

# Child WORLD

SPRING 2008

C h r i s t i a n C h i l d r e n ' s F u n d

See catalog  
insert pages 6-7.



These beautiful children are thrilled with their new school, recently constructed in the Gulu area of Uganda through a grant from Refugees International-Japan. CCF sought this grant to further strengthen its existing programs there. The funds donors entrust to CCF have an even greater impact when supported by grant funding.

(See story page 11.)



**Thousands of Kenyan families, including these children, were forced to flee to refugee camps in neighboring Uganda after the outbreak of violence following the December 2007 presidential election. As the struggles there continue, CCF is helping by providing emergency supplies, including water cans, blankets and even soccer balls to keep the children engaged in recreational activities.**

**CHILDWORLD®**

Editor: Alison Abbitt  
Graphic Designer: Maurcine Dalton

2821 Emerywood Parkway  
Richmond, VA 23294-3725

Or call 1-800-776-6767, or visit our  
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Christian Children's Fund (CCF) is a worldwide force for children, helping the poorest and most vulnerable survive and thrive in order to reach their full potential. One of the world's oldest and most respected international child development organizations, CCF works in 31 countries and assists approximately 13.2 million children and families worldwide, regardless of their race, creed or gender.

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**April 25, 2008, marks World Malaria Day when much-needed attention will focus on the startling statistics of this entirely preventable disease: nearly one million children under five die from malaria each year in Africa alone, according to the World Health Organization. CCF, along with other major NGOs (non-governmental organizations), hopes that its efforts to raise levels of awareness will mobilize communities worldwide to seek and implement solutions.**

# Children's Rights: CCF Represented at the General Assembly of the United Nations

By Joan Tupponce,  
Special Correspondent

Discussions about the protection of children's rights were the highlight of a recent special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. The overall encouraging message of progress was balanced by the fact that challenges still persist. Malnutrition, pandemics, including HIV/AIDS, as well as malaria (according to the World Health Organization, roughly one million children die each year from malaria in Africa alone), tuberculosis and other preventable diseases continue to threaten the lives of millions of children.

Christian Children's Fund's representative, Mamadou Diagne, CCF's national director for Senegal, was on hand to discuss CCF's efforts in helping fight malaria and tuberculosis – both of which pose tremendous risks for children.

"Many of the health issues that plague the world's children are out of our control," Diagne told members of the session. Often factors such as biology, physical environment, fam-

ily relationships and society play a role in the health and well-being of these children.

As part of its mission, CCF takes a holistic approach to children's health by focusing on the development of the child and the family. CCF workers talk with both community and family members about malaria and tuberculosis and how it can be prevented and treated.

"Families interpret the new information resulting from the discussions to consolidate or rebuild their actions," Diagne said. "It contributes to a new collective consciousness and hopefully new community standards."

As part of his goal to raise awareness of CCF's efforts to combat malaria and tuberculosis, Diagne has also worked with individuals from the USAID Office of Population/Reproductive Health. His powerful messages have helped to scale up CCF's efforts in Senegal and strengthen CCF's partnerships with Plan USA, Africare and other NGO (non-governmental organization) colleagues.



**This special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations highlighted children's rights. CCF was represented by Mamadou Diagne (inset), the national director for CCF-Senegal, who addressed the gathering about CCF's work on children's rights and protection.**

# Sponsorship Changes Lives for Both the



**Esther (2nd from left) visited her sponsored child (center) in Brazil. She has sponsored Gerlania since she was four, and now she is nearly 18. They have built a strong relationship over time, and Esther has made a tangible difference in Gerlania's life.**

*By Sandra Shelley,  
Special Correspondent*

Esther has watched her sponsored child grow up. Her sponsorship began when Gerlania was four—now she is nearly 18. “I see how this little girl has grown, and am amazed at how time flies,” said Esther.

She described her sponsored child as “beautiful and very shy” when they first met in 2003. Esther, taking part in a CCF study tour, met Gerlania and her mother in Fortaleza, a city on the northeastern coast of Brazil. “It was very emotional. This child I had seen for so many years only in photos came to life. We immediately recognized each other,” she said. “It was a feeling I can't describe.”

Gerlania and her mother traveled four hours by bus to meet her sponsor. It was the first time that either had been that far from home, and it was also their first trip to the ocean.

Esther was unprepared for the gratitude of the family. Gerlania's mother

“kept thanking me for all I had done...I had done so little, but never realized how much it meant to them until that day.”

Although her meeting with Gerlania was short, Esther also had the opportunity to meet other sponsors and visit communities where CCF works. “I was so impressed with all of the CCF staff in Brazil. Every single person I met was dedicated and determined to help these children...it was very touching to see.”

Inspired, Esther returned to Brazil in 2005 to do volunteer work at an orphanage in Salvador founded by Mother Teresa, and also traveled to Gerlania's village, a trip organized by CCF. The visit included a tour of the primary school Gerlania attended. Sitting in a circle with the schoolchildren, Esther took their questions. “One little girl raised her hand and asked for a hug,” she said. After she hugged the little girl, the others jumped up and got in line for one as well. “They are so affectionate.”

The children put on a show for her “which, I think, turned into a town event. The windows were filled with little faces peering in, just trying to get a glimpse of the show and listen to the music and see the person who came all the way from America to meet her sponsored child.” A villager presented her with a pair of sandals and a poem written for her.

At Gerlania's current school, Esther met a teacher who was himself once a CCF-sponsored child. He had continued on to college, and now felt it was his turn to give back to the community. As he hugged Esther, he said he had never met his own sponsor, but wished his sponsor knew how much his life had been changed.

Esther said her trips to Brazil have

## Children and the Sponsors

helped her grow closer to her sponsored child, and she has enjoyed seeing CCF's work firsthand. "I tell everyone I meet about how great the CCF program in Brazil is, and encourage them to be a sponsor...it truly does work, and it does make a difference."

When asked how her sponsorship has helped Gerlania, Esther said, "I think it has opened doors for her that would otherwise have remained shut." Gerlania recently graduated from high school and plans to attend a trade school. She enjoys the photos her sponsor sends from her journeys and hopes one day to travel herself. "By keeping in touch with her, Gerlania's

gotten to see a different world through a friend's eyes. I hope that has broadened her outlook on life."

*"I was so impressed with all of the CCF staff in Brazil.*

*Every single person I met was dedicated and determined to help these children...it was very touching to see."*

## CCF Receives \$5.5 Million for Education Programs in the Philippines

Deplorable working conditions and emotional strain caused by forced labor around the world often crush children's hopes and dreams for a positive future. Christian Children's Fund addresses this issue by educating families and entire communities about why child labor is harmful and how it serves only to continue poverty's vicious cycle.

Recently, CCF's efforts to battle children's rights violations in the Philippines got a big boost thanks to a large grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. The \$5.5 million grant will be used to help combat child labor issues through education, and will be provided through Christian Children's Fund, World Vision and the Education Research and Development Assistance Foundation.

There are approximately four million child workers between the ages of 5 and 17 in the Philippines who are employed in hazardous occupations on

*"This grant furthers CCF's work to combat child labor in the Philippines," said Anne Lynham Goddard, CCF President and CEO.*

sugarcane plantations, and in commercial agriculture, domestic work, commercial sexual exploitation, mining and quarrying, garbage scavenging and pyrotechnics.

The four-year project hopes, through education, to remove 18,000 children from hazardous work sites and professions and keep another 12,000 children from being exploited. Activities will focus on reducing child workers' barriers to attending formal school; expanding skills and business-based learning opportunities for children ages 15-17 years old; and improving the access of the children's families to community resources relevant to the improvement of their economic status.



**These Sri Lankan children are preparing for a radio program to broadcast information that directly relates to children's issues. These programs raise awareness among children and families about specific topics such as child rights, education and health.**

*Children in CCF communities are stepping into the studio to conduct a children's radio program that offers a keen insight for others about coping with hardship. The children take part in 20 shows, which are broadcast at the provincial level through the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation.*

# Sri Lankan Children Take to the Radio

Children and youth are themselves catalysts for change in their communities. They experience poverty on a different level than adults do and can offer creative insights into remarkable solutions. As one example, Christian Children's Fund has teamed up with a Sri Lankan radio station to give children a voice on issues that affect their daily lives, and it is having a tremendous impact.

Children in CCF communities are stepping into the studio to conduct a children's radio program that offers keen insight for others about coping with hardship. The children take part in 20 shows over the course of six months, which are broadcast at the provincial level through the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation.

"The radio program is used as a tool to disseminate messages among children and parents," said Sugandhi, a program staff person for CCF-Sri Lanka. The programs also help to encourage children's participation, create dialogue between children and the community on

child protection and development issues, and bring about more awareness of children's rights, as articulated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Some of the topics covered include children's educational and health issues, the rights of children with disabilities, and children's rights to free expression. Children also tackle the complicated issues of literacy, child abuse and child protection. The messages are conveyed through songs, drama and discussions.

Through their participation, children are also gaining public speaking skills and increased confidence. They are learning about teamwork, and setting and achieving goals, giving them useful skills for a lifetime. Perhaps most important, adults are beginning to listen and to recognize the children's contributions to the betterment of their communities. Children are raising awareness of the need for curbing alcohol and drug abuse, improving full-time education, and the importance of recreation and cultural activities — all of which will bring about lasting change.

## Join the Study Tours Planned for 2008

**Meet CCF-assisted children for the experience of a lifetime!**

During 2008 CCF staff will host small groups of CCF sponsors, donors, family and friends to visit four fascinating and beautiful countries. Here's an opportunity to experience the daily lives of CCF families in these countries. Plus, you can meet other CCF sponsors while gaining a greater in-depth understanding of CCF programs.

**Brazil Study Tour** will depart from Miami on Wednesday, May 28, and return on Tuesday, June 10, 2008. (*Reservations must be completed by April 14, 2008.*)

**Zambia Study Tour** will leave from Dulles (Washington, DC area) on Tuesday, June 17, and return on Friday, June 27, 2008. (*Reservations must be completed by April 28, 2008.*)

**Mexico Study Tour** is tentatively scheduled for the second week of September 2008.

**Thailand Study Tour** is tentatively scheduled for the second week of November 2008.

The cost of each CCF Study Tour is all inclusive (international flights, in-country transportation, all hotels and meals, trips to local attractions and assistance from CCF staff and interpreters). The cost may also be tax deductible.

For more information about these CCF Study Tours, call **1-800-776-6767** or email [partners@ccfusa.org](mailto:partners@ccfusa.org). Also, you can visit our Web site, [www.ChristianChildrensFund.org](http://www.ChristianChildrensFund.org) and click on Study Tours in the navigation bar at the left.

# Gifts of Love & Hope For Children Living in Poverty

Your caring gifts will provide long-lasting benefits to children, their families, and their communities. Each gift has been carefully selected by our country offices, and the items you choose will be purchased in the country as described.



Honor your family and friends with items from our **Gifts of Love & Hope** catalog for special occasions, such as birthdays, Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day, graduation, or just for the opportunity to surprise and delight them.

**Christian Children's Fund** will send a personalized card to those you wish to honor.

## HELP FAMILIES PROVIDE FOR THEMSELVES

### Goats and cows provide nourishing milk and additional income.

#41759 *Two Goats for a family in Mozambique* \$86.00  
#41843 *One Cow for a family in Timor-Leste* \$286.00

### Raising pigs can help families generate income.

#41854 *One Pig for a family in Uganda* \$27.00

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### Fruit trees and vegetables provide nourishment and income.

#41654 *Fruit Trees for a family in India* \$99.00  
#41789 *Organic Garden for a family in Sri Lanka* \$193.00  
#41710 *Orchard for a family in Brazil* \$36.00

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## PROTECT CHILDREN FROM ACCIDENTS AND MALARIA

**Many parents in the Rio Grande Valley can't afford a car seat. You can help save a child's life.**

*#41911 A Car Seat for a child in the USA*

*\$103.00*

**Bed nets treated with insecticide can protect children and pregnant women from malaria.**

*#41815 Mosquito Net for a child in The Gambia*

*\$14.00*

*#42173 Mosquito Nets for 10 pregnant women in Uganda*

*\$90.00*

## HELP DEVELOP SKILLS FOR A LIFETIME



**Teens in Indonesia want to learn traditional weaving, and the beautiful fabrics can be sold to add to their family's income.**

*#41659 Weaving Materials for a teen in Indonesia*

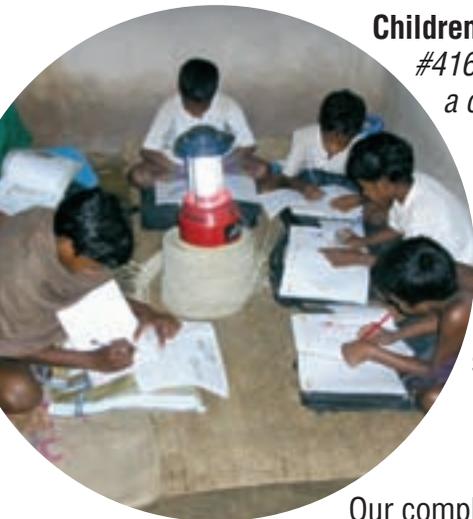
*\$40.00*

**Help someone start to become an entrepreneur in Bolivia.**

*#41554 A Vendor Cart to sell items for income*

*\$571.00*

## CHILDREN WANT AND NEED EDUCATION



**Children in India need light to study after sundown.**

*#41656 One Solar Lantern for a child in India*

*\$193.00*

**Children in Angola need blackboards and chairs.**

*#41511 A Blackboard for students in Angola*

*\$36.00*

*#41512 Eight Small Plastic Chairs for students in Angola*

*\$30.00*

Our complete **Gifts of Love & Hope** catalog is available on our Web site at [www.ChristianChildrensFund.org/gifts](http://www.ChristianChildrensFund.org/gifts). Or if you would like a catalog mailed to you, your family and friends, please call **1-800-776-6767**, Monday – Friday, 9:30 am – 7:00 pm ET.

*Thank you for caring about the needs of others.*

# Giving Children Voices — They are ‘Agents of Change’

In her visits to CCF communities, Tracy Dolan asks children for something that most adults never think to ask for: their opinions. CCF is giving children “voices” by listening to their thoughts on how to address poverty.

According to Dolan, CCF’s child and youth agency adviser, “Involving young people is essential. Children are affected more by poverty than any other group, so it’s important to listen to what they have to say.”

CCF’s extensive interviews with youth around the world were integral components of its groundbreaking study, “Children and Poverty,” published in 2003. By speaking with young people directly, CCF “found that poverty is experienced very differently by adults than by children.” The study breaks down children’s experience with poverty into three categories: deprivation, exclusion and vulnerability.

“The well-being of children and youth is central to the work of CCF,” according to Dolan. “We are committed to giving young people a leading role in program development and implementation,” she said. “In order for children to be meaningfully involved...they need a regular space for dialogue that is not dominated by adults.”

That special space is often found in children’s clubs. In Kolar, India, 33 clubs serve children ages 6 to 16. Most clubs have between 50 and 150 members and are primarily child-led and -managed. The children meet each week to play games and sports, engage in cultural activities, conduct community clean-up efforts, and discuss and share problems. “Many times, the solutions are implemented by the children themselves,” said Dolan.

She gave an example of one club that helped a classmate return to school. The girl had dropped out in seventh grade because her parents couldn’t afford the school fees, and also because they needed a caregiver for her little sister. The children encouraged the parents to let her return, and even raised funds to offset the school fees.

Older youth, like Carolyn in Zambia, have hope. She wants to one day become a doctor, and she knows her parents work hard to pay the local school fees. She sees education as the ability to pass on knowledge to others, and she believes that “every child should have access to education.”

In several countries where CCF works, young people are forming associations to develop their leadership experience by representing children from their communities. In the Jinja district of Uganda, for instance, child and youth executive committees help monitor and report cases of child neglect. Children’s Committees in the Mumbwa district of Zambia periodically meet with local government officials as specific issues come up. In India, “panchayats,” or elected village councils — in this case made up of children — bring up issues relevant to children. All of these committees raise awareness of the needs of poor children and their families, and they offer an opportunity to advocate for policy change. One of their initiatives in Zambia led to an increase in access to reduced-cost health care.

Another structure, child and youth federations, brings together young people from many communities to present the needs of children from their constituencies during meetings with stakeholders and partners who are involved in community development. “Such efforts promote the concept that children are major catalysts for improving their lives, and that they should be consulted and involved in implementing action to make their communities, schools and homes better places,” said Dolan. By providing them with leadership opportunities, and the chance to make important decisions, “we believe they will become better equipped adults with the skills to improve their lives and the lives of those around them.”

**CCF serves more than one million children and families in India, focusing much attention on forming children’s associations to address solutions to poverty. Much of this effort is conducted in Kolar, India, where 33 child-managed clubs meet each week.**



# Fighting Childhood Malnutrition in Indonesia

Malnutrition affects every aspect of a child's life, reducing the ability to learn in school, and leaving the child more susceptible to illness. In the Indonesian province of East Nusa Tenggara, even the most serious cases of malnutrition often go untreated, due to a vast number of underweight infants and children.

"Malnutrition is considered 'normal' in this part of Indonesia because the families often live in a food crisis," said Iman Surahman, program staff member for CCF-Indonesia. Additionally, she said, parents often lack sufficient knowledge about nutrition, and the important role it plays in a child's development. Yet, according to UNICEF, malnutrition is implicated in more than half of all child deaths worldwide.

Last September, CCF conducted a survey in 12 Indonesian communities in which it works. The survey identified 1,338 cases of childhood malnutrition in children ages 5 and younger. Of these cases, 297 suffered from a severe case of malnutrition. With the support of Barnfonden, Sweden (also a ChildFund Alliance member), CCF initiated a multi-pronged approach that involved both routine weigh-ins and supplemental feedings for the children, as well as nutritional education for the families, and the promotion of positive behavioral change in the community.

Midwives, health cadres and other community volunteers are playing a vital role in the program by routinely weighing and measuring malnourished infants and children at health posts. Those who need additional care receive supplemental food and other curative support, including hospital referrals when necessary. Since many of the children are prone to illness such as pneu-



**These children, in a child development center run by CCF-Indonesia, are benefiting from improved nutrition. Because malnutrition affects every aspect of a child's development, improving diets is a key strategy of CCF's work.**

monia and ascariasis (a roundworm infection), the volunteers are conducting deworming activities and educating families about proper sanitation and the prevention of disease. At health posts, mothers learn how to prepare nutritious meals from locally available foods.

Mothers of healthy babies are also going out into the community to help other mothers who need additional support — offering informal teaching sessions about the health and nutritional needs of growing children. To date, 1,131 mothers have learned how to better care for their children through this program.

*This involved both routine weigh-ins and supplemental feedings for the children, as well as nutritional education for the families, and the promotion of positive behavioral change in the community.*

# Household Gardens Improve Nutrition

Partnering with universities, nongovernmental agencies and other professionals helps to strengthen CCF's programs. For example, a nutrition program in Honduras, started in 2003, was the result of a collaborative effort between various nutrition experts, and it is having a tremendous long-term impact on thousands of children.

The program targets families who are primarily subsistence farmers and whose children suffer from poor nutrition. It enables these families to become more familiar with nutritious foods, while also improving crop production. To participate, the families must have access to water and a small plot of land that can be devoted to the establishment of a garden. Eligible families receive seeds, fertilizer and gardening tools through CCF's "household gardens" program. To date, 2,098 Honduran families have participated.



**Household gardens, like this one in Honduras, are making tremendous headway in combating malnutrition by improving both the amount and the quality of foods available.**

Starter seed kits for each family include string beans, peas, carrots, beets, coriander, cucumbers, peppers, tomatoes, onions, cabbage, squash and the protein-rich gandul bean. Instructors, Parent Committees, and Guide Mothers (community mothers selected to receive special training) all help sustain the program by providing nutritional training to families, while also introducing the gandul bean and its preparation.

To ensure the program's long-term success, the crops were carefully selected to be adaptable to the growing environment, and drip irrigation systems were installed to make the best use of scarce water resources. The construction of drip irrigation systems has been crucial. "Not only do they conserve water, but they enable families to produce food all year round," said Pedro Aguilar, program manager for CCF-Honduras.

In 9-year-old Anabel's family, everyone pitches in to make the garden grow. Her father and 19-year-old brother do most of the tending, but Anabel helps with the garden after school. Once the family has met their own needs, they take the extra produce to market to sell, generating additional income that enables them to buy supplemental foods and meet other family needs.

*Many CCF donors support this program through the "Gifts of Love & Hope" catalog, by purchasing seed kits. The catalog offers a great variety of gifts that benefit CCF communities and can be found online at [www.ChristianChildrensFund.org/gifts](http://www.ChristianChildrensFund.org/gifts). (See pages 6-7 for some of these gifts.)*

# Building a Future Through Education

All too frequently, children in developing countries face roadblocks in trying to obtain an education: parents lack money to pay school fees, schools are too far away, and there is often a lack of adequate facilities to house a school. For CCF, educating children is critical to combating poverty in a sustainable fashion.

Thanks to a grant from Refugees International-Japan, CCF is making progress in the Gulu district of Uganda through the construction of classrooms. These classrooms will ease overcrowding from the influx of refugees who fled civil strife in other parts of Uganda.

A tremendous government effort to return refugees to their communities began in 2006. "As families wait for the peace process in Uganda to yield results, many are moving from refugee camps to satellite camps closer to their villages," said Jessica Batsemaghe, grants officer for CCF-Uganda.

One such area is the Gulu district. The steady arrival of children to the satellite camps in Gulu has put a strain

on local schools. Many children attend school in temporary classrooms or under trees. Books and materials are scarce, and desks are few and far between. The youngest children sit on the floor, leaving the desks for the older children.

With the recent addition of new classrooms, education in Gulu will be greatly improved. Four classrooms were built with the support of this initial grant, and another grant was recently made for the construction of three additional classrooms. Implementation began in December 2007, and about 480 children from first to seventh grade will benefit from the new classrooms.

CCF provides funding for many activities worldwide, but also partners with other organizations to further our goals to help children. These simple classrooms will greatly improve the quality of life for the children, offering them a valuable tool for their future.

*For more information about CCF's education programs, visit [www.ChristianChildrensFund.org/content.aspx?ID=151](http://www.ChristianChildrensFund.org/content.aspx?ID=151)*



**A new school, recently constructed in the Kinabwe community of Uganda's Gulu district, was made possible through a grant obtained by CCF.**

# Sweet Memories

By Joan Tupponce,  
Special Correspondent

Memory books, made from the most humble of materials, prove a vital link for children who are orphaned by AIDS. AIDS not only steals children's parents, but it erases any trace of family history and leaves children vulnerable.

Each year roughly 600,000 children are orphaned by AIDS. CCF is helping parents and caregivers dying from AIDS create Memory Books for the children who will be left behind. These books are part of a larger initiative to also protect any inheritance a parent may leave for their children—children like Musa.

“When my mother and father died from HIV/AIDS-related symptoms, I was only two years old,” says the 15-year-old boy. “I had nowhere to go after the burial so I stayed with my widowed maternal grandmother. In 1999 my grandmother died, which meant I had to shift to my aunt's home in the Wanyange community, Jinja district of Uganda. I was too young to understand all of this. I remember it from reading the Memory Book that my Aunt Hadija made for me.”

The book has helped Musa discover his own identity. “Before I read it I thought that my grandmother was my mother,” he says. “I called her Mum until some older children told me she wasn't, but they didn't tell me who she was.”

Musa, who has tested negative for HIV/AIDS, hopes one day to help fight the AIDS epidemic. “I would like to be a doctor and treat patients

with HIV/AIDS because if we had enough doctors in this country, my mother and father would not have died suddenly,” he says. “I developed this ambition by reading my Memory Book.”

CCF-Uganda trained Musa's Aunt Hadija — along with 29 other men and women in her village — in succession planning, which involved writing, par-

enting skills and memory book writing.

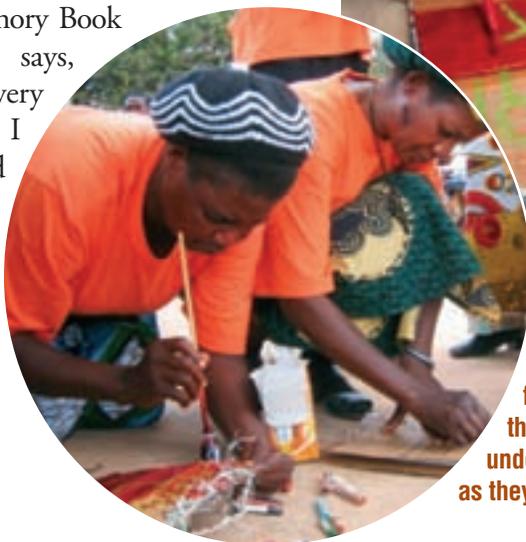
“I have managed to train more than 50 people in writing memory books in this village,” Hadija says. “With the AIDS pandemic, too much information is getting lost, dying with

*“Sitting on a log under a tree in a remote area of Zambia and watching as parents, affected with HIV/AIDS, were making memory books out of cardboard and grass or string, I saw and felt the heart and soul they put into every page. I realized that they want their children to know about their family, and they want to legally protect what little property they have for their children. In that moment, I knew that I would never forget this time and place in my life, and I knew I had been changed forever. Assembling the memory books is the last thing they could do for their children. It is a deeply powerful statement about the way they cope with their own personal death while at the same time doing their best to leave a legacy of love and protection for their children. Of all the memories I will take through life, I will never forget my time on the log with so many strong women as they met their fate with such dignity.”*

—Betty Forbes, VP for CCF's Marketing and Donor Services

those who perish from the virus.” The memory books keep the past alive for these children along with addressing child protection issues.

Musa’s favorite part of the book is the two photos of his parents. “I read my Memory Book often,” he says, “because every time I read it, I understand the information better.”



**Parents make Memory Books for their children as part of CCF’s HIV/AIDS work. These books are made with great care from very basic materials so the children will have some understanding of their family history as they grow up.**

## ‘16 Days’ Targets Gender-Based Violence

Every day, women around the world are subjected to unconscionable forms of abuse, many of which are tolerated because of local customs. Some of the abuses include domestic violence, female genital mutilation, forced child marriages and dowry-related violence.

In late 2007, the United Nations joined humanitarian agencies around the world in “16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence.” The campaign, which ran from November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) through December 10 (UN Human Rights Day), sought to raise awareness of the many forms of gender-based violence and offered recommendations for combating this global crisis.

During the campaign, Christian Children’s Fund’s senior child protection adviser, Mike Wessells, spoke at a UN event on gender-based violence, sharing experiences and insights from his years of working in the field. Wessells noted that although communities often condone gender-based violence, they can also serve as important sources of protection, support and human rights fulfillment. For example, men who are sympathetic to the cause are enlisted by CCF to lead the charge against this violence, challenging the abuse.

In some parts of rural Bolivia, he said, girls are sexually abused by teachers and peers at an alarming rate. But CCF helped the girls find strength in each other by forming girls’ clubs. In addition to providing psychosocial care to one another, the members launched a community campaign to shame predators and created a monitoring system aimed at preventing further crimes. A key feature of the campaign, which successfully reduced gender-based violence, was its inclusion of men as positive role models.

“This example shows that girls are not passive victims; they are survivors and agents of their own protection,” said Wessells.



# Living with HIV

by William Fleming,  
CCF Program Specialist, HIV/AIDS

*Editor's note: This piece is adapted from an article that ran in the December 7, 2007, edition of the Raleigh (N.C.) "News & Observer." William Fleming, who joined CCF in 2005, has worked on HIV/AIDS and health programs in the United States and the developing world for more than 10 years. Fleming has vast on-the-ground experience in developing countries, a Master of Science of Public Health and a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.*

During a recent trip to India, I met with a group of 30 adults living with HIV. We sat in a circle discussing the challenges they face living with the disease.

As we talked, many of the adults briefly diverted their attention to care for their young, squirming children. Although they were distracted during the discussion, it is their children who are their main focus in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

When asked how many of the adults are taking antiretroviral drugs, nearly two-thirds raised their hands, a testament to the government of India's efforts to expand treatment and care services into the rural areas. However, when I asked about their greatest needs, there was no mention of drugs or treatments.

Again and again they voiced concerns for their children. They wanted to know, "What will happen to them when we grow sick or die?" These parents understand very well the increasing risks – both health and non-health related – facing their children.

More than 15 million children have lost one or both parents to AIDS. Millions more have been made vulnerable as the number of orphans left in its wake is expected to increase globally through 2025.

As households cope with caring for a sick family member, children often bear the brunt of rapidly dwindling

resources in the form of withdrawal from school, less to eat, and often exploitative and dangerous work to help support their families. Suddenly the children find themselves thrust into the parent role, creating child-headed households, especially throughout Africa. It is a battle we have only begun to fight.

While some children are orphaned by AIDS, millions are fighting the disease themselves. The recently released "UNAIDS 2007 AIDS Epidemic Update" highlights some important gains for children. Although the total number of children living with HIV has increased from 1.5 million in 2001 to 2.5 million in 2007, the number of new infections in 2007 dropped to 420,000, down from 460,000 in 2001. Deaths among children have also begun to decline after peaking in 2005. These are important signs of progress, but they are small steps and only mask a much larger problem.

Across Africa, Christian Children's Fund is working with youth as key partners in the response to the AIDS epidemic. In Kenya, youth tutors provide support and mentorship to vulnerable children struggling to stay in school while coping with loss and illness in the home. Youth in Zambia are managing an Internet cafe that provides information on AIDS and sexually transmitted infections, as well as referrals to youth-friendly health services. Networks of youth centers in Uganda implement action plans that include AIDS prevention and economic development activities. CCF's partnership with youth reflects our respect for the right of all individuals to participate in their own development.

We need to commit ourselves to meeting the challenge of caring for children affected by AIDS. To do this,



**Though parents are often the ones suffering from HIV/AIDS, their real concern is for the future of their children. William Fleming (far left with hat), CCF's HIV/AIDS program specialist, also met with these parents in Ecuador to discuss key issues. Parents want to be sure the needs of their children are met – some will become orphaned, and others are HIV-infected themselves.**

we need to rapidly scale up care and treatment for people living with HIV, with an emphasis on prevention of parent-to-child transmission and care for women living with HIV. Parents provide the best care and protection for their children, and keeping parents alive is the best solution. For orphans and children living with infected parents, programs promoting quality education, primary health care, nutrition, as well as social inclusion and emotional care for children are all critical elements of an effective response.

The women and men in rural India are benefiting from the expanded care and treatment services but are living examples of the challenges that remain. Their concern should be our concern. HIV/AIDS can't be fought with drugs and treatment alone. Together with these courageous parents, we need to provide an answer for their concerns. We must care for the children. The good news is we are making progress, but this is no time to let up. The lives of millions of children hang in the balance.



**ChildFund (of which CCF is a member organization) Vietnam received a merit award for its contribution to poverty reduction and community development from the People's Committee of Bac Kan province. It was awarded this past January in recognition of its contribution to poverty reduction and community development in the province. Bac Kan is one of Vietnam's poorest provinces, in which 36% of households live in poverty. Receiving the award is Peter Walton (left), the director for ChildFund Vietnam.**

Christian Children's Fund  
Anne Lynam Goddard, President and CEO  
2821 Emerywood Parkway  
Richmond, VA 23294-3725  
[www.ChristianChildrensFund.org](http://www.ChristianChildrensFund.org)

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