



# CHILD PROTECTION

## SEMIANNUAL REPORT » October 2017 to March 2018

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# CHILD PROTECTION

## GLOBAL SUMMARY

*Thank you for your support of our Child Protection projects. Through your partnership, children around the world who are vulnerable to violence are being protected from grave abuse and exploitation.*

Children who live in areas where our Child Protection projects are working face many forms of violence that harm them physically, emotionally, and spiritually. While the types of abuse may vary according to context—whether it is female genital mutilation and cutting in Kenya, child marriage in Mozambique, or child sacrifice in Uganda—they all threaten the well-being of children, and sometimes even their very lives.

In many situations, children have to confront multiple forms of violence on a daily basis, such as shielding themselves from physical abuse in their homes, resisting family pressure to be married as a child, and escaping sexual violence at school. No child should have to fear that their health, dignity, and future will be stripped from them as a result of living in a broken world.

Our Child Protection projects are designed to be holistic in nature so

that they address many of the root causes of violence in communities. Our approach involves strengthening informal and formal child protection systems so that they better safeguard children. This includes empowering children with life skills to protect themselves, teaching parents how to better nurture their children, and mobilizing faith leaders to care for vulnerable children. We also strengthen community-led Child Protection Committees, assist governments in coordinating their efforts, and advocate for legislation that can best protect children.

With your support, our projects are tackling some of the worst forms of child violence. In Armenia, children and parents learned how gender stereotypes can lead to gender-based violence, including prenatal sex selection. In Bangladesh, many children were removed from hazardous child

labor and enrolled in school.

Our new project in India established child care centers in red-light districts to provide children with a safe place to play and help prevent second-generation sex trafficking. And in Southeast Asia, communications campaigns educated thousands of people on the harmful effects of violence. Parents also learned how to use positive methods for disciplining their children.



**1,270,558** **PEOPLE, INCLUDING 656,915 CHILDREN,** have benefited from our Child Protection projects since they began. These numbers include beneficiaries from our Honduras project, which was not summarized in this report, and other Child Protection projects that have already closed. In FY18, 149,649 people benefited.

**21,244** children in Uganda were empowered to make good decisions and protect themselves by participating in school and community clubs, parliaments, and life skills classes.

**328** parents and caregivers in Vietnam developed positive discipline skills to use with their children, instead of violent emotional and physical punishment.

**120** leaders from churches in Mozambique were equipped to train 5,000 church members in facilitating Celebrating Families, which strengthens family bonds and promotes child protection.



# ARMENIA

Prenatal sex selection in Armenia, one of the most egregious forms of gender-based violence, has resulted in the country having one of the most highly skewed birth sex ratios. According to recent government data, this ratio may be incrementally improving.

In 2016, the national ratio was 100 girls born to 112 boys; now, it is 100 girls to 110 boys. However, this ratio still exceeds the biological norm (100 girls to 106 boys), and the reasons for the change are not known. Continuous improvement of the sex ratio over time and more research on the causal factors are necessary before determining that the human rights issue has been resolved.

The Armenia Child Protection project seeks to change mindsets on prenatal

sex selection as well as other forms of gender-based violence. Nearly 100 youth learned about the importance of gender equity in youth groups and 85 couples worked on strengthening their relationships in couples' groups. More than 110 vulnerable families engaged in Celebrating Families, where parents learn how to create a loving home environment to nurture their children.

Children and adults used the knowledge they had gained to raise awareness in their communities about the importance of gender equity. Faith leaders led the way in mobilizing their congregations to care for vulnerable families while preaching messages about how God created man and woman to be equal.

Alongside continued engagement

in policy development, the project pursued media opportunities to influence the broader public. A public service announcement on gender stereotypes was produced and a movie on the Church's historical position on gender relations is now in development.

Your commitment to the Armenia Child Protection project is greatly appreciated.



**123,069** PEOPLE, INCLUDING 1,110 CHILDREN, have benefited from the project since it began in October 2015.

*569 girls and boys participated in activities to prevent violence against children in their communities*

Four-year target: 900

63%

*425 parents and caregivers showed that they better understand positive parenting and nonviolent discipline*

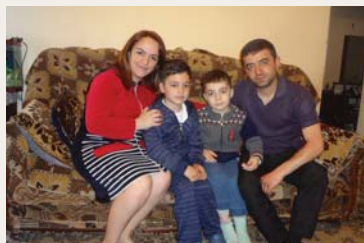
Four-year target: 531

80%

*11 faith leaders mobilized their communities to take action to protect children*

Four-year target: 14

79%



After Inessa and her husband, Garik, began participating in a couples' group and learned about gender equity, their family's financial situation began to improve. But it was not an easy journey.

Inessa began working a few months before the group began, but Garik became increasingly frustrated. Not only is it common for men to prevent their wives from working, but strong gender stereotypes in Armenia often lead to the social separation of men and women. The couples' group helped Garik to overcome some of his feelings of

ownership and loss of power that were limiting her economic opportunities. "He believes now that my work should not be a problem and that it is important for us," Inessa said. She also feels empowered through her work and believes her children will benefit from having two working parents.

# BANGLADESH

After just 18 months, the Bangladesh Child Protection Project is exceeding many of its goals to withdraw children from hazardous and exploitative labor, provide education to vulnerable children, equip parents through training and business support, and strengthen government systems that are intended to protect children from harm.

Over the past six months, 152 children who were engaged in the worst forms of child labor were withdrawn from their jobs; 140 children were enrolled in primary or secondary school.

One mother of a child that was withdrawn from his dangerous job said, "Children are destroying their future to earn two (cents). But this project is restoring these children by providing

income-generating support to their households."

Two new Child-Friendly Learning and Recreation Centers were opened. Now 315 children are attending a total of seven centers: 175 are 3 to 5 years old and benefiting from early childhood education, and 140 are 6 to 17 years old, and are receiving catch-up education that will help them reintegrate into school. In addition, 130 children enrolled at the centers received their birth registrations, which are essential to receiving many services throughout one's lifetime.

The project also provided personalized economic support to 146 parents. They were matched with suitable small business opportunities and trained in

money management. Of the parents who received this training in the first year of the project, 94 percent have withdrawn their children from labor and increased their household incomes.

Thank you for your support.



"(This project) gives us new lives," said Popy Akter, who received vocational training so she could leave her dangerous job.

**19,660** PEOPLE, INCLUDING 8,231 CHILDREN, have taken action to end child labor since October 2016, including 10,151 during fiscal year 2018.

287 girls and boys withdrawn from hazardous labor

Four-year program target: 274 **100%**

824 parents equipped and mobilized to protect their children from harm

Four-year program target: 1,056 **78%**

5,858 children armed with knowledge on their rights

**34%**

Four-year program target: 17,320



Many children in Bangladesh are forced to abandon their education to help their families survive. Lima is one of those children. Following her mother's death, Lima's father injured his leg and could no longer earn an income as a rickshaw puller. Lima went to work in a fish processing factory, where she often experienced harassment and physical suffering.

Thankfully, Lima has recently been able to leave her job and return to school. This project is covering her school fees, and provided her father with his own rickshaw (he previously rented from others), which significantly increased his take-home earnings.

This project is continuing to work with families to create development plans for withdrawing their children from labor and entering them in school.

# GUATEMALA

In Guatemala, many adolescents believe their only options are to accept a life of violence, join a gang, or undertake a perilous journey away from home. World Vision believes they deserve another option—a life free of violence and full of hope.

Central America's Northern Triangle (El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala) has become the most violent region in the world. According to statistics from the National Civil Police, Guatemala had a homicide rate of 26.6 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2016, which is much higher than the recent global average of 5.3 per 100,000 inhabitants (World Bank, 2015).

High levels of violence, lack of economic opportunities, and limited civic engagement can drive individuals to leave their country, thus contributing to irregular migration, and poor migrants may become victims of

human trafficking and crime.

This project seeks to improve living conditions for Guatemalans by reducing violence, improving economic opportunities, encouraging community engagement, and strengthening governance structures.

A total of 61,165 people across 80 communities attended Community Assemblies, where they demonstrated their commitment to supporting this project. Each of the 80 sensitized communities agreed to implement an integrated approach to violence and migration prevention.

Finally, more than 1,000 businesses and 320 churches of various denominations were identified in the project area as potential partners.

Thank you for helping to make a difference in the lives of Guatemalans.



"We have lived divided for many years; our way of thinking does not allow us to work together." This statement was made during a meeting organized by the project in San José Cabén, San Pedro Sacatepéquez, San Marcos. In this municipality, communities have been divided from one another for many years, unable to work together to prevent violence and promote security.

The project understood this history in San José Cabén, yet bet on the possibility of being able to unite the coordinating bodies of the five communities that make up the aldea (town): San José Centro, Los Molinos, Reformador, El Progreso, and La Libertad. The project met with representatives of the Community Council

for Development to present the project and its objectives.

But it wasn't until community members became directly involved through activities and meetings that the project began to take shape. More than 900 people participated in a Community Assembly, including children, youth, and adults. A marimba performance, artistic activities, and games contributed to the festive atmosphere. Leaders expressed their surprise at what happened that day. One said, "We are very happy because we have never seen so much unity among the families and least of all participating in a Community Assembly." Another leader said, "United we have achieved something historic at San José Cabén, from now on, the community will never be the same."



# INDIA

As dusk falls in the red-light districts of India, men begin to roam the streets and women involved in prostitution dress up and look for customers. Hidden in the shadows are children, biding their time until they can return home. These children are exposed to a host of dangers—from witnessing their mothers experience violent sexual exploitation to being sexually abused themselves, or being trafficked and imprisoned in the commercial sex industry.

“Our objective in red-light areas is pretty clear. We would like to stop second-generation trafficking,” said Joseph Wesley, head of the Child Protection project. “Children have seen enough of what adults do and there is a risk that these children might

grow up accepting it as a way of life.”

The project overcame incredible opposition from pimps, political groups, and a grassroots organization of sex workers seeking to legalize prostitution. Project staff took a clear stand that the aim of the project was to protect children and their families. Completing the baseline was also highly risky and sensitive.

In addition to establishing two Child Friendly Learning and Recreation Centers for 84 children living in red-light districts, Girl Power groups for 1,032 girls, and Men Care groups for 72 men, the project revived the North Bengal Anti-trafficking Network, which has since rescued six children from sex trafficking.

At the request of the government, the project has begun strengthening nearly 100 government-established Child Protection Committees, which protect vulnerable children and help survivors of violence to get help.

Thank you for supporting this critical project, which will change the lives of many children and their families.



*Children find refuge in the Child Friendly Learning and Recreation Centers.*

**1,172** PEOPLE, INCLUDING 1,116 CHILDREN, have benefited from the project since it began in October 2015.



After Puja, 15, migrated to India from Bangladesh with her family, she received a marriage proposal from an unknown boy living in the state of Haryana, more than 1,000 miles away. His family offered a dowry of \$2,000 US dollars.

Due to female feticide, Haryana has a skewed birth sex ratio that makes it difficult for men to marry local women. Men often come to states like West Bengal, which has a more favorable birth sex ratio, to find wives. In India, young people cannot contract a civil marriage until a female is 18 and a male is 21. But in West Bengal, child marriage customs and high

dowry demands have prompted traffickers to pose as eager grooms so they can traffic girls for sexual exploitation.

The Men Care groups educate men on the dangers of child marriage and how traffickers may use dowry promises to lure girls into fraudulent marriages and violent exploitation. So when Puja received an extravagant proposal from a faraway stranger, a local Men Care group sensed trouble. Before they could intervene, Puja was married in a traditional ceremony and taken to her new husband's home. The Men Care group informed the police and an investigation was launched. Police subsequently brought Puja back safely to her family.

Although Puja and her husband remain married according to traditional customs, she will live in Darjeeling until she is 18 years old. With help from her family and World Vision, she is learning about human trafficking and receiving support to discern her husband's true intentions. If he is found to be trustworthy, she will have the choice to return to him when she is of legal marriage age. In the meantime, with World Vision's support, she is finishing her education.

# KENYA

World Vision is working with children, parents, teachers, tribal elders, community leaders, governments, and churches to eliminate female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C), child marriage, and other forms of child abuse in Kenya.

At the Morpus Primary school, 20 girls have been rescued from FGM/C or other abuses thus far in 2018, compared to 12 girls in all of 2017. This increase was facilitated by the attendance of parents and community members at community change dialogues.

Alternative rite of passage events, which are week-long trainings offered annually, were attended by 476 girls and 233 boys (as well as 2,800 adults).

Currently 1,884 students are attending classes at the five project schools. Thanks to this project, 125 children who were rescued from FGM/C, child marriage, or child labor received scholarships for their secondary school fees. In addition, 153 children who are vulnerable to harm received scholarships, 33 of which were for vocational training.

Thirty faith communities took action to protect children from harm by establishing ministries. One church is using three of their structures to serve as classrooms for young children who can't attend schools that are far away.

One pastor trained in Channels of Hope, Matthew Kalele, said,

"Awareness on child rights has become part of my life. I walk with the message wherever I go. I take advantage of any forum or gathering I attend to create awareness on child rights protection."

Through your support, this project is raising up leaders of all ages and from all walks of life to become agents of change in their communities.



**511,063** PEOPLE, INCLUDING 305,087 CHILDREN, reached through child protection initiatives since the beginning of the project.

3,087 girls and boys report taking action to prevent violence against children in their communities.



11,462 parents/caregivers are committed to reporting abuse against children.



249 faith communities are mobilized and taking action to protect children.



Lucy Chesang Siwa, 16, is the daughter of a chief and in grade 12 at St. Cecilia Girls Secondary School. She had heard her father say that the practice of FGM/C is harmful, but she didn't understand the depth of the issue until she attended a one-week alternative rite of passage training. She learned about the misconceptions perpetuated by her culture, which allowed the community to uphold the practice for so many years. Lucy was elected to serve as the girls' president during the training, and was asked to speak at their graduation ceremony.

"Why are my people so obsessed with this outdated practice, whereas the whole world has embraced the advancement and empowerment of the girl child?" she asked the graduation crowd. Later she said, "Somehow [my election] re-ignited new enthusiasm in me to be on the frontline of advocating for the elimination of this retrogressive practice among my community, just like my father does."

# MOZAMBIQUE

When girls in Mozambique, as young as 12 years old sometimes, are forced into child marriage, they are set on a path that robs them of their education, autonomy, economic potential, good health, and safety. In essence, they become trapped in a lifetime of poverty. Despite that child marriage is illegal, many families feel pressured into marrying their young daughters due to poverty or cultural tradition.

The Child Protection project in Mozambique is empowering communities to actively address the root causes of early marriage and other forms of violence against children. The project baseline survey revealed that nearly half of parents use violent measures to discipline their children.

Communities have mobilized to strengthen protection systems for children through Child Protection Committees, where members help meet the needs of the most vulnerable children and report child protection

concerns to authorities. Eighty Child Protection Committee members, 40 local partners (including the police), and 20 youth club facilitators were trained in providing psychosocial support to children suffering from abuse, neglect, and violence.

While 300 young people learned about child rights through youth groups, faith leaders formed congregational action teams to proactively care for the well-being of children and their families. Sixty trainings on the Celebrating Families approach were held with church members.

Children took a lead role in advocating for change through Child Parliament and a landmark National Girls Conference. The Parliament sessions gave children an opportunity to call for duty bearers to promote the well-being of children. At the National

Girls Conference, participants drafted a petition called Voice of Girls to advocate for the following with the government: more schools, health centers, and police stations in rural areas; easier access to scholarships; and more employment opportunities for youth.

Thank you for your commitment to making a difference for children in Mozambique.



*Priest Ismael preaches about the harmful effects of child marriage and pregnancy on the well-being of girls.*

**15,859** **PEOPLE, INCLUDING 2,624 CHILDREN,** *have benefited from the project since it began in October 2016.*



Lina, 13, would have married an older man had community members not intervened. One day a man came to her house and offered clothes and food to the family. "I thought he was a relative of my parents who was willing to provide support to my family, given that we were going through really difficult days," she said. "But later I realized that he had bad intentions. He started harassing me, saying that I was beautiful and that I should go and live with him."

Amadeu, a member of a Child Protection Committee, learned that Lina was going to be forced to marry the man after he paid a visit to the family. He immediately reported the case to the chairman of the Committee, who in turn reported it to the local leader. The leader and members of the Child Protection Committee then met with Lina's parents and the groom-to-be to discuss the matter. The leader ruled that Lina was too young to marry and that arrangements for the marriage should be canceled. Lina's case is now under police investigation.

Not only do Child Protection Committees raise awareness about child marriage and how it impacts children, but they also play a paramount role in canceling child marriages when they hear about them through reporting mechanisms.



# SOUTHEAST ASIA

Violence against children can leave physical and emotional scars that last a lifetime. The Southeast Asia Child Protection project is taking holistic measures to create safer communities that protect children from violence, including trafficking.

Children, parents, and community members are being empowered with critical information about preventing and responding to violence. Capacity building is enhancing the effectiveness of informal and formal child protection mechanisms, such as child protection groups, and advocacy efforts are pushing for the implementation of laws that serve the best interests of children.

Public awareness events through campaigns, text messages, radio broadcasts, billboards, concerts, and school events in Cambodia and Vietnam educated thousands of people on the dangers of child marriage, trafficking, and other forms

of violence. As a result, 6,645 children and parents in Vietnam learned how to protect children from trafficking and 792 young people in Cambodia learned about Child Helpline, a free counseling telephone service.

Youth built essential life skills through school and community clubs while their parents learned how to better communicate with them and respond to their needs in gentle ways. In Cambodia, youth ambassadors learned how to teach other youth how to prevent trafficking with the Smart Navigator Toolkit. Additionally, nearly 200 faith leaders were trained to lead Celebrating Families in their communities and 68 were equipped to form congregational action teams after being introduced to Channels of Hope for Child Protection.

To help improve the lives of more children in Myanmar, the project

made policy recommendations to parliament while an amended child law is under review. It also supported two youth delegates to participate in a regional advocacy forum. In Cambodia, World Vision presented findings from its research on the prevalence of violence in schools to inform recommendations for a five-year operational plan for protecting children in schools.

Thank you for your commitment to helping to end violence against children in Southeast Asia.



**126,431** PEOPLE, INCLUDING 68,155 CHILDREN, have benefited from the project since it began in October 2016.



As a young girl, Sokhet became concerned about the safety of her siblings after her father died and she had to abandon school to work in the rice fields. She saw many incidents of violence in her community, and worried about her friends at school who were facing corporal punishment. Seeking a way to help children, Sokhet became a leader of a Child Protection Committee, where members help to identify children who have been abused and connect them with social services.

Recognizing that many community members do not report violations of child rights, Sokhet said, "If we want to see our children safe, we have to start

with ourselves. Teachers, authorities, community members, and parents have to be highly accountable for reporting all cases that they have known and heard in their area."

Sokhet is now implementing Celebrating Families with parents and their children. The approach encourages children to speak about issues that matter to them and helps parents to learn how to nurture their children's well-being. She worked to identify the families most in need of support, and then began leading groups of 25 people.

"We discussed the expectations and dreams we had," she said of leading a group. "Then we sat in a circle and listened to each other's story. The further along the conversation went, the more excited I became."

# UGANDA

The work of this project remains vitally important to the protection of children. A survey conducted in 2017 found that nearly one in five people believe that using children's body parts makes traditional medicine more powerful, and nearly 36 percent would use children's body parts if directed by a witch doctor.

Though these facts are sobering, we celebrate that, with God, nothing is impossible. In fact, no children have been sacrificed in our project areas so far this year.

Through capacity building and collaboration, communities are playing a prominent role in ensuring children's safety. Nearly 80 communities within the project areas are now using the Amber Alert system, and 160 local leaders were trained in the system

over the past six months.

This project is making a difference in the number of children who feel safe in their schools and are empowered to protect themselves, and in the number of parents taking responsibility for their children.

Thousands of children participated in school and community clubs, parliaments, and life skills classes, which empowered them to make good decisions, protect themselves, and influence their peers and policymakers on issues affecting children's safety.

The project worked with 25 schools to develop action plans for addressing violence in their schools and the rate of children dropping out. Each of the 25 schools created a safety team—comprising Child Protection

Committee members, Parent Teacher Association members, teachers, faith leaders, and students—that hold the schools accountable to their plans and support children who have been harmed.

Grave harm against children is no longer being hidden as it was only a few years ago, and children are being saved. Thank you for your support.



**96,298** PEOPLE, INCLUDING 82,116 CHILDREN\*, have benefited from the project since it began in October 2016.

**17,744** report taking action to prevent violence against children in their communities

Four-year target: 23,136

77%



In our project communities, it is tragically common for abuse against children to go unreported. Many children lack a place to feel safe and don't have adults they can trust to protect them.

Nyaketcho Agath, 15, and Achieng Blatina, 17, are sisters who experienced years of abuse by their father. Recently, he came home drunk and slashed holes in the girls' school uniforms because he felt that they were not obeying him. Without uniforms, the girls would be unable to attend school.

However, the girls had recently attended life skills classes that taught them about their rights and the systems in place to help children who are experiencing abuse. This time, the sisters broke their silence and told a Child Protection Committee member about their situation. The Committee helped the children report their case to the police, and their father was arrested. Together, the family, Committee members, and a local council chairperson worked out a plan to give this family new hope. A child protection officer counseled the father, who was then tasked with writing down his commitments to end the violence in their home. He agreed to working closely with the Committee to change his behaviors. The father has reformed, according to the Committee, and is taking good care of his children.

\* The project focused on the same people counted in the January 2018 report, so this number has not increased.



## PURSuing EDUCATION IN A BLEAK PLACE

*A young girl in India achieves her dream despite the odds*

Riya\* has experienced many trials in her 14 years of life, including nursing an abusive alcoholic father and, after she was sent away to an aunt's home, being forced to become a domestic servant in a large household. She dreamed of getting an education while helping her cousins prepare to go to school every day.

"It hurts to see someone your age progressing in life, when you are kept back. No child should have to face this," said Riya.

Her mother, Latika,\* has also suffered many hardships, including being married twice—the first time as a child. Fleeing poverty and an abusive husband, she felt she had no choice but to take up prostitution in order to support her two children.

After Riya's aunt threatened to marry off Riya, Latika brought her daughter to live with her in a red-light district so that Riya would not face the same fate as a child bride. But living in this area comes with new risks, such as being sexually abused, trafficked, or prostituted.

After Latika heard about the Child Friendly Learning and Recreation Center (CFLRC), she began sending her daughter there. Riya then enrolled in a government school, with the help of her CFLRC teacher. She continues to attend after-school coaching at the CFLRC.

"Today my worries are very different as compared to before," she said, adding that

"... even though I was kept away from books when I was young, I will still succeed because I now have the opportunity."

Now she is dreaming of becoming a police officer. Her mother, who has worked in a brothel for 11 years, also has dreams—of a time when she will no longer have to engage in prostitution and she can own a small plot of land, open up a shop, or farm.

"I don't like this place. Every day is difficult for me. I don't know when that peace will come, when I can just live happily with my children," said Latika.

In the midst of these great trials, Latika is relieved that her daughter is going to school. "I always wanted her to study and I know how much she loves to study," said Latika.

With a smile, Riya said, "I'm happy that I have gotten this opportunity and I won't let this place define me. But I'll be happier when more girls are helped."

*\* Names changed to protect identities.*

“A few months ago, I thought it was my fate to accept my mother’s profession and that I too would be forced to get into the same line. But today ... I feel like I can do anything now because I’m finally going to school.”

—Riya, 14



World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. Motivated by our faith in Jesus Christ, we serve alongside the poor and oppressed as a demonstration of God's unconditional love for all people. World Vision serves all people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender.

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