



CCFC child
sponsorship
helps
girls realize
their
potential

Growing stronger because of you

The beautiful children CCFC assists face all kinds of hardships. Manikandan, a little six-year-old boy living in Chennai, India faces more than most. Severely physically disabled and partially blind, Manikandan needed orthotic aids, special furniture, stimulating toys and a custom stroller to transport him to and from school. It was becoming very strenuous for his mother to carry him as he was growing so quickly.


When CCFC appealed to you in February 2006 to help Manikandan's parents obtain these tools that would improve the quality of both his and his parents' lives, you were moved to action.

Manikandan and his parents are overjoyed to have received two special chairs and cut-out trays, for home and school. He has received an ankle-foot orthosis that helps to correct deformities and aids in stretching the spastic muscle behind the ankle.

Because of his poor eyesight, Manikandan learns by listening and feeling. The sound making, brightly coloured toys purchased for him have been carefully selected by a team of professionals to allow him to learn concepts while experiencing the sheer joy of playing with them.

Not being able to afford a school uniform, Manikandan stood out even more from his peers, but now he has two school uniforms, making him feel like he is a part of the class.

Finally, a voice output device and custom stroller have been obtained for Manikandan which will allow him greater communication and mobility.

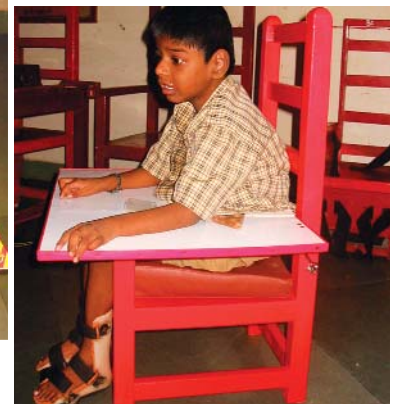
Manikandan and his family cannot thank you enough, our CCFC supporters, for the way you've changed their lives with your donations. Thanks to you, Manikandan's story has a much happier ending. 



Manikandan fitted with his new ankle-foot orthosis helps him to stand.



Left: Manikandan using special books to help him learn through touch.



Right: Manikandan can get support and sit comfortably with his new specially fitted chair.



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OUR VISION

Striving as a worldwide team, we are creating a future of hope for children. We are renowned for our compassion for children of all faiths and cultural backgrounds, inspired by Christ's example of personal, caring love.

OUR MISSION

Christian Children's Fund of Canada reaches out around the world to children in need, to families and communities of all faiths, to demonstrate Christ's love. Working side by side with our colleagues in developing countries, we emphasize child and community development starting with basic assistance and leading to programs stressing self-help and eventual independence.

OUR VALUES

Inspired by Christ's love and compassion for all people, we embrace and practice these values: Results, Respect, Integrity, Teamwork, Excellence

Charitable Registration # 10691 8543 RR0001

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CCFC Empowering women through MED

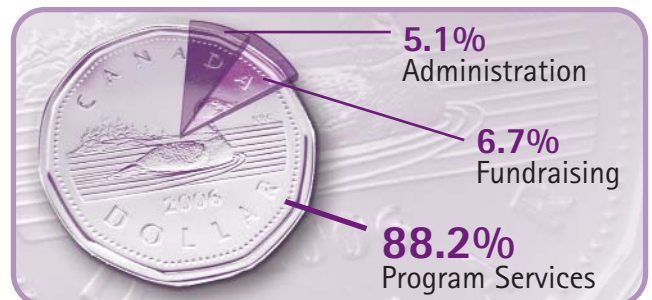
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**Here's
 how your
 donations
 are
 spent:**



From the Chief Executive Officer Bruce Herzog, CCFC

We see them every day. Our little girls and teenage daughters. Giggling while they shop; following the cute boy around school; taking forever getting ready in the bathroom.

But what if going to the shops meant your daughter had to carry sacks of charcoal on her back because the man walking beside her did not want to tire his donkey? What if your daughter was beaten when she tried to go to school because school was a place where only boys were allowed to go? What if going to the bathroom meant your daughter had to wander off into distant bushes where her friend had been raped the night before?

What would you do?

What would you do in a world where life as a woman is a depressing reality? A world where regular beatings and abuse are the constant reminders of what it means to be female?

The things we are going to talk about in this issue of ChildVoice will make you uncomfortable. And they should. The mission of ChildVoice magazine is to share the voice and needs of children in developing countries with you here in Canada. It is about giving a voice to the voiceless: the great percentage of the world's population who will go through their lives suffering in silence and pain. It's about sharing with you their realities and the very real and practical solutions to end extreme poverty. It's about doing what Christ compels us to do, to reach out to the weak, the poor and the marginalized. In this issue, it is about sharing the cries of little girls that go unheard. It is about the children who pay the highest price for the discrimination against women.

Their lives and the stories you will read here are not pleasant or easy to accept, but they are real. They show a reality that is hidden from us here in




Canada. Hidden by cultures where women are treated like beasts of burden and young girls are possessions to be exploited. Areas of the world where even advocating for basic rights for women like gender equality, education, and the right to vote – things that we take for granted – is considered social heresy.

But there is hope.

Over the last few years, CCFC has helped change attitudes, broaden opinions and alter behaviours. The role of women in the communities where we work have started to transform but it has been a very long, complex and difficult process.

Christian Children's Fund of Canada (CCFC) and its local partners facilitate change by helping families recognize women as active members and leaders of their communities with the power to make significant changes for the better if they are just given the right opportunities. We work with women to unleash their potential and break the centuries-old traditions that deprive them of their value, dignity and self-respect. Women have proven to be

important to the social and economic development of their children, families and communities. Gender equality is an area of focus in each of our five program sectors – Health and Nutrition, Water and Sanitation, Education, Micro-Enterprise Development, and Capacity Building – encouraging both women and men to participate in all aspects of the developmental and social decision-making processes.


These outcomes may sound simple but they take a long time, commitment and effort to make equality a reality. They require a shift in culture, a shift in gender roles, a shift in beliefs, and a shift in the hearts and minds of entire communities and countries that live in extreme poverty. Yet, they are outcomes that we as Christians have an obligation to pursue. This issue is dedicated to the girls and women suffering in silence. 

God Bless,

Bruce Herzog

CCFC child sponsorship helps girls realize their potential

– a CCFC Supporter's story

CCFC sincerely thanks the Cornfoots and all of our supporters. You are an active part of the solution to help break the cycle of extreme poverty for children of all faiths, their families and communities. 

Below: Marta and her Mom, the day Marta graduated from CCFC's vocational teachers training program.



Mr. and Mrs. Cornfoot fondly keep a graduating photo of their former sponsored child, Marta.

Saskatchewan couple, Mrs. Ursula Cornfoot and her husband Bill have been CCFC supporters for a number of years. In 2006, they received heart-warming news that the child they had sponsored since 1997, Marta Gimiso, a young girl from Ethiopia, had graduated from a CCFC vocational training program to become a teacher.

“We got involved with CCFC because we were moved by a commercial we saw on T.V.,” says Mrs. Cornfoot. “Sponsorship seemed a meaningful and direct way to help children, families and communities, as compared to just giving to a charity.”

Having spent some time in Africa for work-related reasons, the Cornfoots understood firsthand the great challenges faced by the families who live there. The Cornfoots saw malnourished girls and frail women doing many hours of physically demanding menial labour just to take care of their households amidst overwhelming poverty.

By supporting CCFC, they were able to help alleviate causes of extreme poverty and provide a rewarding experience for their sponsored child, Marta, and her family.

“It was wonderful for us to follow Marta’s progress through receiving letters, updates and occasional photos,” says Mrs. Cornfoot. “It made it a personal experience – in fact we keep a framed photo of her at home.”

The Cornfoots, along with many other CCFC supporters, were kept abreast of developments in CCFC program work in all countries of operation by reading CCFC newsletters.

“Through CCFC, we are glad to have invested in Marta’s life and see the accomplishments she has reached with the help of our support,” says Mrs. Cornfoot. “Seeing her complete her studies and go on to teach others will lead to long lasting success for her, her family and the communities she works in.”

I am self-reliant – thanks to you!


Marta Gimiso, thanks her former sponsors, Mr. & Mrs. Cornfoot.

(Her words have been translated from Amharic).

As a young girl I felt so happy and thankful to be sponsored. It made life so much better for me, especially at a time when my family could not provide for me. Through CCFC and my sponsors, Mr. and Mrs. Cornfoot helped me more than my own family was able to.

My father has not been with us for a very long time and my mother is chronically ill. I would never have been able to go to school and graduate from CCFC’s vocational training program to become a teacher.

Because you helped me and my family, I am able to take care of not only myself, but my family too. You made this possible!

I love teaching my students. In the future I may continue my education and go into another field like medicine. The reality is that there is so much to be done here in Ethiopia and so many people to help. I want to do whatever I can now that I’ve been given this wonderful opportunity. 





Girls left behind means a **nation** left behind

Step into any classroom in Canada and you will see both boys and girls in virtually equal numbers. But in some places around the world the concept of educating girls is very rare.

In many developing countries, people – including a lot of mothers – believe the costs of educating a girl outweigh the benefits. Beyond the direct costs of education to very poor families – for things like school supplies, clothes, transportation and fees – there are other more intangible costs to the family itself when girls spend time at school instead of

The Millennium Development Goals:

To eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.

taking care of their siblings or doing chores for their father and brothers. When you add in the fact that, even for the most menial jobs, women will make less money than their male counterparts and the cultural view that men, with their increased muscle mass are the real breadwinners, it makes it easy to see why educating brothers over their sisters may seem to be a better investment to a family that needs every penny to survive.

However, despite the immediate costs of uniforms and books to an already impoverished family, experts agree that educating girls is the key to long-term success of these families and their entire country.

“Educating girls yields a higher rate of return than any other investment in the developing world,” argues former Harvard President, Economist Lawrence Summers.

Studies have shown that improvement in girls’ education causes an increase in economic growth and that countries where fewer girls attend school have a lower Gross National Product. World Bank studies show that countries that fail to meet United Nations Millennium Development Goals for educating girls will lose 0.4% of their annual economic growth between 2005 and 2015 – a loss that will easily be in the billions and deprive these countries of badly needed infrastructure like water and sanitation, healthcare, and schools.

For each year of primary education a woman has, her risk of living in poverty drops 2.5%, with that rate climbing to 5% for each year of secondary education.

When girls are left behind, nations are left behind. In fact, education can transform a society when girls and women are fully included, and an additional 50% of the workforce that is now dormant is activated.

Did you know...

60 % of the 110 million primary school-age children in developing countries not attending school are girls. – World Bank



In fact, countries that have pursued gender equality over the past three to four decades have grown faster in economic terms and have become more equal societies. Canada is an example of a country which has enjoyed economic prosperity since intentionally focusing on increasing the role and education of women and is a “world leader in child-centred, girl-friendly education” (Canadian International Development Agency).

Christian Children’s Fund of Canada is an active leader in a worldwide effort to help developing communities around the world become more sustainable by providing equal access to education for both girls and boys. Removing barriers to education and promoting gender balance in education are key strategies in CCFC’s education programs which will go a long way to ending extreme poverty and creating a cycle of self-reliance.




12-year-old Elodie Yaogo attends Boukou secondary school in Burkina Faso.

I like being in school because I learn so much. I want to become a nurse because I think what they do is special.

I feel blessed to be sponsored and go to school. Being in school helps to protect me from getting married too early. I want to further my education and then get a job.

Interviewed by Josianne Nare, CCFC Sponsorship Officer, Burkina Faso

What are the returns on investing in girls' education and training?

- Educating girls enhances their role as mothers: educated women have lower child and maternal mortality (child mortality drops 8% for every year of the mother’s schooling), greater ability to afford and make wise choices about nutrition and health services, and the capacity to better protect themselves against HIV-AIDS and other diseases. There are also intergenerational benefits – an educated mother will be far more likely to see the value of educating her own children. (Bridge Development-Gender report)
- Investing in the education of girls also has a huge return economically for their countries and households. Educated women have a much higher chance of being employed and being paid better than their non-educated counterparts – regardless of gender. Basic education of girls enhances farming productivity as women are the pillars of subsistence farming in Africa. Education equips women to take an active role in social, economic and political decision-making. 

CCFC changing young lives for the better


At only 14 years old, Kalavahti was sent by her father to work in a textile mill as bonded labour (also called debt bondage). A commonly-used method of enslaving children, Kalavahti was forced to work as a means of repayment for a loan her father had taken. She was trapped: working for no pay, seven days a week.

This happened when Kalavahti was a sponsored child attending school and had just written her grade 10 exams. When a self-help group of CCFC’s partner, SPEECH, learned of Kalavahti’s situation, they approached her father and counseled him to bring her back to school.

He flatly refused, believing that educating a girl was a waste of time when she could be used to pay off his debt. He also claimed that education made girls too “free-spirited” – causing trouble for the family.

When CCFC’s partner staff persisted, the father finally agreed to bring her back and return her to school. Kalavahti, now in her twenties, is one of many CCFC sponsored girls who trained through CCFC and SPEECH. She is one of six young ladies who are all now employees with Nokia’s manufacturing unit, in Chennai, India, earning a self-sufficient sum of Rs4,000 per month. The competition for these jobs was intense as they were competing with thousands of other young women who had come from all over the state.

“If not for CCFC and SPEECH, I would probably still be working at that textile mill without any hope of ever leaving,” says Kalavahti. “I send money home to help support my family, but I’m also saving to pursue a degree through distance education.”

CCFC and SPEECH programs created a solid foundation and an unshakeable confidence that gave these young women an opportunity to excel and build a better future for themselves and their families. 



Clipping from Chennai’s leading newspaper, *The Economic Times*, profiling the success story of Kalavahti and other young ladies trained through CCFC and SPEECH.

How dry rivers rob girls of their **innocence**

CCFC **water** and **sanitation** projects promote personal safety and education for girls and women

What if sending your eight-year-old daughter to get water meant that on the four mile dirt trail to an unsafe and remote watering hole there was a strong likelihood she would be raped? You would go yourself, but the parasites from that same watering hole have made you so sick that you have constant diarrhea and are too dehydrated to make the trip.

This scenario may seem extreme, yet it is the reality for too many girls and women in developing countries. Today, 1.1 billion people lack access to clean water and 2.4 billion lack access to proper sanitation (UN statistics).

“Buried in these statistics are the real lives of millions of girls and women who carry the burden of their community’s lack of clean water and sanitation facilities,” says Bruce Herzog, Chief Executive Officer, CCFC.

Everyone suffers when there is a lack of water; however, girls and women are the most intimately affected and not just by thirst. Traditional gender roles in many developing countries task girls and women with seeking and gathering water for the household. It takes countless hours every day – preventing girls from going to school and women from participating in valuable income generating activities such as selling products or gardening. And for all their countless hours of toil, the tiny amounts of dirty water they collect will cause life-threatening infections and disease when consumed.



Above: Women fetching water from a nearby water pump constructed by CCFC.
Right: Young girl walking miles in tall bushes to collect water from distant watering hole.

Did you know...

Women spend 40 billion hours annually collecting water.

– UN Report



Lack of water increases dropout rate and risk at school

Even if a young girl does get the opportunity to go to school, she is quickly met with insurmountable hurdles. She must perform her duty and gather water before school. Her day begins in the darkness, well before others are awake, to make her way to a distant watering hole along a long dirt road, vulnerable to the very real threat of sexual assault and abduction.

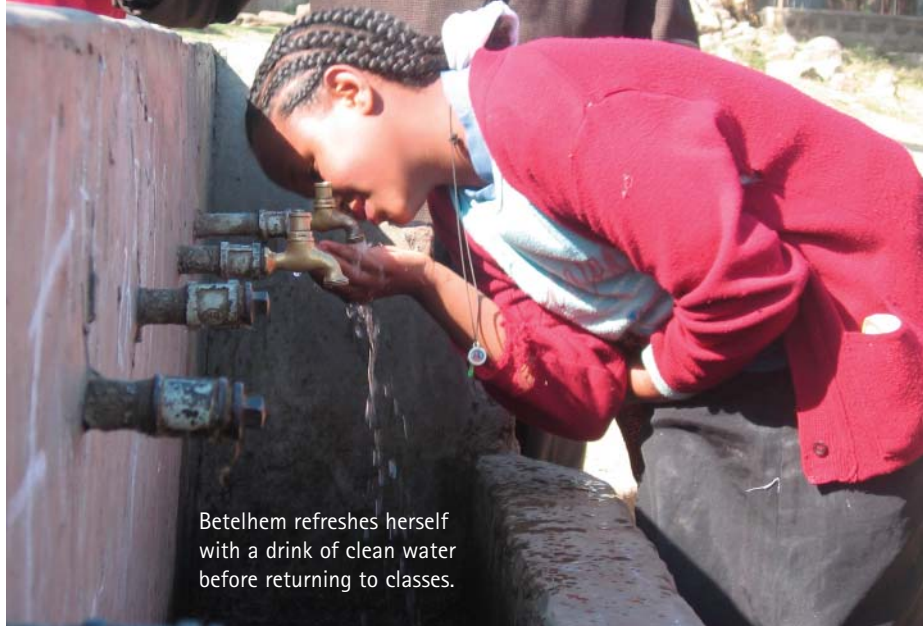
When this duty causes her to arrive to school late, she is punished. When she is too tired to keep up in class, she is punished. When the water is not brought home, she is punished.

This lack of water also directly impacts the sanitation facilities at schools and dramatically increases the drop out rate of girls. At schools where there are no adequate toilets, there are many untold stories of shame, humiliation and ridicule of girls who are forced to drop out, miss out on an education, and in effect lose their future simply because they are starting to menstruate.

If their schools have no toilets to accommodate their daily and monthly needs, young women must seek privacy in far off bushes where they are in **danger of sexual assault and harassment.**

If their schools have no toilets to accommodate their daily and monthly needs, young women must seek privacy in far off bushes where they are in danger of sexual assault and harassment.

In fact, one in 10 girls in African communities simply drop out of school when puberty occurs. Without options or support, they simply cannot stand up under the pressure and have no choice but to remain at home.



Betlehem refreshes herself with a drink of clean water before returning to classes.

CCFC-sponsored child, Bethlehem Melaku is 12 years old and is in grade 5

At my school there are clean toilets and water facilities that CCFC built. I can wash and be clean and so I also feel better at school- I feel healthy. If these toilets weren't there then all the kids and even the teachers would have to go into the bushes.

I pray for the other children in my village who are not a part of CCFC. I ask the Lord to give them an opportunity to get an education like me.

Hope Restored with CCFC


CCFC has not turned a deaf ear to these stories of injustice. Instead, we are committed to promoting gender equity in our water and sanitation development projects.

with the peace of mind that a safe, private washroom is just a few steps away.

Traditionally, men are the ones who make decisions about water and sanitation in developing countries. However, through CCFC, women in the communities are included in all stages of water and sanitation development programs. They offer their knowledge and help in the construction, placing them in a position of authority, decision-making and management of the water facilities.

“This is key to the way CCFC creates a long-lasting and sustainable future,” says Herzog. “Women remain empowered after CCFC leaves the community, and are able to make decisions that will help them care for the needs of their children, especially their daughters.”

While sanitation is a very private matter, CCFC does not shy away from the quiet desperation that young women in developing countries face on a daily basis.

“Having to give up personal safety and an education due to lack of access to water and toilets perpetuates the cycle of poverty,” says Herzog. “We are proactive with this issue, addressing the root causes, not just the symptoms. 

Unspoken threat

The danger of Female Genital Mutilation in the developing world

Scarcely heard of in North America, likely because it is such an uncomfortable topic, the act of female genital mutilation (FGM) is an act of torture, violence and control.

It involves, but is not limited to, crude partial or total removal of the external female genitalia and other injury to the female genital organs for cultural, religious or other non-therapeutic reasons.

Historically, FGM, as documented by Martin Donohoe, MD, FACP, Community Health, Portland State University, was practiced as early as 450 BC and was widely performed throughout ancient Egypt and in many other societies and cultures. This act was also perpetrated in the United States and Great Britain from the early 1800s to the mid-1950s as treatments for diverse female psychological "disorders", like hysteria.

Outlawed in most parts of the developed world, it is still practiced in a number of developing countries today. The number of girls and women who have undergone FGM is estimated at between 100 and 140 million. Each year, an additional two million girls are at risk of undergoing FGM. Most of the girls and women who have undergone genital mutilation live in 28 African countries, although some live in Asia and the Middle East (World Health Organization).

Horror for little girls

This brutal act is most commonly carried out on little girls between the ages of 4 and 12 years old. Forcibly held down, FGM is usually performed by a traditional practitioner with crude instruments, like sharpened metal or broken glass, without anaesthetic or painkillers. Some procedures involve a celebration of the cutting where there is an exchange of money and/or gifts. Others take place in secret and may involve kidnapping.

Reasons given for imposing FGM may include erroneous ideas of maintenance of chastity before marriage and fidelity during marriage. It may also be viewed as an initiation into womanhood and a way of maintaining cultural heritage and social acceptance.

Lifelong pain

Immediate complications include severe pain, shock, hemorrhaging, urine retention, ulceration of the genital region and injury to the adjacent tissue and even death.

Long-term consequences include cysts and abscesses, keloid scar formation, damage to the urethra resulting in urinary incontinence, still births and other life-long sufferings.


The psychological effects are equally damaging. These young lives are flooded with feelings of shame, fear, depression, post traumatic stress disorder and an overwhelming sense of being powerless.



Liberating girls and women

The cutting of little girls in this way is internationally recognized as gender-specific child abuse, child exploitation, torture and is a violation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

FGM can only be reduced through increased education and cultural empowerment of girls and women. It also requires, among other initiatives, that existing laws that prohibit FGM be enforced. And where there is no such law, one must be instituted.

As CCFC works in many different countries, we are sensitive to the potential of imposing western biased gender practices. However, we do recognize the horror for young girls who are forced to undergo FGM. CCFC acts first and foremost as a facilitator, through Violence Prevention Awareness Training, to bring these issues to the forefront and to encourage dialogue in an effort to support girls and women in our countries of operation move closer to attaining their full human rights. 

The cutting of little girls in this way is internationally recognized as **gender-specific child abuse**, child exploitation, torture and a violation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.


Child brides

The practice of early marriage is prevalent throughout the world, especially in parts of Africa and India. While the issue is “softened” by using the word marriage, in reality this is a form of sexual violence for girls as young as 10 years old.

Young girls are often forced into marriage and sex, jeopardizing their health, raising the risk of exposure to HIV/AIDS and greatly impacting their childhood and future adult life.

Parents and families often justify these sexually abusive and exploitive child marriages as a means of ensuring a secure future for their daughters, which is far from the actual case. It is also an attempt to gain economic security and status for the bride’s family. In polygamous cultures the girls are often pursued by and promised to significantly older men, the age of most grandfathers.

Young girls are often forced into marriage and sex, jeopardizing their health, raising the risk of exposure to HIV/AIDS and greatly impacting their childhood and future adult life.

To make things worse, in some cultures tradition dictates that a girl child is to be considered a perpetual outsider from her own family because it is understood that she will soon leave to be married. The result is that her family will not invest in her education or future health. Even when she enters her husband’s family, she is still an outsider as she is accepted by her in-laws only out of marital obligation with no right to exercise authority in her own home. 

Hanna's story

The following story depicts extreme violence. The names of those involved have been changed to respect their anonymity in this difficult situation. Hanna is one of the millions of little girls around the world we were not there to help.

Hanna's body and life were not her own, they belonged to her father and the man she was given to. She had no say in the matter.

Eleven-year-old Hanna lived in a small rural village in Ethiopia. She had 18 siblings, eight from her mother and 10 were from the second wife of her father. Hanna also had a favourite older brother, Ezra, who always looked out for her wellbeing. As a boy, Ezra was allowed to go to school and pursue his studies at university. Hanna, because of traditional gender roles, was not allowed to go to school. As a result of his own education, this was something Ezra was beginning to feel was wrong. And so, with much effort, Ezra finally convinced their father to send her.

Hanna loved going to school and learning, not only because of the opportunities it presented her with, but

because it saved her from being at home all day collecting water, cleaning and looking after her younger siblings and animals.

Hanna's life was on the right track. Perhaps she would be the one little girl in her village to break free of her traditional gender role and pursue a better life.

Only two years after her bright future had started, Hanna's life began to fall apart. At the tender age of 13, Hanna was given by her father as a third wife to a man her grandfather's age.

Her father was very happy about this idea, believing this man had some wealth that would benefit Hanna's family. Ezra once again tried to convince their father to change his mind

and leave Hanna in school. He knew that once she was given in marriage Hanna would never go to school again and be forced to have children when she was still just a girl.

This time their father refused. Hanna had had her time at school and they needed the money.

Hanna's wedding day was decided for her. According to tradition, to prepare her for her husband to be, she would also have to undergo painful female genital mutilation (FGM) one month ahead of the wedding day. Hanna's body and life were not her own, they belonged to her father and the man she was given to. She had no say in the matter.



Hanna's mother was to pretend she was deathly ill and to ask the father to take her to the hospital late at night. In this way she would not be responsible when Hanna was taken out of the house.

The next evening Ezra waited out of sight in the nearby bushes for hours as their father refused to take their mother to the hospital. Finally, in the wee hours of the morning, their father relented. At the break of dawn, Hanna rose to go to the river with her water jar to collect water. Ezra followed behind her. The river was covered by a dense forest along one side. It was there that Hanna and her brother made their escape to the new village.

When their parents returned home they couldn't find Hanna. Her father was very angry and took his pistol as he went to look for her. As he searched, he considered giving Hanna's two younger sisters as a substitute to Hanna's husband to be.

New life shattered

After a year living her new safe life, Hanna's brother completed his education, got a job and arranged for Hanna to come live with him. She was very happy to learn she would be reunited with her brother. Together they would continue Hanna's education and plan for the future.

Around the same time, before Hanna left for her brother's, the older man who was suppose to marry Hanna was boasting to men at a local bar about how rich and powerful he was. He spoke of his two wives, his cattle and his shop. He also spoke of how he was cheated out of a "wife-to-be" – Hanna. Seething with anger, he pledged that whoever could find and rape Hanna would have his admiration and be paid handsomely for their efforts.

One of the young men there knew who Hanna was and started thinking of how he could take advantage of this opportunity.

On the final week of Hanna's stay with her host family, two of her girl classmates arranged a meeting time to

say goodbye to her. Late in the afternoon, one of the girls came to Hanna's home. They walked along to meet the third girl at another home. As they arrived, the other two girls quickly ran away leaving Hanna alone in the house.

Hanna's two friends had already been approached by the man who committed to rape Hanna and were made to set this trap under threat of harm.

Hanna's hands and legs were bound and her mouth gagged. She was dragged down a gravel road into a forest and raped.

It was after midnight before Hanna was discovered by passers by in the bushes, terribly bruised and bleeding.

The man who raped Hanna, though widely known, was never prosecuted. **CV**

A plan for freedom

Ezra was upset by what was to happen. Despite what tradition dictated, he knew in his heart this was not right, not for his little sister. Together with a university friend, Ezra devised a plan to help Hanna escape her date of mutilation and early marriage.

If they could somehow sneak Hanna away, Ezra's friend could take Hanna to the town where his parents lived so she could continue her education and have his parents look after her.

They shared the plan with Hanna's older sister and mother to sneak Hanna away at night. They all agreed on the plan but her mother feared that her husband would kill her if he found out she had anything to do with it.

After learning of Hanna's story a few months ago, CCFC has reached out to Hanna, Ezra and the other children in their family.

Today, Ezra, on a single meager income, is supporting Hanna, their two younger sisters and two brothers. They are living with him in the town of Nazareth, Ethiopia.

At age 15 Hanna still is not a CCFC-sponsored child.

Hanna and one of her younger sisters, Alima, are now enrolled in our sponsorship programs awaiting sponsors. They will have opportunities to receive educational, nutritional and health assistance. You can contact us to sponsor her and other young girls vulnerable to these situations.

Hanna still deals daily with the trauma of the rape, yet she hopes to help prevent this from happening to other girls in the future. When she grows up, she would like to work on behalf of child protection rights.

You can help Hanna, her sister, Alima or other girls prone to these situations. Call 1-800-263-5437 or visit www.ccfcanada.ca



How CCFC

protects young girls

Violence Prevention Training Awareness


Young girls are affected by domestic violence all over the world. In CCFC's program countries where pressures of poverty, a lack of social rights and services exist, domestic violence against this very vulnerable group is all too common.

As part of CCFC's Child Protection Plan and holistic community development, many of our programs include violence prevention awareness in schools, support classes and community activities.

Issues around domestic violence are brought into the open to allow children a safe place to discuss how it affects their lives. The content also includes suggestions and appropriate behaviour for non-violent conflict resolution. Another important aspect is raising the self-esteem of all children, especially girls, so that those who are currently in or may find themselves in a violent or abusive situation feel more confident in standing up for themselves.

As part of CCFC's Child Protection Plan and holistic community development, many of our programs include violence prevention awareness in schools, support classes and community activities.

Classes are also offered to parents to educate them on non-violent parenting techniques. In Early Childhood Education training classes, the trainers work with parents to dispel myths about child-rearing, especially around the female child. Common misconceptions include that children will grow up spoiled if they are not spanked or beaten, and that children need to be physically disciplined for them to learn.

Many of our program communities have started developing networks to act in cases of domestic violence. They help to raise awareness and inform girls and women of their rights. Some of these networks are run locally and are situation specific, while others are part of a government strategy. 

Girls can't be **helped** without protecting **mothers**

Once regarded as a private matter, violence against women has been recognized over the last decade as a significant global human rights issue.

Gender-based violence has tremendous social and economic costs, in addition to the physical and psychological torture individual women live with. Even the threat of violence is debilitating, with women not achieving their potential as healthy, productive members of society. Countries suffer from this lack of productivity, as well as from the related health care and social services costs. Sadly, the incidence and cost of domestic violence is virtually the same in developed and developing countries, although when compounded with malnutrition and poverty-related diseases in developing nations, the overall health burden is greater.

Some cultures and traditions excuse or even encourage male dominance and endorse such patterns in law. This can be blatant or subtle as violence against women is a learned behaviour with abusers often having lived in abusive homes as children.

Because abusers are often close family members, violence against women is vastly under-reported and tolerated, chiefly because women fear increased violence if the truth is told.


Devastating **effects** on children

CCFC recognizes that children are not individuals living in isolation. Each child is part of a family and a community. The effect of violence against women is not limited just to mothers but has a devastating effect on their children, many of whom also become victims of abuse themselves.

Witnessing violence can have deep effects on children's well being and is in itself a serious public health issue. Children generally have one of two responses: either they internalize the experience and become sad, frightened, depressed and overly compliant, or they externalize their reaction by acting out aggressively or defiantly. Children from abusive households have poor impulse control, low self-esteem, lack ability to form healthy friendships with peers and perform at a lower level in school.



The United Nations suggests that in order to change gender-based violence, a creative, multi-faceted solution, not unlike the approach to the ending of apartheid, is required.

The solution must include: politicians and policy makers who establish legislation and who model governments where men and women serve as equals; education systems that allow equal access to education for all children; support by religious leaders, health care professionals, media and non-governmental organizations, like CCFC, who advocate for a change in perception, legislation and policies, and who act as agents of change so that violence against women becomes an exception rather than the norm. 

Christian Children's Fund of Canada works with individuals, local governments and communities to develop programs and training that will create a healthy climate for all women and men. Violence Prevention Training Awareness is a significant component of our education programs.

All **work** and **no pay**

Half the world – nearly three billion people – lives on less than two dollars a day. In these conditions of extreme poverty every daily choice, no matter how small, impacts their survival.

Almost 70% of these people are women who spend upwards of 16 hours a day labouring to support their family and community. They are rarely paid a fair wage – if any at all – and receive little or no benefits. Yet, in sheer desperation, they continue to work to feed their children. The long hours of literally backbreaking labour damages their health, their spirit and ultimately their future.

The **invisible** majority

In Africa alone, women are responsible for producing 60-80% of the food supply, yet they often go hungry because there is still not enough to go around. Around the world there are 1.6 billion rural women farmers, yet they own only 2% of the land and get just 1% of all compensation from profits.

As Western industries fight for more sales and higher profits, they apply more pressure to the workforce chain with the burden ultimately falling on the marginalized female manual labourers who are unable to stick up for themselves. Some industries demand extremely high outputs while cutting salary expenses. Factories, fruit orchards and fabric warehouses are filled with women who are willing to work for next to nothing because of a lack of options. Often, the fear of losing their only income forces them to keep quiet about the abusive conditions.



Women in rural, poverty-stricken areas are especially vulnerable to this oppression because they are literally watching their children die of hunger. They do not have access to credit, training or educational resources to do anything else. Any money, even when it's just a fraction of the fair wage their male counterparts earn, is something they desperately cling to and are afraid to lose.

No job **security**

Often working conditions for these women are unhealthy and give no allowance for sick days or maternity leave. There is no such thing as job security. Most women are working under short-term contracts or no employment agreement at all.


Young girls join this cycle of abusive labour early in life because their mothers are away so much and duties are passed on to them. As young as six years old, these girls are responsible for managing the house and caring for younger siblings, leaving little time for school. Without an education, girls marry early and have fewer opportunities to break the cycle of oppression and poverty.

CCFC training, **teaching** and supporting

Christian Children's Fund of Canada is committed to ending this cycle by supporting women of all ages and integrating them as equals in the community development process.

CCFC helps develop economic stability by opening the doors to real choices for women. Through education and vocational training, many women discover their entrepreneurial skills. And with the support of CCFC Micro-Enterprise Development loans, mothers develop and establish their own income-generating businesses. CCFC has helped to launch an estimated 7,000 businesses with a repayment rate of over 90%.

Ultimately, mothers work towards self-sufficiency while they care for their children. Though they still complete an astonishing amount of work throughout each day – providing food, clothing, education and health care – women start to bring home an income reflective of their valuable labour.

Together with women around the world and our generous supporters, CCFC is building a stronger community and a better tomorrow. 

empowering women through micro-enterprise opportunities

By Karen Flores, CCFC

Economic opportunities in developing countries are lacking, especially for impoverished women who have no chance of achieving their dreams for a better life. They are women who desire to grow personally and to provide for their families but who have no resources to do so.

CCFC has implemented a Micro-Enterprise Development (MED) program for parents of CCFC sponsored children which has proven successful in all of our program countries.

We offer our MED programs so that the poorest of the poor, predominantly women, can create and grow small businesses, earn a living, support their families, generate jobs, and take on a leadership role in their communities. The results are an improvement in their standard of living, increased confidence and a sustainable hand up approach to self-reliance.

CCFC low interest loans

For many, receiving a bank loan is virtually impossible—especially for poor women who lack the collateral to apply for bank loans and are not deemed credit-worthy. CCFC provides an opportunity for groups of impoverished women to get small low-interest group loans of about \$100 (on average as a first loan) provided they have shown the initiative and willingness to start a small business that will benefit the community. These loans are commonly used for buying and selling local products or farming or sewing tools.

Our reports prove that MED works. Loans are repaid over 90% of the time. And because CCFC invests this money back into developing the skills of community members, with special focus given to women, the entire community is able to work its way to a better future. As loans are repaid, our MED participants are eligible to apply for larger loans to help them expand businesses.



Ramatu Mohammed mixing shea butter for her MED business


What success looks like:

Ramatu Mohammed, a mother of four, lives in Jisonaayili, a CCFC program community in Ghana. Ramatu became a CCFC MED participant in 2005. Her first loan was \$62.50 CDN (¢500,000.00 Cedis) which she used to invest into her shea butter business, a product widely used in cosmetics as a moisturizer.

Ramatu repaid her loan on time and then applied for a larger loan. Producing 50 kilograms of shea butter weekly, Ramatu started to generate a profit of \$5.00 CDN (¢40,000.00 Cedis) per week and later \$11 CDN profit by increasing her shea butter production to 112 kilograms a week.

Thinking like a true entrepreneur, Ramatu wants to expand her business to purchase shea nuts in bulk. In this way, as the price of shea nuts increases she will have enough surplus inventory to increase her profit margins and keep up with demand.

“I cannot say how much I appreciate CCFC’s help in supporting me with MED loans. These loans have helped me to generate a stable income for my family,” says Ramatu.

I am able to buy soap, food, pay medical bills and buy clothes for my children and myself. Sometimes I even help to support my husband in difficult times because I have a savings account for the first time in my life.” 



Sanatu Nantogma, CCFC Country Director, Ghana

Leading by **example**

How CCFC uses female leadership to advance women's role in society

CCFC is committed to:

- Redefining gender roles with the purpose of advancing women's equal participation with men as decision-makers in shaping sustainable development in their communities.
- Supporting women and girls in the realization of their full human rights.
- Reducing gender inequalities in access to and control over the resources and benefits of development such as education.

Ghana is just one country where we are giving girls and women alike excellent examples of women in leadership that they can look up to and follow.

"CCFC was adamant about **empowering indigenous women** and staff to facilitate development in Ghana," says Sanatu. "However, other male dominated organizations in the country refused to believe that I was in fact the Director of the Ghana Country Office because I was a woman."

I am what I was in childhood – only bigger

Sanatu Nantogma, CCFC Country Director, Ghana rightly believes a child is shaped and moulded for adulthood by their early experiences. The more positive those experiences, the brighter that child's future.

"As the twig is bent, the tree is formed," reflects Sanatu. "This is why it is so important to invest in the lives of children, teaching them and building their self-esteem while they are young."

Firstborn to a village chief with five wives and 26 children, Sanatu was not destined to go to school, but to stay home to assist her auntie or grandmother with all the work to be done.

"Both my auntie and grandmother fought over who had the right to take me," remembers Sanatu. "So my uncle, an educated man, stepped in and sent me to school instead."

Going to school became very difficult for Sanatu, as it is for many other young girls CCFC assists. At age 13 she was juggling her heavy household obligations, studying and earning money by selling kerosene, bread and fruits after school and on holidays.

"During my primary school days, when I was in the village I was exposed to guinea worm infestation [a painful swelling and ulceration until a worm several inches long breaks through the skin] every year which took me out of school for one to three months," says Sanatu.

Even with these early barriers to education and success, Sanatu passed her exams, becoming District Public Health Nurse in Bolga, Ghana, then a teaching assistant in a community health nursing school and obtaining her Masters in Social Leadership.

"My choice to go into nursing [subsidized by the State] allowed my father to use his scarce resources to send my brother to secondary school," says Sanatu. "He often raised the issue of whether it was worthwhile to waste money for a girl to go to school and deprive my brothers of money needed for their schooling."

"I find many women in Ghana see me as a role model. Even the little girls in our sponsored programs talk about growing up to be leaders in their communities – now that's success."

The call to serve

As a young, now married woman in nursing school, Sanatu was befriended by a Christian woman who invited Sanatu to attend Christian meetings. It was at one of these meetings that Sanatu accepted Christ as her Saviour and embraced Christianity.

After working with Ghana's Ministry of Health for 11 years, she felt in her heart the need to work for a Christian organization.

"If Christ calls you to work for him who are you to say 'no'?" asked her husband.


CCFC took notice of Sanatu's skills and wanted to lead by example to change unfair social norms in Ghana. As a result Sanatu was hired to start the CCFC office in Ghana and she transitioned from a single health focus to integrated social development.

A woman in authority?

Her challenge to start up the CCFC office in Ghana was not without resistance.

"CCFC was adamant about empowering indigenous women and staff to facilitate development in Ghana," says Sanatu. "However, other male dominated organizations in the country refused to believe that I was in fact the Director of the Ghana Country Office because I was a woman."

After many months of networking and demonstrating her knowledge and skills with organizations that CCFC wanted to partner with, skepticism faded and was replaced by respect and praise by both men and women.

"As a Country Director for CCFC, I find many women in Ghana see me as a role model; they are inspired and want to take on more challenging responsibilities themselves," says Sanatu. "Even the little girls in our sponsored programs talk about growing up to be leaders in their communities – now that's success." 



Sanatu Nantogma, CCFC Country Director, Ghana leading health and nutrition assessment.


Gifts of joy

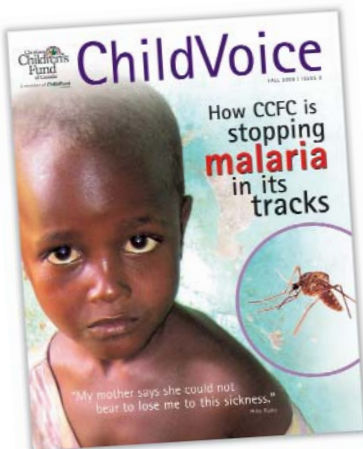
Smiles, relief and appreciation will be seen in the eyes of those who receive the life changing gifts that you, our Supporters, purchased through CCFC's first-ever Gift Catalogue.

Some of the most popular items donated included:

- ✓ Two Hens and Rooster (over 100 donated)
- ✓ School supplies (over 50 donated)
- ✓ One Pig (over 40 donated)
- ✓ Seeds (over 40 donated)
- ✓ Soccer Ball (over 40 donated)

Your donations totaled over \$ 63,000 as of February 2007 and are meaningful resources that will give hope, life and joy to children and their families.

Thank you for choosing to give gifts that act as stepping stones to build a brighter future. 




Helping CCFC stop malaria in its tracks

Our previous issue of ChildVoice focused on the deadly disease of malaria. At least 300 million acute cases of malaria occur worldwide each year, resulting in more than one million deaths annually – more than 80% of which are estimated to occur in sub-Saharan Africa, mostly among children under five years old.

In response, many of you decided to support CCFC's comprehensive anti-malaria strategy which includes providing bed nets to protect all CCFC sponsored children in Ghana and Burkina Faso.

As a result, we are happy to tell you that 31,500 high quality, long-lasting insecticide-treated bed nets have been secured! A total of 14,500 nets will be delivered to Burkina Faso and 17,000 nets to Ghana before the rainy season which starts in April 2007. The nets can cover up to three children at a time as they sleep, protecting them from malaria infected mosquitoes.


Your support of our anti-malaria initiative will greatly help in stopping the malaria disease from affecting approximately 94,500 children and save the lives of many.

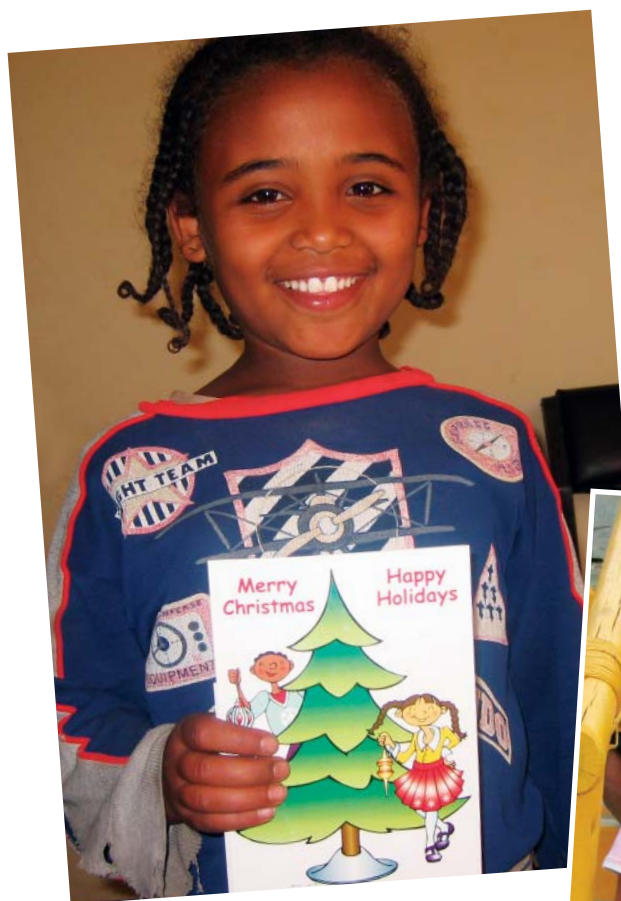
Look for a detailed full report on CCFC's fight against malaria in our Fall issue. 

Small gifts – big smiles

Sending CCFC's Christmas postcards and stickers to sponsored children brought big returns in SMILES.

As important as your financial donations are, it is the time and effort you and your family put into your relationship with your sponsored child that is priceless.

The children were thrilled to receive their stickers and especially happy to hear from you! 



John Nash leaves behind legacy of life


Long time sponsors John and Shirley Nash began their relationship with Christian Children's Fund of Canada (CCFC) in 1986, sponsoring more than 100 children in the last 20 years. CCFC is saddened to report that Mr. Nash passed away in November 2006 leaving behind his own family and their extended family of 50 sponsored children.

Mr. Nash was described by many as caring and compassionate. He will be remembered for his commitment to helping children in need and creating a future of hope for impoverished communities around the world.

Their support provided education, nutrition, clean water and medical assistance. Their sponsored children meant a lot to them and they cared for each of them deeply, sending numerous cards throughout the year with words of encouragement and monetary gifts for birthdays and at Christmas. Each of their sponsored children's photos were kept in a photo album and as the children graduated from the sponsorship program their photos were stored in another album that celebrated the success the Nash family had helped to make possible.



Mr. John and Shirley Nash

Because of Mr. Nash and his wife 100 more children have lived longer and healthier lives than they otherwise would have. CCFC and the children are grateful for his legacy of hope, encouragement and love. 



Life is in the things YOU give

Leave your Legacy.

Making a decision about your will, the future of your family and how you want to be remembered takes great consideration. There is much to think about, like who to give to and how to give. Every giving option has certain benefits and there are many ways to administer your gift.

Christian Children's Fund of Canada (CCFC) has giving options that allow you to transform the lives of children with the peace of mind that allows you to use your financial assets in the most cost-effective way.

No matter what your financial means, planned giving through CCFC offers a way to maximize your current and future wealth to make a timeless difference to children and families in need.

It's an easy way to combine your personal financial objectives with your charitable giving goals.

For more information contact

Dorothy Tam, CFRE

Manager, Major & Planned Gifts

dtam@ccfcanada.ca

905-754-1013 or 1-800-263-5437 ext. 525

"The success of nations in the developing world lies directly in the success of its women. Unlocking the potential of mothers and daughters to become proud contributing members of society can jump-start a dormant economic engine to break the cycle of extreme poverty."

Bruce Herzog
Chief Executive Officer, CCFC

You can help give girls and women
the opportunity they deserve.

Call 1-800-263-5437 or visit
www.ccfcanada.ca to find out how.



A box of
chocolate? – *Maybe*

A bouquet of
flowers? – *Maybe*

A baby goat? - **Definitely**

This **Mother's Day**, watch your mom's face light up when you tell her you've purchased a life-changing gift in her name though CCFC's Gift Catalogue.

A variety of unique and meaningful items are available this Mother's Day like small animals, school books, or tools for hardworking moms in developing countries.

Warm your mom's heart by giving her something priceless – the joy of knowing a little girl or boy will eat tomorrow because of the gift you've given in her name today.

To see a full list of gift ideas at a wide variety of prices visit www.ccfcanada.ca.



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