



# Children & Youth At Risk

Children and youth represent the hopes and dreams of our future. However, the grim reality is that millions of adolescents struggle to simply survive. As the most vulnerable in our society, children are grievously affected by major issues such as poverty and conflict. In the midst of socio-economic upheaval a child's family or community may not be able to provide the basic necessities of life. Many continue to lack proper sanitation, adequate nutrition, appropriate housing, as well as access to social services and healthcare after the establishment of democratic leadership structures.



At this moment, there are child soldiers forced to act as combatants in conflicts that they do not understand. Boys and girls are working long hours in dangerous conditions that exploit their labour at the cost of an education and the joys of childhood. A disproportionately large number of girls are denied access to education, adequate nutrition and medical care. Traumatized child refugees continue to suffer psychologically after resettlement. Countless children are trapped in human trafficking – our modern-day form of slavery.

CBM's programs for Children and Youth at Risk acknowledge and respect the dignity and potential of every person, regardless of age. We emphasize education, basic healthcare and the formation of values in order to prepare them for the future. Programs in food security, AIDS prevention, microcredit loans, literacy, and housing benefit the overall health of families and communities to build a better future.

In every country where we work, CBM strives to provide appropriate mentoring and training of key staff and volunteers. Working in partnership, local churches enable us to maximize our resources and impact and address the following key areas:

## EDUCATION

Education is a gift that can never be taken away. An educated child is able to imagine a life that goes beyond the difficulties of the present day. School provides empowerment – a place where children develop a voice and make themselves heard.

However, the global reality is that millions of children will never receive this life-changing gift. For families struggling to survive, educating children is a luxury they simply cannot afford. The cost of school fees, uniforms and supplies are often way beyond their means.

Over two-thirds of uneducated children are girls. Often, in poor families with multiple children,

boys have priority over girls in receiving an education. Uneducated girls are at higher risk to become marginalized and exploited. They are more likely to contract HIV and AIDS and have a higher chance of dying during childbirth. It is also less likely they will ever own land, have a voice in society or break out of the cycle of poverty.

CBM's goal is to bring lasting change to the lives of children around the world. We address the multi-dimensional societal challenges that families face. For many children, it takes more than just enrolment to ensure they receive a meaningful education. By providing realistic opportunities to receive an education, their lives can be improved and changed forever.

*"Children's rights of security, a safe home, adequate nutrition and education are violated everyday because of violence. Some of them are watching their parents powerless, unable to offer them protection... Many studies have proven that the legacy of violence can be transmitted from one generation to the next when there is no strong movement of healing and change."*

**Regine King**, a psychotherapist who is a Rwandan genocide survivor and one of the dedicated volunteers who assisted in the development of CBM's Orphans and Vulnerable Children program in Rwanda.

*"My thoughts could not go beyond primary school. My parents are farmers working infertile soil and I thought I would become a poor farmer like them. The main problem I had was [feeling isolated] and I lacked self-confidence but after becoming a Christian I felt that I'm just like everyone else, now. I will freely help other vulnerable young people."*

**Clement Kamayirese** from the Orphans and Vulnerable Children program in Rwanda, has plans to study computer science.



## HEALTH

The life expectancy for children and youth in the world's most vulnerable communities is far less than those in wealthier nations, including most of Canada. There are many factors contributing to this, whether it's unsafe living conditions, preventable diseases, contaminated water, hunger or malnutrition. These challenges are an everyday reality for many young people living in places like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Bolivia, India, and even among our First Nations population here in Canada.

CBM believes that good health encompasses the whole person – physically, socially, emotionally, spiritually and culturally – and extends beyond the individual to entire communities. We strive to bring hope and healing to children struggling with the devastating social and physical consequences of preventable diseases. We work in partnership to bring counselling to those who have witnessed and experienced atrocities due to conflict. As well, we help families access basic healthcare and give them an opportunity to lead healthy lives.

CBM believes God has a very special heart for the plight of the poor and oppressed. He loves to heal and restore. It shouldn't matter where in the world you are born. All people deserve access to adequate healthcare and services that contribute to physical and social well-being.

## HUNGER

According to the World Food Programme (WFP), a person is considered undernourished if daily food intake does not include enough calories to meet minimum physiological needs for an active life.

There are just under a billion people who live with that reality today.

A hungry mind cannot concentrate, a hungry body does not take initiative, and a hungry child loses all desire to play and study. Deprived of the right nutrition, hungry children are especially vulnerable and become too weak to fight off disease. They often die from common infections like measles and diarrhea.

Responding to hunger issues is one of the main focal points of CBM's development programs. We support several projects that focus on food security. Families are food secure when they have confidence in their ability to either produce or earn enough money to purchase the food necessary for a healthy and active life. Together with church partners, we work with communities in countries like Bolivia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, India, Kenya and Rwanda to help families become food secure.

Each year, undernutrition contributes to five million deaths of children under five in developing countries. (UNICEF)

Hunger is the world's number one health risk. It kills more people every year than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined. (WFP)

## PEACE

The next generation is poised to inherit a broken world. This past century was the bloodiest in human history with genocide, civil conflict, oppression and social injustices across the globe. Many survivors live with deep wounds and brokenness. The after-effects of trauma continue with a lack of trust and negative ideologies that create division among community groups. It is imperative that the Christian church respond through peace-building and reconciliation ministries for true healing.

At CBM, our approach is to integrate reconciliation ministries into every part of our work, including programs for children and youth.

The trauma from the 1994 Rwandan genocide still defines life for survivors and its legacy has reached into the next generation.

The continuing instability of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has left many young people disillusioned with little hope. Through our partners, CBM provides opportunities for youth to dialogue, receive trauma counselling, Biblical teaching, and training in multimedia and the arts to foster new principles towards peace-building.

## HEALTH MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Child-centred programs are expensive to manage because of the costs of education, healthcare, facilities and dedicated staff, yet the investment is worth it. In Bolivia, young men and women who were helped by the Prison Kids ministry during their childhood, come back to volunteer and serve as role models. Rwandan orphans supported through our programs have requested training in peace-building and reconciliation so that they can address the ethnic divisions in their country. In India, families have become Christians and children who were not in school have actually gone on to successfully complete secondary school and even beyond.

There is only a limited window of opportunity in children's lives to make a positive impact that will guide them into adulthood. Their chances of success in life start with showing them God's love and compassion in tangible ways. You can help equip these young people with the necessary tools to make a brighter future for themselves and their generation.

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In the event a particular project or program is oversubscribed or where local conditions prevent implementation, CBM will redirect your donation to where it is needed most.

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through word & deed*