Running away to school in Samburu County, Kenya

Growing up, Rehema’s parents never sent her to school.

Even though education is free in Kenya, families are still responsible for the cost of uniforms and supplies. So, when financial resources are limited, young girls often miss out on the schooling that could change their lives.

And Rehema’s family resources were more than just limited – the family was struggling to survive. “One day when I was 12, I heard my parents planning to marry me off,” she says.

While the thought of a young girl being forced to marry is shocking, child marriage and gender-based violence are common and persistent problems for girls growing up in the world’s poorest places.

But Rehema had much different plans. “I decided to run away to school,” she says.

When Rehema’s parents tracked her down at the nearby school dormitory to demand that she be married as planned, the school staff – especially the dorm matron, Lucy Nguru – fought for Rehema. They “stood with me so I could stay,” Rehema says.

Rehema’s dormitory is one of many that ChildFund has constructed in schools in several African countries to support girls’ access to education.

Your support makes this work possible!

And with help from friends like you, ChildFund is also able to build schools that create a supportive all-girls’ learning environment where young women can find a safe haven from early marriage and other forms of gender-based exploitation and violence.

“Thank you for changing Rehema’s life for good. Your gifts make all the difference!”

“Rehema was only 12 when she overheard her parents making plans for her to marry. Now she’s safe and in school, thanks to friends like you.”
PARTNERSHIPS
Changing points of view in Indonesia

With your support and help from our corporate partners Caterpillar Foundation and P&G, ChildFund continues to change lives in rural Indonesia!

Over the last two years, we’ve provided 1,000 young people with training in life skills, entrepreneurship and more. And recently, we’ve expanded our training to address gender-focused issues.

Afifa, 21, has been inspired by the training. “I want to change community perceptions about gender,” she says. “I know it will be hard, since the community’s stereotype is that women should stay at home and focus on domestic matters like cleaning and cooking. But that is all wrong – domestic responsibilities should be shared and not viewed as being just for women.”

Lin, who’s 22, also has a new perspective. “The training has taught me that women have equal rights to work, and if society denies women that right, they are violating women’s rights, stopping women from exploring opportunities,” she says.

Riadi, 21, agrees with Afifa and Lin. Since he’s always treated his friends equally, he had never thought about there being any real differences between men and women. Now, he says, the stereotype that women exist only for domestic matters is “so old-fashioned. All women and men should have equal rights and opportunities in their communities, especially in education, careers, politics and social life.”

Working together, there’s nothing these young people can’t accomplish!

ADVOCACY
ChildFund leads global efforts to end violence against children

Did you know that every year, around half of the world’s 2 billion children are exposed to abuse, neglect, exploitation and other forms of violence?

When unaddressed, violence – whether it happens at home, school or elsewhere – can have a profoundly negative impact on a child’s lifelong well-being.

As a member of the Ending Violence Against Children Taskforce, ChildFund helps our nation’s leaders understand the gravity of this issue and advocates for an end to violence against children worldwide.

In March, a congressional resolution to end violence against children, co-written by ChildFund, was reintroduced in both chambers of the United States Congress. The resolution calls on lawmakers to recognize the negative effects of violence and put children first in all our policies.

“Human trafficking and child labor have tragic lifelong consequences for individual children and devastate entire communities,” said Sen. John Boozman, a lead sponsor of the resolution. “This bipartisan resolution sends a strong message that a plan to end violence against children must be a priority.”

Please help get the word out by contacting your representatives in Congress today and letting them know you support H. Res. 230 and S. Res. 112.

When we work together, a world free from violence against children is possible!
One of Jennifer Quintero’s favorite things about her job is letting children know that someone cares about them. She understands firsthand how life-changing that can be. Because that’s exactly how her sponsor and other friends from ChildFund made her feel while she was growing up!

Jennifer, who lives in Texas’ Rio Grande Valley, works as a family coach—a special type of social worker who helps families overcome challenges and grow stronger.

“A lot of pieces of my life motivated me to become a social worker,” Jennifer says. “Sponsorship was one of them. Having just one person saying that you are worthy, it makes a difference.”

Jennifer grew up in a low-income family, and she experienced much of the stress and anxiety that often accompany poverty. But she remembers how happy she felt every time Juanny, a ChildFund staff member in her area, came to visit her.

Juanny always took the time to ask how she was doing and listen to her. Every time Jennifer finished a project or wrote a letter to her sponsor, she could feel Juanny’s pride in her—and her sponsor’s. Even the little things Jennifer did were meaningful to these two women.

“My sponsor sent me small gifts for my birthday and holidays, but the best part was when she would write and ask me about my interests, goals and what I liked,” Jennifer says. “Just knowing someone else cared about me was invaluable.

“My sponsor had hope in me, and knowing that she believed that I could be something in life made all the difference.”

Schoolchildren in Guatemala are facing a crisis.

The Guatemalan school year begins in January and runs until October, but families who migrate seasonally to find work leave with their children in August and don’t return until February or March. This disruption to their education, year after year, lowers their chances for a productive future.

That’s been changing. With your help, ChildFund is working to improve the quality of primary school education in rural Guatemala by providing teachers with training and fresh, engaging materials to keep kids interested—and learning.

Launched in 2013, the Aprendo project—or, in English, “I Learn”—sparks children’s critical thinking, reading and math skills through a vibrant approach to learning. Before, says the school’s principal, Mario Gomez Velasco, “the children did not participate. But now, with this new methodology, the children carry out activities, and they are in charge of the process. Their logical thinking is developed. They are more motivated to learn.”

And those aren’t the only benefits. First-grade teacher, Maria Garcia, says the children are happier and better-behaved since ChildFund introduced the new approach.

Her wish for her students? “That they come back to school at the start of the new school cycle and stay until the end—that is my biggest wish.”

You’re helping children in Guatemala stay in school. What a great way to change lives.

Thanks for making successes like this possible for children all around the world!
SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

‘Stick with it’: The Robertses change the world, one gift at a time

When Jonathan and Angela Roberts first decided to become sponsors in the early ‘90s, they never dreamed they’d go on to support the transformation of an entire community in Kenya.

It all started with Phillip, a little boy who lived in rural Wamunyu, about 45 minutes outside of Nairobi. The Pennsylvania couple committed to give $21 a month to support him. “Going over our finances, we were able to make that dollar amount and put it in the budget. That’s what drew us to ChildFund,” Angela says. “It wasn’t much, but we said, ‘We’re going to do it. We’re going to stick with it.’”

With each passing year, they challenged themselves to take their giving to the next level — and then the next. “We’re very goal-oriented,” Angela laughs.

As their own financial resources grew, the couple gradually took on four, then eight, then 10 total sponsorships, all in Wamunyu. They donated livestock and tackled projects that would benefit the entire community, like building a water weir and supporting an early childhood development center with toys and supplies.

“People don’t get to choose where they’re born or who they’re born to. But we’ve all been blessed,” Jonathan says. “We’ve all got different amounts of time, talent and treasure, and we have a responsibility to try to leave the planet a better place.”

Sometimes, he says, meeting that responsibility requires taking a leap of faith — like the time when they were about to make an offer on a new house just before ChildFund called to request funding for critical renovations to Wamunyu’s elementary schools. Spoiler alert: 2,000 children in rural Kenya will soon be learning in classrooms with real windows and roofs that don’t leak.

What motivates the Robertses to make ChildFund such a big part of their lives? Angela says they both have a sincere love for children. “Children remind you that the gift of life is just that: a gift.”


DISASTER UPDATE

India

In early May, a powerful cyclone hit India’s east coast, devastating several districts in the country’s Odisha state. Cyclone Fani made landfall with wind speeds approaching 115 miles per hour, equivalent to a category 4 hurricane. While only a few dozen people lost their lives in the storm, hundreds of thousands more were displaced. Homes were flattened, health centers were destroyed, schools were heavily damaged, and crops and fisheries were decimated. For children, the impact of the storm itself — as well as their families’ struggle to put their lives back together — will last a long time.

Thanks to friends like you, ChildFund was able to take action right away, by helping families rebuild their lives and livelihoods.

You’re also helping to provide children with access to Child-Centered Spaces, where they can feel safe and learn from caregivers trained to help kids in the aftermath of an emergency.

Thank you for keeping children safe and cared for in the chaos after any disaster.
Hello friends!

Have you ever stopped to think of the hope and joy that you’re bringing to children living in the world’s poorest places?

Believe me, you can see it in their faces. Just look at the photo at the top of this page. These children are taking part in our ENRICH program to promote early-grade literacy in the Philippines. They couldn’t be happier!

It’s just one example of the positive, lasting change that you’re helping to bring to children in need. In fact, your compassion has a ripple effect that touches countless lives.

As you read this issue of ChildWorld, I hope you’ll see that one person really is behind everything we accomplish – YOU!

You’re helping to break the cycle of poverty in Central America. Your gifts are providing support for families recovering from Cyclone Fani in India. You’re helping children like Rehema get the education that can change their lives. And we haven’t even scratched the surface of all the good that you do.

Thanks for making a difference!

For the children,
Anne Lynam Goddard
President & CEO

ChildFund International
2821 Emerywood Parkway
Richmond, Virginia 23294
1-800-776-6767
www.ChildFund.org
GOOD NEWS FOR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

The Combined Federal Campaign allows federal employees and military personnel to designate gifts to the nonprofit organizations of their choice. This year, please designate ChildFund and encourage your coworkers to do the same. All gifts will bring help and hope to children in extreme poverty around the world.

Please remember, our Combined Federal Campaign number is 11385.

UPCOMING CALENDAR EVENTS

AUGUST 12
International Youth Day

AUGUST 19
World Humanitarian Day

SPONSORED CHILD BECOMES NATIONAL DANCE CHAMPION

Pavani, a sponsored child from southern Sri Lanka, recently won first place in the Ministry of Education’s All-Island Interschool Dance Competition. This is the highest such honor in the country, and she took home a gold medal and certificate for her efforts. Pavani is currently studying for her pre-university exams and hopes to become a dance teacher one day.

Congratulations, Pavani!

Contributing photographer: Jake Lyell