

MY VISIT TO ZAMBIA

In November 2014, I joined Dr. Neal Stretch, Ab and Faye Boogerman, and Corrie Mulder (Director of Operations at International Needs Canada) on a trip to Solwezi, Zambia.

Our focus was to try to understand the health needs of the students at ZACTS—a primary school for orphans and vulnerable children supported by International Needs Canada. In 2012 ZACTS opened its doors to 90 children between the ages of 5 and 10 who had never had access to schooling. Today 200 children attend through Canadian sponsorships and donors committed to sustainable development.

We were warmly welcomed by everyone we met! Our week began with an amazing time of worship on Sunday morning at Kimasala Evangelical Church. It is a profound experience to travel anywhere in the world and to have a sense of being part of one family as we worship and pray together. The music was incredibly uplifting and joyful.

Our week at the school consisted of setting up a 'clinic' to assess the health needs of the students. Our hearts were blessed by these dear children, but our hearts also quickly became burdened by their health concerns and the inaccessibility of health care. On Friday afternoon, we met with a group of mothers under a tree at the school. They shared their desires and their burdens for their children. These mothers expressed deep gratitude for the school and for their children's sponsors. They shared that their greatest concerns were water and health care. Dr. Stretch led these assessments and conversations with kind compassion and professionalism.

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CBS SHARES IN THE WORK IN THE DR CONGO



The Democratic Republic of Congo, sometimes referred to as the DR Congo or the DRC, is located in central Africa. It is the second largest country in Africa and the eleventh largest in the world. The DR Congo is struggling to recover from decades of warfare that has killed millions of people throughout the country. The eastern regions are still plagued by army and militia violence. The spread of HIV/AIDS fuelled by sexual violence against women has given the DR Congo the sad reputation of being "the worst place on earth to be a woman." Yet the Congolese people are resilient, dynamic, and generous.

A group of Canadians, with the assistance of International Needs Canada, travelled to the DRC in May, 2014, and held a Vacation Bible School for the children at Kamalondo School in Lubumbashi. The Canadian Bible Society provided 450 French New Testaments for the students and teachers at the school. The excitement was infectious as the children raised their New Testaments with great pride and promised to faithfully read God's Word and do what it says. The school director said he would make sure that the study of God's Word would be included in the school's curriculum. The DRC needs young men and women of integrity to rise up and give leadership to the next generation. Only when people have peace with God will they be able to have peace with each other. Thanks to the generosity of CBS, the Word of God will give light, life and healing to many in Lubumbashi and throughout the DR Congo.



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As I reflect on our trip, I can still feel quite overwhelmed by the intensity of the experience. The children stole my heart. The mothers' longings for their children felt no different than mine. The teachers were loving and hardworking. The needs seemed enormous. Our helplessness felt paralyzing.

We discussed our impressions with Benani Dakowa and Warren Nyimba (chair and treasurer of International Needs Zambia, respectively) and expressed our support for the development proposals that they were planning to present. They thanked us for coming and said that our presence was a great encouragement. They noted that we spoke love into their children when we touched them and looked into their eyes. How simple that seems....but, we trust it was a part of a bigger plan of God's care for His children in Solwezi, Zambia.

Arlene Bennink, Ancaster ON

FROM STUDENT TO TEACHER & COMMUNITY LEADER

Purnakala Buda Magar, a former student at the Lydia Vocational Training Centre in Nepal, has grown in her service to the Lord and to her community since graduating from the Centre in 2009. She expressed her joy as she shared that after her training at the Lydia Centre she was able to take a position of leadership in her community and be involved in social outreaches such as clothes distribution, delivering basic health education and empowering women to raise their voices against oppression. Purnakala works with others to find solutions to the hardships and challenges they face every day. The comprehensive teaching and skills training she acquired at the Lydia Vocational Training Centre has transformed her life. Purnakala now runs a small tailoring shop of her own where she trains other women, sews clothes, and shares the knowledge she acquired at the Lydia Centre. She employs one person to help in her shop so she is able to assist her husband with some of his pastoral work.



"I am so thankful to God, the Lydia Centre, and my sponsor for providing me with a wonderful opportunity to become skilled and independent." Purnakala



A SOLID PLACE TO STAND

Samson Baidya and his wife, Papri Paik, will always be grateful for the work of International Needs in their lives. Brought up in poverty-stricken homes in Bangladesh, Samson and Papri were sent by their families to live at Savar Children's Village in Dhaka when they were very young. Samson was the oldest of four children and only seven years old when his family sent him to live at the Children's Village. That same year, Papri's father died and her mother, unable to provide for her, brought her to Savar Children's Village, hoping they would take her in. Papri was admitted and together with Samson and the other children, they grew up under the loving care of dedicated childcare workers and teachers.

"We were introduced to God through prayer and Bible study in the morning and evening, and had classes throughout the day. Hunger was now a thing of the past as we received food and lodging in our new home. With encouragement and loving support, we learned well at school and in 2004 I graduated from High School. I recently completed my Bachelor's Degree with Honours. As a child, I had no hope in my life and would never have believed that I could reach this level of education and be a resource person for others. I praise God for all He has done in my life and thank International Needs for the important part they played in my family's growth and development." Samson Baidya

Samson and Papri have been married for six years now and God has blessed them with a precious daughter. They live in Moghbazar, Dhaka, where Samson works as a training specialist and Papri works as a primary school teacher where their daughter goes to school. Their gratitude and appreciation to God, their sponsors, and the wonderful staff at International Needs knows no bounds.

International Needs Bangladesh reaches out to children from very poor backgrounds. Every child who comes to our Children's Villages has a unique story. The social system in Bangladesh is such that orphaned children are cruelly ostracized, neglected and left subject to a life of child labour and extreme poverty. Children often arrive at the Children's Villages emotionally traumatized by what they have experienced. Our partners work hard to alleviate their fears and to heal the emotional scars they bear through loving care, nurture and bringing Jesus into their lives.

For more information on our work in Bangladesh, please visit our website at www.internationalneeds.ca

FOR THE LOVE OF PEACE



Twelve year old Nathan poses for a photo with his teacher, after a group of Canadian visitors were moved to tears by his recital of a war poem. The group was visiting Kigoma School in the DR Congo and were delighted when the students shared their talents with song, dance, drama and poetry.

TEACH ME PEACE

Mother, teach me peace.

Everyone is making war,
we hardly ever see peace.

At school, I learn these things...

I've had enough mother,
I've had enough of war stories.

It's horrible, all the destroyed territories,
The men and women who have perished.

It's despicable, all those machines
made for the purpose of killing.

The whole land is mined
and ready to explode...

Mother, teach me peace.

I know all about war and nothing about peace.

All I know is how to hate war.



SPREADING CHEER IN BANGLADESH

A group of Ontario donors decided to forgo gift giving this year in order to buy a special Christmas dinner for the girls living at Savar Children's Village and the boys at Bethany Children's Village. *"We already have so much"* said one of the donors who prefers to remain anonymous, *"it just seemed like the right thing to do"*.

Christine Pitts, a single mom with two young children, heard about the project at her church and decided to get involved.

"My family and I sponsor two children in Bangladesh and I would love to go and visit them some day. As a teenager in youth group, I felt that God had laid missions on my heart but because of my insecurities I thought He could never use me in this way. When I heard of this opportunity, I was so excited and wanted to be part of it. I'm sure our gift was a blessing to the children but I truly feel it was me who received the greatest gift and blessing this year. God can and wants to use me regardless of my past, and He has plans for my future! I'm thrilled to have had the opportunity to contribute to the Christmas Dinner project and hope to make it a new tradition for my family every year."

A BASKET OF KINDNESS

On behalf of the many children and families who were blessed this Christmas through your kind generosity, please accept our heartfelt thanks. Many of you responded and gave a Basket of Love to unsponsored children and their families and brought joy and encouragement to their homes. Baskets of Food, Care, Hope and Medical Supplies were distributed in the neediest areas. The Government of Canada multiplied the Baskets of Medical Supplies to help meet the medical needs of Haitian children. We are so grateful to you for the part you play in this important work. May you experience God's richest blessings in 2015.

Photo Credit: Marie Eve Bertrand

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS...40 YEARS OF IMPACT



Dr. Ray and Lorna Harrison

International Needs was founded 40 years ago by Dr. Ray Harrison, a New Zealander. Dr. Ray was invited to Bangladesh in 1974 by the late Rev. Smith R. Adhikary when the country was going through incessant floods and calamities. People were spending days and nights on the side of the road waiting to be admitted in the hospitals which were overcrowded with the sick afflicted with diarrhea and cholera. Observing the horrible conditions people were in, Dr. Ray broke down and wept. Embracing Rev. Adhikary, he cried, "Can't we do something to help

these people?" Thus was born the work of International Needs.

Dr. Ray saw the need to assist national leaders to tackle the problems facing their own communities, both spiritually and practically, with the conviction that they were better able to understand the culture, needs and issues of their own people. On July 7th, 1974, a small house was rented in Pallabi Mirpur, a district of Dhaka, to care for six orphaned children who had lost their parents in the war of Independence in 1971. Yeob Biswas remembers fondly his days at the home. He was a child when he lost his parents and went to live at International Needs' Children's Home.

"I spent 10 happy years at the home. I'm so thankful that they took me in and gave me shelter, food, care and an education. I got to know Rev. Adhikary who was so friendly and kind to us. He was the godliest man I ever met to this day. His preaching and the things he taught us really inspired me. I accepted Christ as my Saviour and was baptized on November 8th 1984. It was the Red Letter day of my life!" Yeob Biswas

Yeob went on to earn his Master's Degree in Intercultural Studies and works as a development specialist. He is one of the thousands of children who have been impacted not only in Bangladesh but in 36 countries around the world. Today, International Needs partners with 1,200 national staff members who undertake sustainable development, evangelism and the care of vulnerable children and families in their own communities. International Needs reaches over 10,000 people each week.

After 40 years of ministry we can only exclaim, "The Lord has done it and it has been a joy and a privilege to work with Him in serving the most vulnerable among us. May God continue to use us and our partners for many years to come to alleviate suffering and hopelessness and bring hope and the joy of Christ to every heart."

PRAYER CORNER

ITEMS FOR PRAYER

"Prayer is where the action is."
John Wesley

Please pray for the work of our Community HIV/AIDS Prevention Program in Uganda. Pray that God will grant wisdom to our partners in their battle against this dreaded disease. Pray for the many orphans who have been traumatized by the loss of their parents. Pray also for a cure for HIV/AIDS.

ITEMS FOR PRAISE

"Sing the praises of the LORD,
you his faithful people; praise
his holy name."
Psalm 30:4

We praise God for His guidance and timely help throughout 2014 and thank Him for each one of you, for your prayers and support of this ministry.



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