

THE LINK Newsletter

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TOGETHER FOR CHANGE:
**Building
Opportunity,
Health, and
Connection**



international needs
transformed lives, changed communities

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Health Within Reach: The New ZACTS School Clinic



ZACTS School in Solwezi, Zambia continues to grow as a centre of hope and opportunity, constantly evolving to meet the needs of its community. **From vocational training for parents to agricultural projects and clean water initiatives, each new effort builds on the last, creating visible change that extends far beyond the classroom.**

For more than a decade, medical teams from Canada have partnered with ZACTS to provide care for thousands of children and families. Over the years, they have seen remarkable improvements in health and wellbeing across the community. Yet one challenge remains: access to consistent, nearby medical care.

Now, ZACTS is preparing to take the next step by building a community health clinic on school grounds.

Currently, the nearest clinic is 15 kilometres away. For families without transportation, for mothers with young children, or for anyone facing an emergency, that distance can mean the difference between life and death. **The new ZACTS Clinic will change this reality, bringing essential healthcare within walking distance for thousands.**

This facility will provide student health services, maternal and child care, emergency treatment, laboratory testing, immunizations, and ongoing health education.



The total project cost is CAD\$210,000. **To ensure long-term sustainability, the Zambian Ministry of Health has committed to staffing the clinic and supplying essential medicines.** A local Community Health Management Committee will oversee daily operations and maintenance to keep the clinic responsive and well-managed.

By uniting education and healthcare in one accessible hub, ZACTS is helping every member of the community live healthier, stronger lives. Your support will help make this vision a reality and continue the transformation already taking root in Solwezi.



Two ZACTS graduates, sisters Annie and Rachel, now qualified nurses, will be among the first to serve in the clinic! Their story beautifully illustrates how ZACTS empowers students with a desire to give back, bringing the impact full circle.

The Power of Opportunity: Irene's Path from Sponsored Child to STEM Leader

Meet Irene, a former recipient of child sponsorship from Ghana. Growing up, her parents struggled to meet her educational needs, and the thought of ever pursuing higher education seemed like a distant hope.

That changed when Irene began receiving sponsorship. With consistent support through her school years, she was empowered to focus on learning and dreaming big. The sponsorship also gave her parents room to save, making university a real possibility.

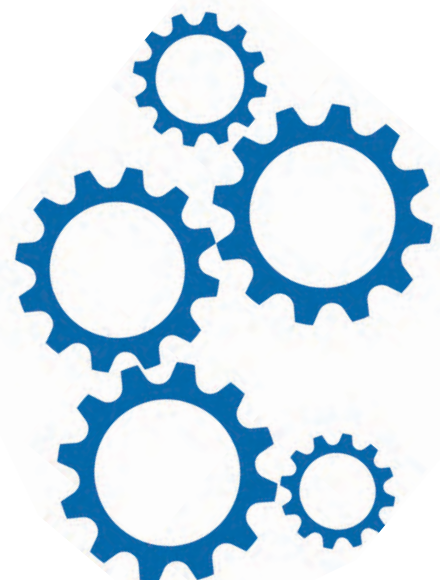
Today, Irene is in her final year of university, studying Computer Science and Engineering. Once a shy, reserved girl, she has grown into a confident leader and advocate for STEM.

"I never imagined I could be a leader," Irene shares. "But from my first year at university, I've served as course representative, and now I lead the Women in Engineering Innovation Team. I also work with the WAAW Foundation (Working to Advance STEM Education for African Women) to encourage junior and senior high school students to pursue STEM and take on leadership roles. I want girls like me to believe they can do more."



Her achievements speak for themselves. This past year, Irene was a top finalist in the World Engineering Hackathon (a challenge for engineering students to develop solutions for the UN Sustainable Development Goals), competing against over 3,000 students from 90+ countries. She presented on 3D printing at an Inovtech summit and was one of only 10 finalists chosen for Telecel Ghana's Female Student Sponsorship Program.

Looking ahead, Irene dreams of becoming a Software Engineer at Microsoft and mentoring the next generation of girls in STEM. Irene's story shows the heart of sponsorship: giving children the chance to unlock their full potential. With your support, more children like Irene can reach for their dreams.



Building Hope for the Future: Breaking Ground at Savar Children's Village



For over 40 years, Savar Children's Village has been a safe haven for vulnerable girls in Bangladesh. What began with 80 students in 1984 has grown into a thriving home for more than 250 girls, providing education, healthcare, meals, and shelter. In our Winter Link newsletter, we shared that years of wear and Bangladesh's harsh climate had taken a toll on the school's facilities, making full reconstruction necessary. **What first seemed like a setback became a turning point, inspiring a vision to rebuild stronger and reach even more girls in the years ahead.**

Thanks to your support, reconstruction is now underway!

Recent progress includes:

- A fully staffed construction team
- Fencing, cameras, and guards are in place to deter theft and vandalism and to keep children away from construction
- A gated road to keep school activities separate
- Temporary housing, kitchen, storage, and office space during construction of the new facilities
- Removal of old facilities and relocation of the playground
- Foundation work for the new dormitory
- A joyful cornerstone-laying ceremony marking this exciting new chapter

Thank you to everyone who has made this possible.

Several phases of the expansion are still ahead, and your continued support will help bring them to life and provide even more girls with safety, stability, and the freedom to dream.

Scan the QR code to learn more or support the project.



Stories of Connection:



Healing through Creativity

At Bella Ciao in Kenya, Evans has been transforming the space with paintings, murals, and signage. Growing up in Kibera Slum, Evans developed a love for art early on and began selling his work to support his education. Today, he teaches art to children and youth at Bella Ciao, helping them discover their creativity and confidence. Evans shares, "My dream is to empower young people through art. More than just a creative outlet, it has been a form of therapy for me, and I want to help others experience that same transformation."

The Dual Impact of Sponsorship

When Jace's grandfather sponsored a boy in Bangladesh around Jace's age, it sparked a special connection that quickly grew into a friendship. Jace had been feeling a bit left out since his three older siblings each had sponsored children through their grandfather. He asked, "Can I have a brother from Bangladesh?" Now the two exchange letters, sharing stories about their families, schools, and favourite activities. These cross-cultural friendships open doors to education and opportunity while fostering compassion and understanding between children.



Starting Strong

In Guatemala, the Survive and Thrive program supports children aged 0–6 with early learning and nutrition, building essential skills before school. Recently, the older children entered Grade 1, and facilitator Kely met with their teacher to check on their progress. The teacher noted these children were noticeably more comfortable with classroom materials like paper, crayons, and scissors, and more confident connecting with peers. It's clear that early investment helps children start school ready to shine.

Baskets of Love: Gifts That Give Back

Share the joy of giving this Christmas with a Basket of Love. Each basket helps meet real needs for families around the world and can also be given in honour of someone special. When you dedicate a gift in a loved one's name, we'll send a gift card for Christmas morning to let them know a meaningful gift was given on their behalf. You can also choose to give a basket in your own name and make this season brighter for someone in need. To receive gift cards in time for Christmas morning, call **1-888-702-9805** or explore our online gift catalogue at **www.internationalneeds.ca**.



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Postal Update: Stay Connected



Due to ongoing Canada Post strike disruptions, this newsletter may have arrived later than usual. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we continue to keep you connected with the stories and updates you care about. Sign up for our **e-newsletter** to receive updates more quickly by filling out the form linked to the **QR code**.

Praise & Prayer Corner

Praise: After a system error caused some donations to be processed twice, we were so encouraged by your gracious responses. Many of you asked to leave the extra gift or even give more, a wonderful reflection of the generosity within our donor community.

Prayer: Please pray for peace and stability in our partner countries experiencing political unrest and conflict. Pray for protection over vulnerable families, wisdom for leaders, and lasting solutions that restore peace and hope.