

# POWER OF **HER**





## Transforming the World, One Woman at a Time

Sunday was only two years old when her family fled their home in South Sudan. She was carried on her mother's back as they ran, dodging soldiers. For weeks on end they ate what they could scrounge and drank from standing pools of water. They finally reached safety in Uganda, and settled in a refugee camp.

When Sunday began school in the camp, she discovered that she thrived in the academic environment. When she entered high school, her education was no longer free. However, Sunday's parents believed she was well worth the investment. In fact, when girls her age began to drop out to get married – a culturally accepted practice – her father insisted that she remain in school. Every day, he would sit Sunday down and discuss the long-term benefits of being educated.

Over the years, Sunday has come to deeply value her father's wisdom. Not only is she currently earning her master's

degree, but she has also become a fierce advocate for the education and equality of all women. She has returned to work in South Sudan, and is empowering women through her position as the Project Officer of our FEED (Fortifying Equality and Economic Diversity) program.

"In the past, it wasn't so easy for women," she told us recently. "A woman couldn't make a decision in the family. She couldn't even own land. But ever since FEED started, all that has changed. Now, women take care of their own money. The women say that the men listen to them. They are being elected as leaders. Even gender-based violence has decreased."

Sunday believes that investing in women is the key to bringing prosperity to her country. "My dream is to change the system. We will have a hunger-free world if we give girls a chance," she explained. We think she's right, and want to join her as she makes her dream come true.

Despite daunting odds, Sunday's passion has driven her to leverage opportunities to facilitate greater peace and equity for her people, now recovering from the devastation of war. And we can't help but wonder, how much could our world change if we supported more women like Sunday?



### SOUTH SUDAN

Recently, Sunday visited our office in Canada, and inspired us with her tremendous vision, passion and determination.



**Child marriage. Discrimination. Sexual violence. Marginalization. Power imbalances. Disrespect. Death in childbirth. Micro-aggressions. Glass ceilings. Inequality. Female genital cutting. Harassment. Female erasure. Inferior education. Rape culture. Desertion.**



### **Being a girl can be grim.**

At World Vision Canada, we believe it is wrong that girls and women are often the most marginalized and discriminated against in any given population around the world. We believe that men and women were both created in the image of God, and that inequality distorts this image. We believe that an equal partnership between women and men is foundational to strong families and communities. And we believe that egalitarian values address the root causes of poverty and promote sustainable development.

### **We believe in the POWER OF HER.**

We see it as our sacred responsibility to come alongside to amplify, train, equip and empower her. She possesses a vast amount of resilience, ingenuity, courage, wisdom and grit, and our world is a better place when we hear her voice. However, we also recognize that there are systemic forces working against her. She shouldn't have to stand alone. We commit to partnering with her until her dreams for her life, family, community and future are fully realized.

Because when her power is called forth, the world listens, injustice falters and hope rises. It's through the power of her that change takes root.

## **HER RISK**

*Each year, approximately 15 million girls under the age of 18 are married off (UNICEF)*

*Globally, 130 million girls are being deprived of education (UNESCO)*

*1 in 3 women has been beaten or sexually abused in her lifetime (World Health Organization)*

*Girls in conflict-affected areas are 2.5 times more likely to be prevented from going to school than boys (UNICEF)*

*In a single year, 150 million girls are the victims of sexual violence (UNIFEM)*

*The number one cause of death for girls aged 15-19 is childbirth (World Health Organization)*

*At least 200 million girls and women alive today have been subjected to Female Genital Cutting (United Nations)*

*Sexual violence is employed as a deliberate and widespread tactic of war, putting women and girls at high risk in conflict-affected areas (United Nations)*

# POWER OF HER

A movement to support gender equality is increasing in visibility and credibility across the globe. World Vision Canada is part of this important movement.

In Summer 2018, Canada invested in an historic \$3.8 billion commitment to girls' education announced at the G7 leaders' summit held in Quebec. Canada, along with Britain, Germany, the European Union and Japan, is partnering with the World Bank in what is considered to be the single largest investment in education for girls and women in conflict and crisis situations in history. Advocacy efforts by World Vision, in conjunction with other relief organizations around the globe, were instrumental in securing this groundbreaking commitment.

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**We believe that the foundation of strong families and societies is based on the equal partnership between women and men.**

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At World Vision, we believe that we can only fully contribute to children's well-being by intentionally addressing the barriers of gender inequality. Our POWER OF HER initiative promotes gender-transformative projects that have the greatest impact on the health and quality of life of girls and women at three critical stages: childhood, youth and adulthood.

Through POWER OF HER, we empower women, girls, men and boys, as well as community groups, local leadership, faith-based and secular organizations, to be agents of change. We identify harmful values and behaviours, and work toward change and equitable relationships. We also influence policymakers and duty bearers to promote policies and strategies that incorporate gender equality perspectives, hold them to account for gender-responsive governance systems, and work to promote gender equality.

**If ever there was a time to work for the equality of girls and women, that time is now!**

“This commitment is a game-changer for girls in crisis-affected countries. To have a policy declaration that makes girls' education a priority and that is also backed by outstanding financial contributions from the G7 and other countries is exactly what we've been calling for. Every child has the right to an education. Even in the world's toughest places, education saves lives and builds futures. The right of millions of vulnerable children, especially girls, to get an education will now be supported, and these children will have the chance to live up to their full potential. Despite competing G7 priorities, Canada has stayed the course by leading the international effort to meet this urgent and unmet need.”

— *Michael Messenger, President and CEO, World Vision Canada*





# She Does Not Stand Alone

We have a unique opportunity at World Vision Canada. Our global federation has spent over 60 years in the trenches with the world's most vulnerable women and girls. During that time, we have developed key relationships ranging from the humblest of refugees to the highest-ranking officials, a reputation for passionately protecting children and a trustworthy financial track record that have garnered us immense favour. As a result, we can go where others cannot.

In dangerous parts of the world, police vehicles follow ours when entering gang-controlled communities because our reputation protects them. In times of disaster, we reach hurting families first because we have warehouses stocked and ready with emergency supplies. In war-torn countries, we have local staff, and so when other organizations pull out, we can stay. In the halls of power, our voice is welcomed, and we can influence local, national and international decision-makers.

As the world becomes more interconnected than ever, we are leveraging our decades of experience to tackle the inequality, discrimination and marginalization of girls and women. We advocate with governments for the enactment of just laws and enforcement of human rights. We create programs that impact the life of one child as her whole community transforms. We address issues such as maternal and infant mortality, barriers to education, gender-based violence and human trafficking with specialized projects, many of which have Canadian or international government support.

**As Canadians, we are part of a global community that can help transform the world to amplify her power. Together we can create change so that every girl can experience life in all its fullness and know that she does not stand alone.**

## What's Your Cause?

Based on our own uniqueness, each of us is called to champion a cause or causes in our lives. As you partner with vulnerable girls and women around the world, we encourage you to do so as an authentic reflection of who you are.

### SURVIVAL

Preventing infant mortality, deadly diseases and starvation through health education, emergency supplies and holistic medical support

### POVERTY

Solving unemployment, hunger and scarcity through economic empowerment, loans and improved agricultural methods

### EDUCATION

Combating child labour, early marriage and illiteracy through early childhood education, schools, vocational training programs and community building

### WATER

Eliminating water-borne diseases, insufficient sanitation and poor hygiene through clean water sources, latrines and education

### INJUSTICE

Fighting trafficking, abuse, child labour and gender-based violence through interventions, rehabilitation, education and advocacy

### RAW HOPE

Intervening in war zones, dangerous places and emergencies, through Child-Friendly Spaces, essential supplies, protection and long-term solutions

# Survival

If we are going to intervene on behalf of girls, we must begin before they are even born. Many are delivered to mothers who had inadequate prenatal care – if they had any at all – so these girls are developmentally delayed from the moment they take their first breath. And if they survive the first few moments of life, they are then bombarded with other challenges.

Unfortunately, the substantial hurdles that girls face are often directly linked to gender-based discrimination and inequality. Factors like low priority on education for girls, inferior social status and inequitable division of labour in households all prevent women and girls from obtaining vital information about health and family planning. They often do not understand the risk factors for preterm delivery, have access to preventative services, possess sufficient financial resources for health care services, or have the power to make decisions about their own health care.

**We believe addressing the root causes of discrimination and power imbalance reduces maternal and child mortality.**

We work with our partners around the world to empower her to make her own health decisions, sensitize health practitioners to her unique challenges, support traditional birth attendants and midwives, provide vaccines and medicines, distribute emergency food, teach her about nutrition, and train Community Health Workers to educate women as well as men.



This sign illustrates the objectives of the 1,000 Day Journey, part of the ENRICH program designed to save the lives of young children.



BANGLADESH

A woman's access to proper health care during pregnancy can be the difference between life and death for her newborn.

## ENRICH

### Enhancing Nutrition Services to Improve Maternal and Child Health

ENRICH is a multi-country intervention project aimed at reducing maternal and child mortality by directly addressing malnutrition in the first 1,000 days of life, from pregnancy to two years old. The program specifically targets the most vulnerable, including women and children in remote areas and the poorest of the poor.

In every ENRICH area, we have four objectives: training, services, equality and advocacy. This holistic model ensures that women have increased access to life-giving healthcare and nutritional education, gender-responsive facility-based nutrition services, antenatal care, postnatal care, skilled delivery and maternal nutrition during pregnancy. We advocate for more laws, systems and structures to realize her rights to quality, affordable healthcare, including sexual and reproductive health. Our programs seek to give women and girls greater understanding of the dynamics surrounding gender inequality, gender-based violence and power imbalances in household decision-making.

In addition to these health benefits that ENRICH delivers, the project is bringing families closer. Women are noticing a greater participation in health matters by the men in their lives. One participant named Dorcas told us, "My husband never came with me to the hospital for visits when I was expecting. But he started to appreciate the need and began coming with me." She is thankful that it is now easier to talk about matters like family planning which, before the training, was a difficult conversation for women in her community to discuss with their spouses.



"WHERE YOU LIVE  
SHOULD NOT DETERMINE  
WHETHER YOU LIVE,  
OR WHETHER YOU DIE."

— Bono, Singer-Songwriter

KENYA

## Coming Back from the Brink



KENYA

In Kenya, girls are twice as likely as boys to be malnourished.

When Charity's mom brought her in to the food distribution centre in Kenya, the health workers took one look at the eight-month-old and immediately rushed her to the hospital. She was so malnourished that she didn't even want to eat – a sign of major complications. Nutritionists put her on fortified milk, slowly building up her body so it could receive solid food. Charity drank the milk until she could handle Ready to Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF), an energy-dense supplement filled with protein, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals.

In countries like Charity's, girls are twice as

likely to be malnourished as boys, according to the Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. In many households, the women and girls eat only after their male family members have satiated themselves. This "food discrimination" leads to insufficient nutrition and chronic illness.

Being a recipient of the ENRICH program that treats all children equally regardless of gender, Charity survived. Not only is she on her way to a full recovery, but her mother is also equipped with education about nutrition and the requirements to keep Charity healthy.

"AS LONG AS POVERTY,  
INJUSTICE AND GROSS INEQUALITY  
EXIST IN OUR WORLD,  
NONE OF US CAN TRULY REST."

— Nelson Mandela, Former President of South Africa

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

## Poverty

Millions of impoverished people wake up every morning knowing they will struggle for subsistence. Since their families live on what we, in Canada, would consider a pittance, everyone pulls their weight to survive, but the brunt of this work falls most heavily on the shoulders of girls and women.

Many of these girls work because education is too costly, or they are needed to supplement the family's income. They spend hours fetching clean water, which robs them of time they could be cultivating sources of income or going to school. They are at the mercy of human traffickers, who pretend to empathize with their poverty, but really want to manipulate them for nefarious purposes. They suffer from "food discrimination," often eating only after the men in their families have satiated themselves during times of scarcity. And amid all this, they are at higher risk of preventable diseases and acute malnutrition.

**We believe investing in women is the key to breaking the cycle of poverty.**

When women and girls are given the tools to climb out of poverty, entire communities flourish. In conjunction with our partners around the world, World Vision is helping girls and women find safe options for generating income, undergo business training to foster independence, develop financial strategies, learn improved agricultural methods, create women-led savings groups and become successful entrepreneurs.

## Desperate for Work, Betrayed by Family

- Reth was married off very young by her family to a man who kept them destitute due to his gambling addiction. Even though she was pregnant, she knew she had to leave him and build a life for her unborn child. Over the next few years she had various jobs, but was only ever able to just scrape by financially.



*Diana (right) and Margareth (far right) are two of hundreds of female farmers leveraging our training to restore food supplies, income and stability to a country devastated by civil war.*



**SOUTH SUDAN**



**SOUTH SUDAN**

When Reth's daughter was five, Reth's older sister contacted her to advise of what she claimed was a lucrative job opportunity in China. It was a difficult decision to leave her daughter in the care of her parents, but Reth felt it was the best way to provide for her whole family. She could send them money once she started her new job, and everyone would have a better life.

However, when Reth arrived in China, a broker met her at the airport, and told Reth that her sister sold her into marriage for \$500. Reth was devastated – she was stuck in a foreign land, she didn't speak the language, and she wasn't allowed to call home. The broker took away her passport, locked her in a room, and beat her. After two months, she finally relented.

Reth's new "husband" bought her from the broker for \$25,000, and took her to work for his extended family. When she became pregnant, he allowed Reth to call her mother for the first time. Her mother contacted the Cambodian ambassador and several non-profits in China, who helped Reth escape. Within months, Reth legally dissolved her sham marriage, and reunited with her mother, father and young daughter.

World Vision became aware of her situation when Reth returned to Cambodia, and we immediately began to provide food, clothes, medical care, reintegration support and seed capital for income generation. Reth now runs a small grocery store and earns enough to support her newborn and to send her older daughter to school. This financial security ensures that she will not be lured into another deception. Instead of migrating to other countries to find money, she will be able to stay home with her children and thrive.



**CAMBODIA**

## FEED

### Fortifying Equality and Economic Diversity program

From the day it declared its independence in 2011, the country of South Sudan has teetered on the verge of collapse. When the historic power struggle between ethnic groups ballooned into outright civil war two years later, tens of thousands were killed, and millions fled from their homes in fear for their lives. People, however, were not the only casualties of the war. The subsistence-level agricultural economy was decimated as farmers were killed or fled along with everyone else.

When the tensions escalated, World Vision Canada partnered with the Canadian government and other NGOs to empower women and marginalized families to increase their agricultural productivity and income through our Fortifying Equality and Economic Diversity (FEED) program.

In this project, we formed hundreds of Farmer Field Schools in which we prioritized female participants. Because the women had limited control over income in their homes, the project also promoted group ventures which redressed the power imbalance. Women were elected to train their peers on how to get the most nutritional value from their harvest for children. They learned valuable skills to increase the production of their farms, and can now stock food to sustain their families through the lean seasons. And they stepped into leadership.

"Men used to dominate everything," Kon Awet Awet, FEED's Project Coordinator, explained to us recently. "Women came in third or fourth place [behind other men]. Now, they speak with authority, and men are supporting them."



CAMBODIA

“IT IS WITH  
THE POWER OF  
EDUCATION THAT  
WE CAN **SHAPE**  
**OUR FUTURE AND**  
CHANGE LIVES.”

— Malala Yousafzai, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

# Education

For millions of girls around the world, school is a privilege and impediments to an education are legion. Impoverished parents often put their young daughters to work for survival of the family. Others do not see the value in educating girls and therefore keep them at home. Some girls must spend hours each day carrying water from a distant source, leaving them with little or no time to attend school. Some drop out when they hit puberty, or because they are forced into early marriage. Others are lured into the trafficking trade. Some are intimidated by the fear of sexual assault on the way to school. And others cannot go to their classroom because it has been torn apart by bombs or a natural disaster.

We believe the African proverb that “when you educate a girl, you educate a nation.”

Educated girls have healthier babies, greater incomes and longer lives – and these benefits are passed down for generations. We are therefore working with our partners around the world, training qualified teachers, building and equipping safe schools, establishing Child-Friendly Spaces for her psycho-social and academic development, starting Early Childhood Development programs for those crucial first years of her life, discussing the importance of equality through community awareness campaigns and addressing the underlying poverty that drives families to make gender-biased choices.

## Our Emergency Response in Nepal



NEPAL

Because of the size of World Vision’s network, our teams have the capacity to monitor indicators of both natural and man-made threats. Our Global Rapid Response Team brings together international disaster experts from around the world, who are deployed within hours of a major emergency to support local teams and communities. So when the earthquake hit Nepal on April 25, 2015, we

mobilized all these resources to help.

While the early days were consumed with meeting the immediate needs of the Nepalese people, our attention soon turned to rebuilding. Schools were at the top of our priority list because the longer a girl stays out of the education system, the higher her chances are of never returning. And we didn’t want

Nepal to lose a generation of educated girls because of the earthquake.

While our work is ongoing due to the enormity of the task, we have constructed Temporary Learning Centres and permanent schools, distributed teaching materials, handed out thousands of student supply kits, and established hundreds of children’s clubs in five earthquake-affected districts.

Girls like Muskan (left) are keenly aware of the value of school. “Education is important in my life because I want to be successful and independent when I grow up,” she told us.



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

## Putting Her Family First

In a small village just outside of Kanaga, a commercial city in the Democratic Republic of Congo, lives a family of 13 in a tiny, two-room hut. Marie, 14, lives there with her father, brothers and sisters. Marie's mother is ill and must stay in the hospital until she recovers.

The Democratic Republic of Congo is Africa's second largest country and rich in natural resources. Yet, it is one of the world's poorest countries, with the majority of its population considered "extremely poor" according to the World Bank.

Marie and her family are part of that "extremely poor" majority. She used to attend school, but her father can no longer afford to send her. Her father makes and sells charcoal but doesn't make enough to support the family, so now Marie must assume the duties of an adult.

Each day is the same for Marie. She collects a pile of palm nuts and then, with a rock, breaks off their encasement to release the soft nuts inside. After she has enough crushed palm nuts to sell, she walks along a busy main road and squats in front of a local market, just across from its main gate. The buyer will either mash

the palm nuts or press them into oil for cooking.

With her mother hospitalized, Marie has assumed household duties too. She cooks for her brothers and sisters, and sweeps up the husks from the palm nuts that she's crushed to use as kindling.

Marie misses school and wishes that she could return. So does her father. He would love to send her back to school to further her studies and ultimately attend university. But though she's only a child herself, Marie knows that the needs of her family come first, even over her own future.



HONDURAS

*School children with access to proper sanitation and safe drinking water have a better chance of staying in school.*

# Water

Even though access to clean water and sanitation is enshrined as a basic human right by the United Nations, for millions of women and girls around the world these are luxuries that they simply cannot hope to enjoy. They are too busy trudging for hours to a water source, suffering with water-borne diseases like diarrhea, and battling the severe dehydration and malnutrition that poor water access brings.

Females are disproportionately affected by lack of clean, close water and proper sanitation. In many households, women walk for hours each day to fetch

water, and they face the risk of assault by men or attack by animals along the way. In families where the children are responsible for this chore, girls are twice as likely as their brothers to bear the brunt of this task. Furthermore, when girls don't have adequate toilet facilities at school, they miss an average of five days a month due to menstruation. As they fall further and further behind in their studies, the pressure to drop out entirely begins to mount.

**We believe access to close, clean water liberates girls to focus on their education and economic prospects.**

Along with our partners around the world, we are building and maintaining boreholes so that clean water is closer for her, training community members on good hygiene and sanitation practices to cut down on the spread of disease, facilitating WASH clubs which promote gender equality and female leadership, and installing toilets in schools so that she is safer and more likely to finish school.

## ➤ Rwanda WASH

Our Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) programs around the world provide communities with basic necessities while utilizing a holistic approach. As the most pressing concern, people need

access to clean, close water, and we provide that by installing water sources in local schools and other accessible places. But then we support programs – such as WASH clubs in schools and village committees – so that children and their parents learn new, healthy habits, and then pass those learnings along to other community members. At the same time, we train local artisans on the maintenance of the water sources so that the systems will be repairable should they break down.

The impact is far-reaching. Once people have access to clean water and proper sanitation, they have more time on their hands.

They are no longer walking long distances to collect water, nor are they sidelined by water-borne diseases. And they are putting this extra time to good use. Parents are turning their attention to income generation, and their children are focusing on going to school.

In our Rwanda WASH program alone, we have seen a dramatic increase in school completion rates. In the community of Bugasera, which was once devastated by the Rwandan genocide, primary school enrollment is now at 99.7% with 92% of students completing their education. While education for all children is undoubtedly crucial, we are thrilled that girls are being educated at the same rate as boys in Bugasera, and that they are encouraged to take leadership positions in their school WASH clubs. The lessons they are learning will benefit them for life.



RWANDA

*Before WASH came to her village, Rose (left) walked for kilometres every day to fetch water while her mother anxiously awaited her safe return.*

“WATER  
IS LIFE,  
AND  
CLEAN  
WATER IS  
HEALTH.”

— Audrey Hepburn, Actor



INDIA



## Courage Award Recipient, Nav Bhatia



As young women in India hit puberty, access to washrooms becomes more and more problematic. In nearly half of India's schools, bathrooms don't exist, and where they do, they are filthy and dangerous. The inadequate facilities and cultural taboos around menstruation mean that girls will not attend school while menstruating, and some will drop out of school altogether. The consequences of dropping out reverberate throughout the rest of their lives.

When Toronto Raptors' Superfan, Nav Bhatia, heard of the plight of girls in India, he didn't hesitate to roll up his sleeves

and get involved. Mobilizing local support, including from the Indian diaspora, he began tackling the issue by installing bathrooms, sanitary napkin dispensers and private change rooms in multiple schools across the Punjab region to ensure girls always feel comfortable and safe in their schools. And, as an added bonus, he has ignited a passion within these girls for playing basketball.

In appreciation of his dedication, World Vision presented Nav with our Courage Award. He stands as an exceptional ally with us, fighting for the inclusion and empowerment of girls around the world.

# “INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS A THREAT TO JUSTICE EVERYWHERE.”

— Martin Luther King Jr., Civil Rights Leader

## Injustice

While it might seem intuitively obvious to those of us living in a #MeToo and #TimesUp world, women and girls deserve to have a life free from discrimination, abuse and exploitation. Unfortunately, even though these fundamental values are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, far too many of our sisters around the world are targeted simply because they are female.

Millions of girls are made to work as modern slaves or forced labourers, pulled

out of school early solely because of their gender, trafficked to foreign countries, sold off to the highest bidder, forced to undergo genital cutting or married off shortly after puberty. Even when they have a life relatively free from coercion, girls in many cultures are viewed as inferior to the men and boys in their households.

**We believe girls and women have inherent value that is undiminished by their gender.**



UGANDA

### *It Takes a World*

The World Vision Partnership recently launched an international campaign entitled, *It Takes a World*. Stretching out across 65 countries in need of intervention, this program continues

*Viola used to dream of being a doctor. However, when her parents were killed, she was sold into marriage. Now, at the age of 16, her world revolves around her duties as a wife and mother.*

our long-term work to secure the release, repatriation and reintegration of many victims of human trafficking, but also expands its focus to include concerns such as child marriage.

This issue is particularly troubling because early marriage abruptly ends a girl's childhood, and has dire life-long ramifications. Newborns from mothers under 18 years old have a 60% higher chance of dying within the first year of life compared to children born to mothers over 19 years old. In fact, a mere 10% reduction in child marriage could contribute to a 70% decrease in maternal mortality rates and a 3% decrease in infant mortality. Early marriage



INDIA

*A 12-year-old Indian girl shows the needle she uses daily at her job to stitch leather on shoes. Her fingers are heavily bandaged to protect them from injury.*

Beyond intervening on behalf of girls and women in dangerous situations, we want to tackle the roots of injustice – shame, ignorance and systemic discrimination. World Vision works with our partners around the world to identify the most vulnerable women and girls, train police to recognize victims, register her so she can legally establish her identity, launch awareness campaigns on gender equality, educate communities to appreciate that she is of equal worth and value, advocate with governments for better laws, and address the underlying poverty that drives families to make desperate choices.

also increases the risk of health issues such as fistulas and HIV-AIDS for young girls. A girl whose education has been prematurely interrupted will earn less over her lifetime, thereby reinforcing the cycle of poverty. Simply put, from a long-term perspective, child marriage presents an enormous burden on families and communities.

Through the *It Takes a World* project, we seek to mobilize local communities to recognize the risks to their daughters, empower youth to lead change, support the income-generating capacity of girls and women, ensure universal access to education, and advocate with all levels of government for the creation and enforcement of appropriate legislation.



## Sharon Ramsay World Vision Board Member



Sharon was in high school when she first recognized the pressures that women face regarding gender stereotypes. “Boys would taunt the girls saying, ‘If women are so great, why are there no famous female leaders, lawyers or chefs?’” Now, as a Registered Marriage and Family Therapist who counsels women regularly, she readily admits, “There are still barriers to women and girls trying to find their place in the world.”

Sharon’s passion for breaking down those barriers led her to join World Vision Canada’s Corporation in 2005 and the Board of Directors in 2008. It was in this capacity that she travelled to Cambodia and encountered some of the grim outcomes of systemic injustice. As she walked into her hotel lobby, a sign referenced the rampant child sex trade by announcing,

“There are still barriers to women and girls trying to find their place in the world.”

“We don’t have children in our rooms.” Later, she watched as young women pulled out plastic chairs to sit on while they waited for men to select them for sex. But Sharon cautioned us, “While it’s easy to think of it as a ‘there’ problem, it’s not. Even with opportunity and development, women can still be instantly reduced to sex objects.”

Sharon is dedicated to recognizing the existing capacity of women and girls across geographic, class and cultural lines, and she deeply believes in the resilience of women who have survived situations that left them robbed of their choices. We are honoured that she is sharing her wisdom and insight with us as a senior leadership volunteer with POWER OF HER’s Education Committee.



CANADA

# “THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE ONE OF OUR HIGHEST PRIORITIES.”

## Raw Hope

It is estimated that more than 500 million children live in places affected by disaster or conflict. These dangerous areas are labelled as “fragile” because their social, economic, political and environmental structures have all crumbled, or they have been decimated by natural disasters. Women and girls in fragile areas are substantially worse off than men and boys.

When forcibly displaced from their homes, girls are 2.5 times as likely to be prevented from going to school, putting them at an academic and economic disadvantage for the rest of their lives. In areas of conflict, women and girls are deliberately targeted as victims of sexual violence, left to grapple with the aftermath of trauma and any children born in its wake. And in many Raw Hope areas, the maternal and infant mortality rate skyrockets because these vulnerable

women don't have access to adequate health care.

**We believe the path to peace and restoration is paved by the training and promotion of women.**

We therefore pay special attention to the plight of girls and women in the midst of the devastation, destruction and instability of conflict. Working with our international partners, we are giving her leadership skills development, prioritizing her education, distributing emergency supplies to families who have lost everything, addressing the epidemic of gender-based violence, building health care facilities, offering Child-Friendly Spaces where she can process her trauma, opening Early Childhood Development Centres, and investing in women's entrepreneurship.



A chart of emotions helps children identify what they are feeling in a Child-Friendly Space (right), and kids pour into school at Al Azraq refugee camp (far right).



## NOUR

Situated throughout communities and refugee camps in the country of Jordan, our NOUR project works with Syrian refugees who have left everything behind as they fled the war in their homeland. Many of these desperate refugees are girls who face disproportionate challenges.

Although most Syrian children were enrolled in school before the war began,

girls now struggle to get access to quality education. Many parents, faced with extreme poverty and fear of the future, push their daughters into early marriage. And these difficulties are further exacerbated by the fact that women and girls constantly battle with the psycho-social effects of their vivid memories of war and terror.

Despite these enormous hurdles, our staff is partnering to improve conditions for these vulnerable women and girls by building classrooms, empowering Child

Parliaments to give young girls a voice, running Early Childhood Education Centres in refugee camps to reach the most vulnerable children, and helping girls work through their emotional trauma through our Child-Friendly Spaces.

“I am a completely different person after taking part in the Child-Friendly Space. It truly is the light in my life,” fifteen-year-old Lamia told us. “I used to think that I couldn't play or laugh, but now I'm convinced that I can once again.”

# MUST REMAIN

— António Guterres,  
United Nations Secretary-General



SYRIAN REFUGEE



SYRIAN REFUGEE

## Playing through the pain

When bombs decimated her village in Syria, Shaima (12) and her family fled to find safety. The route was long and perilous, and the sun beat down on them. Along the journey, Shaima's sister died from the effects of sunstroke, devastating their close-knit family.

"I don't feel I can talk to my mother about my sister's death, because she's grieving for my sister a lot. I don't like to see tears on her face. I felt sad – our family was very close, and suddenly, we were torn apart. I wish I could turn back time but there is nothing I could do," Shaima told us.

Her family found aid at our NOUR program in Jordan, and even though the haunting memories of war still linger, Shaima threw herself into the activities offered through our Child-Friendly Spaces. She is thriving in sixth grade, saying, "I love school because I get to learn so many different things. Today we had math, and we learned how to divide numbers. I really enjoy it."

**"I'm not scared any more. I feel comfortable and safe here."**

But the Child-Friendly Spaces encourage far more than mathematics; our staff are trained to help these children of war heal from emotional trauma. For Shaima, this healing is intrinsically connected to soccer. So, at the end of each day, she joins her friends on the field to play. "I'm not scared any more. I feel comfortable and safe here."

# POWER OF **HER**

## JOIN US

Alongside the pain, discrimination and marginalization that she endures, there is also the potential for tremendous power within her. These challenges do not deter her, and so do not deter us.

At World Vision, we have chosen to engage. We are on the ground in the most difficult locations, providing education on her human and international rights, advocating for her empowerment within families and communities, giving her the seed money to start businesses, providing quality health care and family planning options, and fighting for justice when she is under attack.

Wading into the impossible is the first step in making things possible for her. It is why our field personnel venture into remote and unsafe places. It is why we build partnerships with people regardless of their religion, ethnicity or gender. It is why our president, Michael Messenger, speaks tirelessly on behalf of the world's most disempowered children, giving voice to the voiceless.

**But, we cannot do this without you, without your engagement. When you engage, we can act. And when we act, the POWER OF HER grows.**

**The time is now. Join us in advancing the power of girls and women around the world.**



## Want to Get Involved? Here are five ways you can help:

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### INITIATORS

Introduce opportunities to engage and galvanize support for the initiative.

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### INFLUENCERS

Individuals who network to open doors and connect us to a broader range of relationships.

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### INNOVATORS

Bring original approaches to fundraising, including social enterprises, mentorships and entrepreneurships.

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### ILLUMINATORS

Thought leaders and visionaries who provide overarching perspective, strategy and leadership.

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### IMPLEMENTORS

Action-oriented individuals who will ensure the jobs get done.

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[www.worldvision.ca/powerofher](http://www.worldvision.ca/powerofher)  
[powerofher@worldvision.ca](mailto:powerofher@worldvision.ca)

**“EMPOWERING GIRLS AND  
WOMEN IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE  
WAY TO BRING SYSTEMIC  
CHANGE TO COMMUNITIES.”**

*— Suanne Miedema, Board Chair, World Vision Canada*





# POWER OF **HER**

**SUPPORT HER STRENGTH.**

If you would like more information or to become involved with POWER OF HER please speak with your Philanthropy Advisor, call our National Manager of Strategic Fundraising Initiatives at 1-800-714-3280 ext 3935 or visit [worldvision.ca/powerofher](http://worldvision.ca/powerofher)

“I RAISE UP MY VOICE—  
NOT SO I CAN SHOUT,  
BUT SO THAT THOSE  
WITHOUT A VOICE  
CAN BE HEARD...  
**WE CANNOT SUCCEED  
WHEN HALF OF US  
ARE HELD BACK.”**

— *Malala Yousafzai, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate*

World Vision is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organization working to create lasting change in the lives of children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. Inspired by our Christian values, World Vision is dedicated to working with the world's most vulnerable people regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or gender.

In this fiscal year, World Vision Canada anticipates raising \$401 million in total revenue for its community development, emergency relief and advocacy work, of which approximately 16.1% will be used for necessary fundraising. In cases where donations exceed what is needed or where local conditions prevent program implementation, World Vision Canada will redirect funds to similar activities to help people in need. World Vision Canada is federally incorporated and located in Mississauga, Ontario.

For more information, or for a copy of our latest audited financial statements,

please visit our website at [www.worldvision.ca](http://www.worldvision.ca) or contact Director, Supporter Care at 1 800 844-7993.

**SURVIVAL**

**POVERTY**

**EDUCATION**

**WATER**

**INJUSTICE**

**RAW HOPE**