

# PWSDevelopments

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## Supporting Orphans and Vulnerable Children

**T**HE IDEA IS HEARTBREAKING: SMALL CHILDREN LEFT without their parents due to AIDS, or emerging into a world already burdened by poverty and hardship. Yet it is a reality for far too many children in developing countries around the world.

Our church is actively working to support orphans and vulnerable children through Presbyterian World Service & Development. Together, with dedicated program partners around the world, we are helping bring new hope and opportunity to some of the most marginalized and neglected kids in the world.

The concept of vulnerable children generally refers to orphans and other groups of children more exposed to risks than their peers, such as children who suffer from extreme poverty or face disabilities. They are the children most likely to fall through the cracks. Special attention and focused programs are absolutely essential in order to ensure these children receive the support they need to not only survive, but thrive.

**PWS&D's work to support orphans and vulnerable children includes:**

- paying school fees and providing necessary supplies and uniforms
- offering skills training in activities such as electrical, welding, tailoring, hairdressing, computers, carpentry and motor vehicle repair
- providing scholarships for post-secondary education

- increasing access to daily nutritious meals and supplying food supplements
- purchasing seed and fertilizer to support disadvantaged families
- building homes for improved shelter
- offering individualized attention, encouragement and follow-up from trained volunteers and staff
- teaching how to prevent the spread of HIV from mother to child
- increasing awareness of high-risk activities
- offering free medical services to improve overall health and wellbeing
- conducting nutrition education
- training teachers, guardians and volunteers in order to deliver high-quality care and education
- psychosocial support to help overcome trauma and emotional challenges, and learn positive coping methods.

The results are seen in the faces of those we support. The health of children is significantly improving, giving them new strength and the mental and emotional stamina to not only attend school but excel in their studies. Caregiving families are accessing important resources and the overall capacity of entire communities is increasing as teachers and volunteers receive training and education. Services offered involve women and men, allowing both genders to participate in skills training and making decisions. Beneficiaries of the programs ➤



### Supporting children continued...

frequently share their stories with other children, becoming mentors and role models, and offering valuable learning opportunities for others.

### Helping Orphans Overcome

According to the UNAIDS 2010 Global Report, more than 33 million people were living with HIV at the end of 2010. The story is particularly bleak for regions like sub-Saharan Africa, where the majority of new HIV infections continue to occur. Although the rate of new infections has been gradually

## Social support for orphans must continue, and recent success in rolling out programs of support such as cash transfers, food support and education bursaries must be expanded and sustained.

- UNAIDS 2010 GLOBAL REPORT

falling, levels of new infections are still high and the number of people living with HIV has increased worldwide.

There is good news. The Global Report points to a 19% decrease in the number of new infections and of the 15 million people living with HIV in low- and middle-income countries, at least 5.2 million have access to treatment. It is clear that HIV prevention is effective. Treatment is working. More families are receiving medication and support. Communities are beginning to conquer stigma and discrimination. These are modest—yet fragile—steps in the right direction.

However, while the world celebrates the beginning of a decrease in the number of overall deaths, the number of AIDS orphans is still rising. The estimated number of children 17 years of age or younger who

lost their parents due to HIV rose from approximately 14.6 million in 2005 to 16.6 million in 2009. And almost 90% live in sub-Saharan Africa.

Presbyterian World Service & Development is working in Africa and around the world to bring real hope and opportunity to orphans through initiatives that not only address immediate needs, but also ensure long-term achievements. Care and support for orphaned children comes from families and communities, so as the number of orphaned children grows, the caregiving families and communities also require assistance.

The results are that orphans and vulnerable children are improving their strength, health and outlook on life, while also being empowered to take on new, exciting challenges and prospects.

## Triza's Story: Overcoming Poverty

**L**ITTLE TRIZA is only five-years-old and is the eldest of four children. Her mother was only 13-years-old when she gave birth to Triza and the family was struggling under a heavy burden of poverty. Triza lived her first four years without any formal education, surviving on one humble meal a day. One of her siblings died due to malnutrition.

Unable to care for the family, Triza's parents placed her and her siblings in the care of their paternal grandmother, though things weren't much better. Triza's grandmother regularly leaves the home to go out in search of employment as a day labourer, taking on work like draining sand from the nearby river and selling it to vendors. Unable to have their grandmother stay home with them, the children were left without care or food.

Staff from the local program soon learned of the problems faced by Triza and her family. This January, Triza was enrolled in a childcare centre operated in part by funds from PWS&D. The loving, dedicated support she receives means Triza can take part in games and lessons, and receive nutritious food. For a child in such



Triza reads out letters of the alphabet to her classmates

formative years, the support she receives is invaluable.

"The centre is doing a great job in caring for the young ones each and every morning, at the same time giving them a rare opportunity of early child education for free," explains Triza's grandmother. "Every morning I go on my quest for work and fend for my family knowing Triza is somewhere safe."

Triza's health has now dramatically improved and she shows a great deal of potential. She is excelling in her school lessons, interacts well with other students, and enjoys reciting poems and verses for the class.



# A Story of Triumph in Nicaragua

PWS&D'S PROGRAM PARTNER REACHES OUT TO A WOMAN IN NEED

**M**iriam Martinez is one of 22 members of a women's group in Managua, Nicaragua, led by PWS&D program partner, Soynica. Miriam previously worked long, tiring hours in a clothing factory while her three young children were left at home under the supervision of a neighbour she paid to care for them. Miriam struggled with the burden of trying to make ends meet for her family. Her husband had left her and she was the sole income earner.

Miriam was determined to provide for her children and give them opportunities she never had. She dreamed of helping them get an education so they wouldn't have to work in the conditions she suffered under. She sacrificed herself by working even longer hours, but in the process she was unable to care for them properly. Over time, her children's health deteriorated significantly, as well as her own. Miriam didn't realize that the inexpensive and easily accessible food they were living off of, such as soda pop, cookies and chips, were adding to her family's health problems.

Miriam was in a very stressful situation and felt as if her back was against a wall. She wasn't making enough money to pay the bills but she didn't want to give up any more time with her family to work in the factory. She was watching her children—and herself—fall apart physically and mentally, along with their home.

Miriam took a big risk and made the tough decision to quit her job in order to dedicate time to raising her children. She promised them that, somehow, she would take them to school, cook them good meals, and be there for them as they grew up—and they were overjoyed. She didn't know how she would make it work, but she believed there had to be a way. She owned a sewing machine and hoped she could make enough money tailoring for others.

The first step was to enrol her youngest child in the neighbourhood pre-school, which is run by PWS&D partner, Soynica. On that first day, children underwent haemoglobin tests and Miriam learned that her little boy

was severely anaemic. He was treated with nutritious food and supplements. "Thanks be to God that I met people who were willing to teach me and help me," Miriam says. "I was so confused and felt very guilty that I had let my little boy get to this state."

The changes in her son were like night and day. He became involved in cultural activities at the pre-school, and from a solitary, quiet and sad child he became social, energetic and talkative.

Miriam volunteered at the pre-school in preparing lunches of soy, fruit and nutritional extracts for the children. She was trained in how to make soymilk, sausages, pies, and grain-based drinks with foliar extract. She was able to take some of the extra food home to help feed her other children. She gave nutritional talks to the parents of students and received training from Soynica to become a promoter of Early Childhood Development.

She began working with children at the pre-school on activities and exercises that stimulate them mentally and physically in order to help ensure proper muscular and brain development.

"I now live a completely different life," Miriam says happily. "I have overcome health problems that

I had, I dedicate a lot of time to my children, I have a source of income, and I improved my own eating habits. I also became a member of Soynica's network of women where I can share my story—both the challenges and successes—in order to help others so their lives do not have to be so full of sickness and stress."

Two of Miriam's children have graduated from high school and her third child is in his final year. They have positive outlooks on life; they are confident and intelligent. Miriam thanks God and believes her prayers were answered.

"I assure you that this is just one story; there are many more women like myself who are learning to succeed and many more children like my son who are learning to laugh and smile again."

**“There are many more women like myself who are learning to succeed and many more children like my son who are learning to laugh and smile again.”**

# RESPONDING TO THE “WORST HUMANITARIAN DISASTER IN THE WORLD”



actalliance



PHOTO: (RIGHT) CHRISTIAN AID, ACT

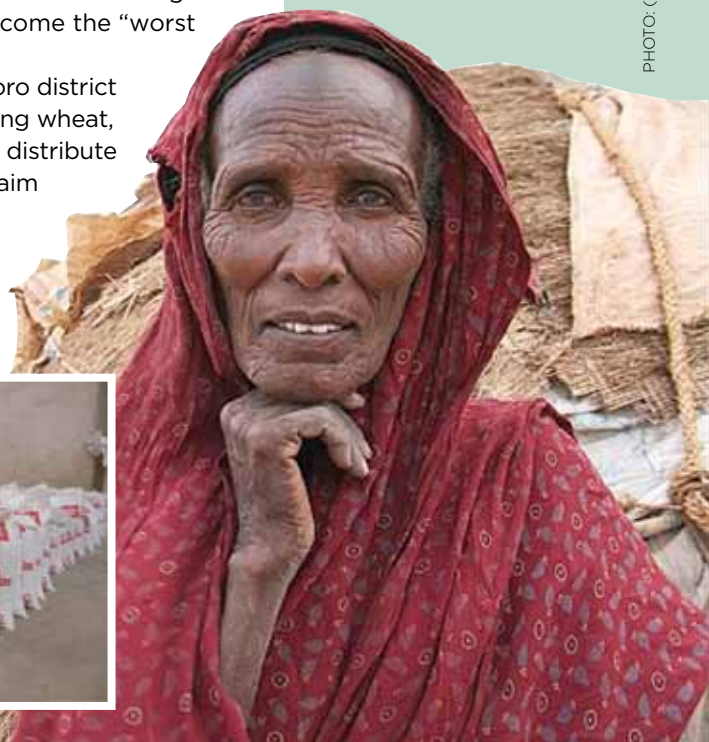
**YOUR PRAYERS AND FINANCIAL GIFTS** are needed to help bring desperately needed relief to the people of Eastern Africa as they suffer from the worst drought to hit the region in 60 years. PWS&D is responding to this crisis situation in partnership with Canadian Foodgrains Bank, the ACT Alliance and Canadian Churches in Action.

The World Food Programme estimates over 10 million people in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Djibouti, Uganda and Sudan will now require food assistance following two years of prolonged drought. The lack of rains has damaged crops, dried up existing sources of water and led to higher grain prices.

Thousands of people are leaving their homes and walking for weeks toward refugee camps in Kenya and Ethiopia in hopes of receiving food rations. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres says the crisis has become the “worst humanitarian disaster in the world.”

PWS&D is working with Canadian Foodgrains Bank in Ethiopia’s Goro district to provide 18,350 people with more than 1,900 tonnes of food, including wheat, beans, oil and famix, a supplementary food product. The program will distribute food freely to those in need and through food-for-work projects that aim to conserve the area’s natural resources. PWS&D is also working with the ACT Alliance to provide desperately needed food, water, shelter, clothing, hygiene kits and psychosocial support to 300,000 Somali refugees at the Kenya Dadaab camp and 10,000 host community members. Emergency education and livelihood recovery initiatives will also be established.

Please pray for the people of East African countries during this time of great need. Your financial support will ensure vulnerable people receive life-saving food in order to survive this difficult time. You can make a donation through your church, mail a cheque to the office, donate online or call 1-800-619-7301 ext. 291. Please mark all donations as “East African Relief.”



## Presbyterian World Service & Development

The development and relief agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada

For more information or to make a donation contact:

**Presbyterian World Service & Development**  
50 Wynford Drive,  
Toronto, Ont. M3C 1J7

1-800-619-7301 ext. 291  
pwsd@presbyterian.ca

[www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd](http://www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd)

Editor: Barb Summers,  
Communications Coordinator

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A GIFT OF HOPE