in the next year?

There are so many things on the horizon that I'm excited about, from work to family. We're getting to a new phase with our kids. We now have two new drivers in the family. I have a son who graduated high school. My middle child is playing football. I had a new movie come out this year called *The Bad Guardian* on Lifetime. I'm excited about all of that. 🍌

**Get Melissa's "Beloved" friendship bracelets with a gift of \$60 or more to the World Vision Fund. To learn more, see the insert between pages 18 and 19 or visit [worldvisiongifts.org/HandcraftedGifts](http://worldvisiongifts.org/HandcraftedGifts).**





ANDRÉ GUARDIOLA/WORLD VISION

# Yessica in the mirror

By Catherine Turcios

**BEFORE YESSICA COULD EVEN WALK**, her mother left her and her brother to live with their grandmother, Maria. She went looking for work but never returned. Yessica’s father lived nearby but didn’t help raise the two children. To care for them, Maria cooked and collected firewood.

“That’s the work we’ve had, nothing else,” Maria says.

As a child in Honduras, Yessica was different from the village kids, says her grandmother—not learning bad words, stealing, or getting into trouble. Instead, she was quiet and humble, even while being ridiculed by other children for the darker color of her skin. That painful experience made looking at herself in the mirror difficult.

“I always thought, ‘Oh no, I’m ugly! I’m black! I have ugly hair!’ because that’s what they put in my head,” Yessica shares. “I didn’t see myself anymore,” she continues. “When I saw myself in the mirror, it was like I was looking at a question: ‘Who am I?’”

She wouldn’t know the answer for many years.

## A life without luster

Yessica had to overcome significant barriers to continue her education. “One of the most difficult situations for me was to be able to study, to be able to buy my notebooks, and to be able to travel to school,” she says.

Maria wanted to make sure her grandchildren went to school. “That is the best life for the little ones, for them to go to study,” she says. But her economic situation was less than desirable.

So as a 10-year-old, Yessica began sand mining with her dad and her half-brothers on the weekends.

“That’s how I earned my extra money ... that’s how I helped myself,” she says.

When she was 15, and the money from sand mining wasn’t enough, she began spending her summers working in other people’s houses: washing floors, taking care of children, cleaning, and doing laundry.

## Light breaks through

In 2017 when Yessica was 17 years old, things began to change when World Vision began working in her community.

“They were organizing a group of young people, and I remember I was invited,” she says.

World Vision staff invited the youth into a Bible study, and then taught them about agriculture. Yessica became deeply committed to the program and joined a field school, where community members are trained in new agricultural techniques and best practices by World Vision technicians.

She was in her second year of high school. With the new knowledge she learned at the field school, Yessica dedicated herself to growing coffee and farming the plots that World Vision was forming within the community.

“One of the nicest parts for me when I’m on the plot is to watch the sunsets, to see how water falls on the plants, to see them grow, to see the fruit they bear,” Yessica says. She also loves giving back to others: “The other favorite part for me is helping people with food from the plot, which is something that has been practiced since we started with it.”

She began to see the fruits of her commitment. “It was a change,” she says—a big one—“because I was starting to have more income.”

Today, Yessica earns \$4,854 a year, while the average in Honduras is only \$2,750. With this income, Yessica has finished building her grandmother’s house and now pays for water, groceries, and her grandmother’s medicine. She even bought a motorcycle.

“I’m very happy,” Maria says, “because she’s prospering and prospering.”

## Yessica shines

In 2019, Yessica was invited to take part in Biblical Empowered Worldview training through World Vision. Through the Bible studies and principles offered in that training, Yessica’s self-esteem grew. She began to see her value through God’s eyes rather than the criticisms of others. “When you discover the great truth of Biblical Empowered Worldview, you’re going to feel like a different person,” she says.

Through the trainings, she also discovered she could lead.

“One of the parts that changed me the most was when ... they let me be part of the family of volunteers,” she says. After training for a year, Yessica is now a community leader, teaching both women and men—including her uncle—to farm. She even serves on community boards, water boards, and local boards of trustees.

As she’s grown and changed, she’s also come to appreciate how much her grandmother believed in her.

Left: Yessica on her farm. Below: A tender moment with her grandmother. Yessica decorated the mirror with butterflies, a symbol of transformation.

“When I was in school ... there wasn’t a parade where she wasn’t out there walking with me and her water bottle,” Yessica says. She says her grandmother may have struggled to provide for her, “but she was there for me.”

She sees that her grandmother left her a legacy of never giving up. She also credits World Vision with encouraging her.



ANDRÉ GUARDIOLA/WORLD VISION

**“I consider myself a unique woman, and every time I look in the mirror, I say to myself, ‘Yessica, tomorrow you’re going to be better than today.’”**

“World Vision came along and believed in me, and it’s something that I can’t forget, and it’s there in my heart,” Yessica says. “World Vision is my second family. It’s my second home. It’s been my school. It’s been my university. And there have been times when I’ve gone to World Vision and said, ‘Do you have this, or can you help me with this?’ And whoever’s there, whichever project is taking place, they have always supported me.”

Yessica believes in her cousin, Marbella, to whom she has been like a mother in the physical absence of Marbella’s own mother. Yessica’s dream for Marbella is “to see her as a professional, but also one of my dreams is that Marbella can be with her mom.”

Today, when Yessica looks in the mirror, she no longer sees a question. She says, “Today I look at myself and think, ‘How beautiful I am!’ And I see myself as a woman with identity, with vision, with her own beliefs.

“I consider myself a unique woman, and every time I look in the mirror, I say to myself, ‘Yessica, tomorrow you’re going to be better than today.’”

Not only is Yessica beautiful—she has built a beautiful life for herself and her family. 🍌



Scan to hear Yessica share her own story.



# 5 resolutions for 2025

📌 As we look ahead to a new year, what are your resolutions for 2025? If you're not sure yet what to pursue, here are some ideas to help guide you into the new year while also making an impact on the world.

By Kristy J. O'Hara-Glaspie

1

## Get more exercise—and sign up for an event with a cause.

It's a pretty common resolution. But what if this year you resolved to get more exercise not only so you could feel healthier, but also to help equip kids and

families for better health—by helping them get access to clean water? Each May, thousands of people around the world unite in walking, running, or rolling in World Vision's Global 6K for Water.® Six kilometers is the average distance women and children in lower-income countries walk daily to collect water, which is often dirty and can make them sick. Your sign-up fee will equip one person in need with clean water. Looking for more of a challenge? Join a Team World Vision running group in your area! You'll run longer races with friends and make a difference in the world while crushing your running goals for the year.

2

## Improve your prayer life.

God asks us to pray always, in all circumstances, and without ceasing. That's a tall order, so no matter how much we pray, we can always grow in this area. Maybe this is the year to focus on that challenge.

You can start with our Matthew 25 prayer page at [wvmag.org/Matt25](http://wvmag.org/Matt25), which leads to a series of guides that will walk you through praying this powerful passage. Or if you want to feel encouraged when the state of the world leaves you feeling discouraged, check out our prayer guide for peace at [wvmag.org/peace](http://wvmag.org/peace).

3

## Become a Child Ambassador.

Do you wish you could afford to sponsor hundreds of kids? Do you love talking about how sponsorship changes children's lives as well as your own? If so, consider becoming a Child Ambassador! World Vision's Child Ambassadors are a group of committed volunteers who share about child sponsorship with their friends, families, churches, and small groups and inspire others to sponsor children too. Your passion and global impact can multiply when others choose to sponsor children as well.

4

## Lead your local community—while helping change the world.

Step up as a leader this year and organize a kit build for your church, business, or community! Your group can sign up at [kits.worldvision.org](http://kits.worldvision.org) and purchase the unassembled supplies from World Vision. We'll ship it all to you, and your team of volunteers will build the individual kits—like hygiene kits and backpack kits—assembly-line style. The kits are then distributed in the U.S. and around the world to children and families in need. You'll be serving as a leader locally while bringing awareness to needs around the world.

5

## Get crafty—and help babies in need.

If you've been saying for years that you'll learn to knit, maybe 2025 is the year to finally make it happen. Or maybe you taught yourself during the pandemic, but now your needles and yarn sit in a drawer unused. Either way, resolve to get get crafty for a cause this year! World Vision partners with bestselling author Debbie Macomber in our Knit for Kids program, where knitters across the nation download free patterns and create blankets and hats for babies in need around the world. Visit [knitforkids.org](http://knitforkids.org) to get started.

Whatever you decide to do in 2025, we urge you to "work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord" (Colossians 3:23). Happy new year! 📌



Learn more about these and other opportunities for the new year.



Written and photographed by Amy Van Drunen, a photojournalist with World Vision's U.S. office

Sony a7R III  
24–70mm lens at 24mm  
1/1600th at f/7  
ISO 1250

after her parents' divorce and departure from her life—and how she now lives with her grandmother and helps her with work. Sovanny, Soaphea, their grandmother, and their friends walked with us so we could see where Soaphea helps collect charcoal and water lilies. They sell these on the side of the road to provide household income.

As we walked to a nearby pond, I held my camera in one hand and Sovanny's hand in the other. She sought me out after every activity, and we danced, made funny faces at each other, and mimicked each other's words. At one point, there was an entourage of children saying "Oh wow"—Owen Wilson style—as we walked to the pond. My heart felt warm.

Before I took the above photo, Sovanny wrapped her arm around me, and I swung her around. She jumped and motioned for me to do it again. I did. Her cousins and friends ran over, grabbed her arm and foot, and swung her in circles. Each time she leaped into the air before diving toward the ground, just to spring up and do it again—her laughter filling the air. It was a beautiful moment, full of joy and the simple pleasures of play—a glimpse of childhood. 📌

# Connections in Cambodia

📌 **WHILE VISITING A SPONSORSHIP COMMUNITY** in Cambodia, our team shared the day with Sovanny (pictured on the left) and her family, immersing ourselves in their daily lives.

When we first entered Sovanny's grandmother's house, I sat next to Sovanny, did a little wiggle dance, and smiled at her. Her face lit up with a striking smile, her joy palpable. From that moment, her hand found mine and didn't let go for most of the day.

We listened to Sovanny's cousin Soaphea share about the pain she felt

BRITTANY FAN/JOURNEY GROUP



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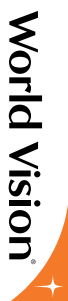
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