



World Vision®

# CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

PROGRESS REPORT: October 2015 through September 2016

*Prepared January 2017*

# CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

## GLOBAL SUMMARY

### *A time of endings and new beginnings*

As this fiscal year closes, it marks the completion of three projects—Ethiopia, India, and Zambia.

This report celebrates the significant successes each of these projects has experienced, exceeding project targets and leaving in place local churches that have taken to heart the Bible's call to care for the vulnerable.

Pages 4, 6, and 9 report on project final evaluations, including accomplishments as well as suggested improvements that will inform future projects.

The pilot Christian Discipleship project in Kenya (page 7) will be expanding from three to 12 program areas next fiscal year. Our existing project in El Salvador (page 2) will be winding down next year.

We are excited to announce the launch of three new Christian Discipleship projects in fiscal year 2017. These include the Philippines, Central America (El Salvador and Honduras), and Ethiopia.

We are humbled and grateful for your faithful commitment to helping



local churches in their ministry and ensuring that children and youth have abundant opportunities to learn about and experience God's love. Without your prayers and support, none of this would be possible. Thank you.

## GLOBAL UPDATE

**227,147** PEOPLE benefited from ministry activities since October 2015.



*35,377 children and youth participated in discipleship activities.*



*9,095 pastors and church leaders were trained in theology and children's ministry.*



*1,048 churches engaged in holistic ministry to serve people in need in their communities.*

## FISCAL YEAR 2016 SPENDING

**\$8,851,407** spent

**\$9,016,229** program-to-date funding

**98%**

# EL SALVADOR



Doors are opening for the impact of World Vision's work with Salvadoran churches to continue to expand. In addition to exceeding all the original

project targets, we are seeing local churches embrace their role as spiritual leaders in their communities and expand their ministries. On average, participating churches committed \$6 for every \$1 invested by World Vision in ministry activities.

This project has benefited 289,498 people since it began in July 2012, including 39,152 in FY16. Some of the key FY16 accomplishments include:

- Held workshops on child well-being issues for more than 1,000 churches. As a result, 223 churches joined the solidarity fasting initiative to raise awareness of child hunger.
- Supported the creation of 220 Hope Teams, which are leading ministries in their churches. The project mentored the Hope Teams that are leading conflict resolution workshops in local schools to reduce violence. The project also worked with national and local government entities to demonstrate the effectiveness of Hope Teams, with the goal of developing new funding sources for these teams to continue and expand their work once this project is complete next year.

Please pray for project activities that are encouraging a culture of peace in families and communities, and for churches that are assisting victims of violence.

*70,213 children and youth participated in discipleship activities, including 8,853 in FY16.*

Five-Year Target: 23,375 **300%**

*4,847 pastors and church leaders were trained in theology and children's ministry, including 935 in FY16.*

Five-Year Target: 3,000 **162%**

*1,012 churches engaged in holistic ministry to serve people in need, including 479 in FY16.*

Five-Year Target: 1,000 **101%**

## *Teen becomes a leader for peace*

When her parents fled El Salvador to escape death threats from local gangs, Jocelyn was forced to live with extended family in a home filled with violent arguments and abuse. She says the atmosphere caused her to be rebellious—until she learned about peaceful conflict resolution at a youth center started by nuns trained by World Vision. Now she is a leader in de-escalating arguments in her home, a model student, and is mentoring younger children.





# ETHIOPIA



The goal of the Ethiopia Christian Witness Project (FY12-FY16) was to equip faith leaders to minister to those in need in their communities.

Altogether, the project benefited 322,364 people, including 62,320 in FY16. The project's success (for more detail, see page 4) has encouraged us to launch a new Christian Discipleship project in Ethiopia beginning in December 2016, which will focus directly on nurturing the Christian formation of children and youth.

One of the unique accomplishments of the project was creating nearly 100 faith-based forums (FBFs) in which Christian and Muslim leaders learned to work together, forming friendships that promoted peace in their communities. During FY16, FBFs supported families severely affected by drought. The participation of faith leaders (rather than just local government as is typical)

reassured the community that all families were fairly treated.

The project trained Sunday school teachers to involve children in demonstrating their faith. In FY16, 1,544 children participated in leading worship in their churches through songs, drama, and teaching. The project also supported churches in the creation of nine child development centers, providing places for children to play and learn to socialize in constructive environments that aren't usually available for children in rural areas.

Please pray for peace for the people of Ethiopia, where riots are causing disruptions in many of World Vision's program areas.

*33,210 children and youth participated in discipleship activities, including 8,790 in FY16.*

Five-Year Target: 10,000

332%

*8,108 pastors and faith leaders were trained in theology and children's ministry, including 2,948 in FY16.*

Five-Year Target 1.710

474%

*260 churches engaged in holistic ministry to serve people in need, including 46 in FY16.*

Five-Year Target: 128

203%

## *Teen learns to advocate for education for herself and others*

Leila, age 15, has become a young leader in her community. Although she was a good student, her family didn't support her desire for an education, forcing her to spend most of her time performing household duties. Training from World Vision taught her how to advocate for herself. Now, her family treats her and her brothers more equally. She is the chairperson of her district's child parliament, and is working to promote children's rights to education. She dreams of becoming an activist to fight harmful traditional practices that lead to child abuse.



# ETHIOPIA FINAL EVALUATION

The final evaluation of the project was conducted in June 2016. The evaluation stated that:

- Children who learned about the Bible through methods appropriate to their age (e.g., games, songs) were eager to share their faith with parents and friends who weren't believers.
- Creating collaboration between faith leaders of different faiths was a daring step that effectively promoted community changes that benefited women and children.
- The project's training helped faith leaders look at culture through a faith lens, rather than through a

cultural lens, providing the inner conviction needed for them to take the lead to change harmful practices. Faith leaders' influence has led to demonstrated decreases in child marriage, female genital mutilation, and marriage by kidnapping.

- Parents who learned about positive parenting and equitable gender roles created more loving and safe home environments, enabling them to better nurture their children's spiritual growth.
- Involving children who have not yet learned to accept harmful traditional practices and are willing to learn new ideas is pivotal to inspire change throughout communities.

Because of this, the evaluation recommended including even more training for children in future projects.

Some of the areas noted for improvement were:

- The project could have focused more on teens (in addition to younger children), because churches have few Bible study materials that engage this age group's interest.
- Holding more training workshops in rural locations (rather than larger cities in each district) may have increased participation. (Although program targets for training already were exceeded.)

*"I am an expert and head of women and children affairs office, but used to think that parenting is providing food, clothing and shelter to children. I did not know the importance of emotional care and support for children. [World Vision's] training helped me become a good mother."*

—Head of Women and Children Affairs Office, Mersa program area

## The project's final evaluation reported:

Children sharing their faith with parents and non-believing friends

Attendance at church-based Sunday schools

Peaceful co-existence in multifaith communities

Marital and family conflicts in targeted communities

Divorce rates in targeted communities



# INDIA CHURCH IS OUR NEIGHBOR



*In 2016, World Vision held the sixth annual Rupantran youth internship program for 240 participants, mobilizing middle-class youth to inspire their churches to reach out to impoverished communities.*

The Church is Our Neighbor project reflected a big shift in our approach to the poor in India. Our passion was to challenge and equip local churches to be agents of transformation in their neighborhoods and rediscover their vital role in caring for the poor. The success of this project is demonstrated in the final evaluation results on page 6.

Indian pastors have learned to look beyond the walls of their own churches to the children and families who are hurting and hungry in nearby communities. They've led their churches to a better understanding of the Bible's call to care for the poor and the fatherless. Churches have answered that call by ministering to children and families with food,

clothing, medical care, educational assistance—and most of all, the love of Jesus. Your prayers and support have made this transformation possible.

Project activities have reached 131,482 people since October 2011, including 59,293 in FY16. But the actual reach is much greater through the ministries started by individual churches. Participating churches also are sharing their passion for outreach with their denominations, which will continue to expand this project's impact.

Please pray that alumni of the Rupantran internship program will be a powerful influence and inspire their churches' youth groups to engage with ministries that reach out to children and families living in poverty.

*6,608 children and youth participated in discipleship activities, including 2,445 in FY16.*

**Five-Year Target: 2,000 330%**

*12,291 pastors and church leaders were trained in theology and children's ministry, including 4,045 in FY16.*

**Five-Year Target 5,000 246%**

*668 churches engaged in holistic ministry to serve people in need, including 220 in FY16.*

**Five-Year Target: 400 167%**

## *Taking a stand, making a difference*

Pastor Varinder Kumar used to think that serving the poor meant an occasional missions outreach project. World Vision's training made him realize that although preaching and prayer meetings are important, God also calls Christians to care for the physical needs of the poor. Now his church is reaching out—mentoring impoverished families and providing educational assistance. "When the pastor speaks, the people listen," said Pastor Varinder. "And people in my church told me that I've made a good stand."



# INDIA FINAL EVALUATION

An evaluation of the results of the Church is Our Neighbor project was completed in June 2016. The evaluation validated the positive effect the program has had, while also identifying some areas for improvement.

The majority of evaluation participants agreed that the project was effective in building churches' awareness about people living in poverty, and equipping them for outreach ministries. Compared to the baseline survey completed in 2013, the number of churches that reported always or often supporting the poor has increased from 42 percent to 64 percent. Ninety-two percent of churches reported using some resources to care for those in need, even if their outreach is less frequent.

The evaluation showed that Rupantran internships were successful in mobilizing youth to reach out in their

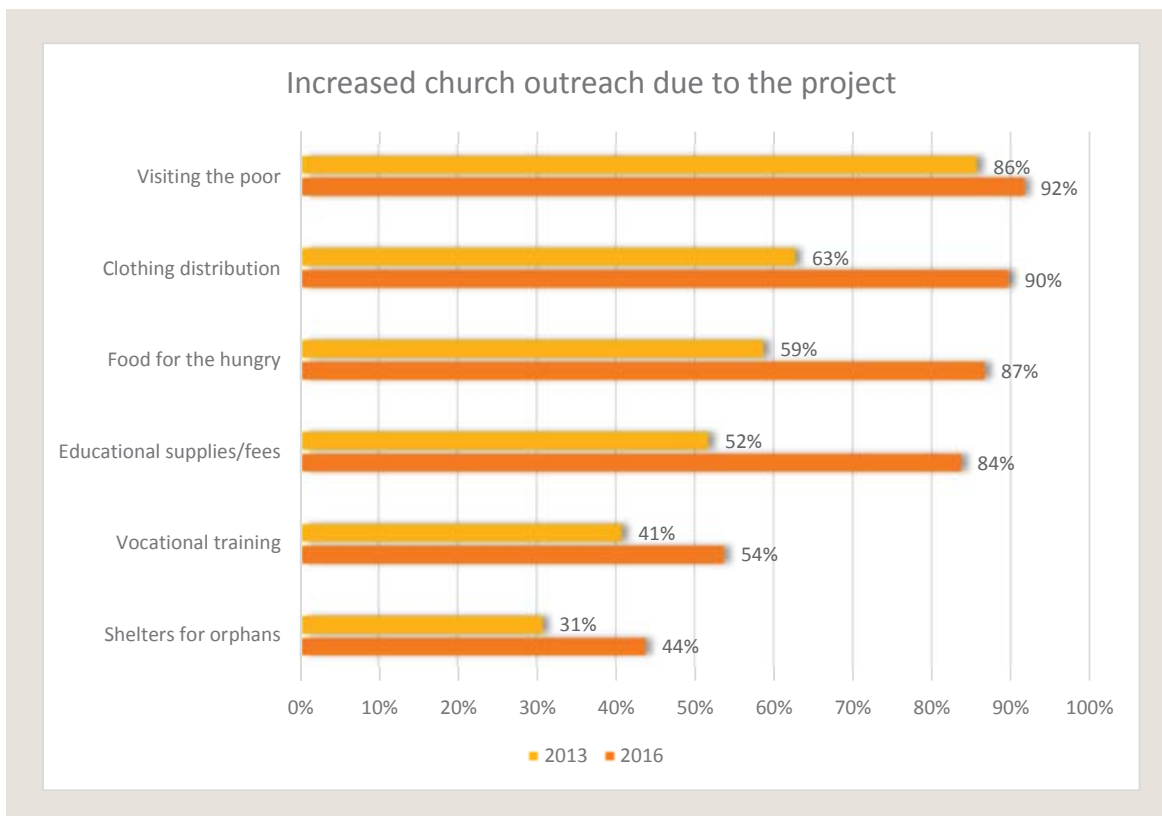
communities. The Integral Mission workshops were seen as successful in bringing together churches of different denominations and helping them see the larger picture of the kingdom of God, including caring for the weak and vulnerable.

Several areas were identified as needing improvement:

- The project was not as successful in engaging church congregations as it was in engaging church leaders. While pastors often were able to inspire their congregations, more intentional engagement with church members could have expanded these churches' ministry efforts.
- Youth involved in Rupantran experienced significant personal change, but were not always able to carry their enthusiasm back to their own churches to mobilize youth groups to become engaged.

- World Vision staff outside of the core project team had a limited understanding of Integral Mission. As a result, only about one-third of ongoing World Vision program areas include churches as strategic partners in their work in impoverished communities.

Although the Church is Our Neighbor project was scheduled to be completed at the end of fiscal year 2016 (September 2016), the remaining project funding will be used during FY17 to address these issues and better ensure long-term sustainability of the project's successes. This will include activities such as Integral Mission refresher training for churches and for World Vision staff outside of the project core team; work with churches on strategies such as Integral Mission Sundays to engage their congregations; and more intentional involvement of Rupantran alumni in outreach activities.



# KENYA



View a video from the Bible club at Kinze Primary School in Kalawa:  
<https://vimeo.com/179234692>

The Kenya Christian Discipleship Project has reached 54,422 people since the beginning of the pilot project in 2014, giving church leaders the skills to better minister to children and families in their congregations.

We are excited at the launch of the project into nine new program areas in October 2016, for a total of 12 areas altogether. Thank you for your prayers and support that are making this possible.

Some of the key accomplishments in FY16 include:

- Training 154 children's ministry leaders who reach nearly 5,400 children in churches and school Bible clubs.

- Organizing a week-long camp for 120 youth leaders to equip them to assist in leading Bible clubs.
- Supporting the 140 pastors studying theology through Scott University.
- Holding workshops for pastors in Changamwe, where the population is 60 percent Muslim, to help them find common ground and reach out to their Muslim neighbors in Christian love without confrontation or fear.

Please pray for the children's ministry leaders who have been trained this year, as they apply what they've learned in their Sunday schools and school Bible clubs.

*14,921 children and youth participated in discipleship activities, including 10,921 in FY16.*



*629 pastors and church leaders were trained in theology, development, and children's ministry, including 154 in FY16.*



*207 churches engaged in holistic ministry to serve people in need, including 147 in FY16.*



## *Bible club brings change to school*

Bernard, age 14, knew little about Jesus or the Bible until his schoolteacher was trained by World Vision on starting an after-school Bible club. "Through the Bible club, I learned and prayed to receive Jesus in my life," says Bernard.

Bernard is now a leader in the Bible club, plays drums with his church worship team, and helps clean the church. "My favorite Bible verse is Matthew 5:9 ... for it assures me I am a child of God," he says.





# ZAMBIA



*Hakola Mudenda (left) is leading a group discussion on the qualities of good leaders. His participation in the Christian Witness Project taught him to serve as a peer educator for other youth. "I appreciate that the training ... has helped me to be more responsible as a young person," he says.*

The Zambia Christian Witness Project has touched the lives of 115,051 people since it started October 2011, including 11,960 in FY16.

As the project completed its final months, key activities included theological training for 56 pastors in Mbeza and Twachiyanda, training for 36 Sunday school and Bible club leaders, holding a children's camp, and organizing a celebration for the Day of the African Child in which nearly 200 children had the opportunity to make their concerns known to community leaders. Chipso Ngandu, a girl from Sichimbwali, spoke out strongly about her right to stay in school and not be forced into child marriage—eliciting cheers from other children.

The project's successes (see evaluation on page 9) were possible only because of your support. "I would like to express my gratitude to the donors for your unwavering commitment," says Victor Simuchimba, project manager. "Your giving has touched many lives. Pastors have been equipped to meet the needs of the community in more than spiritual ways. Children are growing in the knowledge of God and can respond to their neighbor with God's love and grace."

Give praise that although the project is ending, these activities will continue under the direction of World Vision Church Engagement facilitators. Pray that local churches will continue to grow in their ministry to their communities.

*21,447 children and youth participated in discipleship activities, including 368 in FY16.*

**Five-Year Target: 4,400 487%**

*1,999 pastors and church leaders were trained in theology and children's ministry, including 538 in FY16.*

**Five-Year Target 440 454%**

*790 churches engaged in holistic ministry to serve people in need, including 96 in FY16.*

**Five-Year Target: 660 120%**

## *Transformed by the transforming Word of God*

Lawrence Mweetwa (at right in the photo) is a church leader from Sichimbwali who admits that his preaching previously was not very strong as it reflected his shallow understanding of the Bible.

After participating in the Christian Witness Project's theological training, he says, "The training has helped me to have a balanced understanding of God's Word. I am now able to preach with deep understanding. ... The facilitators dug into the Word and brought out life-transforming insights."



# ZAMBIA FINAL EVALUATION

The goal of the Zambia Christian Witness Project was to equip churches as leaders in meeting spiritual and physical needs in their communities. The project's final evaluation took place in four program areas, including Mwamba and Buyantanshi because they were the first communities the program reached five years ago. The program's long-term impact is evident in these areas today.

Some of the evaluation's findings include:

- Community fears that teaching about gender equality would destabilize marriages were allayed

by World Vision's Scripture-based teaching. This was respected by the community and created a healthy basis for discussing gender issues.

- Pastors gained entrepreneurial skills, enabling them to serve as shining examples of overcoming poverty through personal initiative.
- The program saved time and money by working with established partners that had existing training materials. However, program participants said they would have found it helpful to have the materials in local languages with handouts they could review later.

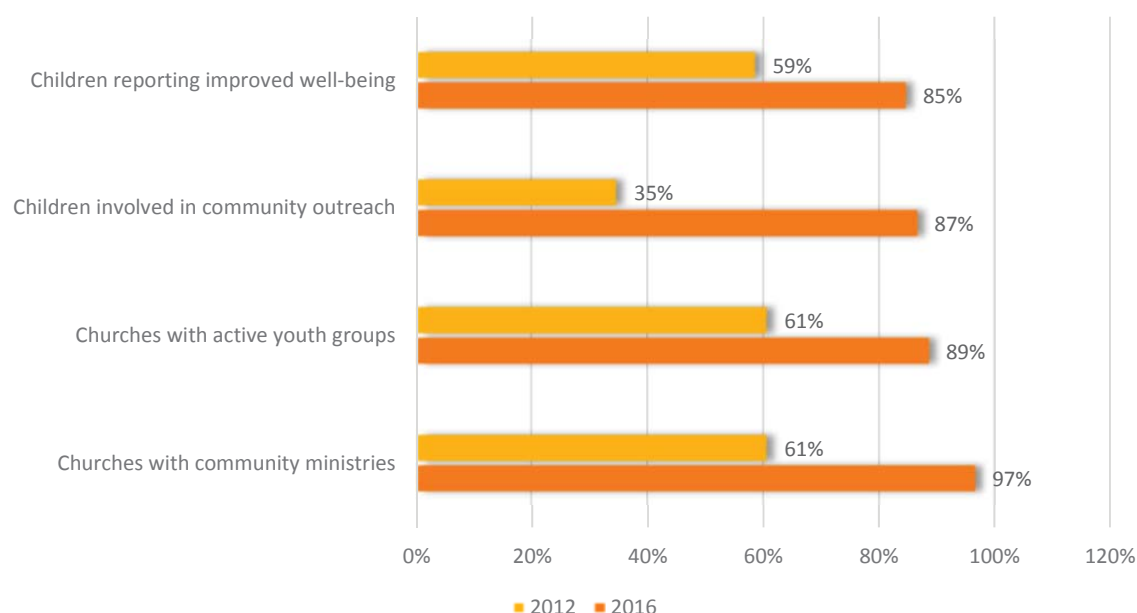
- All trainings were interactive, which increased participants' understanding of the materials.

The evaluation's key recommendation was to mainstream the Christian Witness Project's activities into World Vision's ongoing community development work. This will provide the opportunity for more follow-up with community members after initial trainings. It also uses the project's proven strategy of engaging local churches to ensure long-term sustainability of the changes introduced into each community.

*"We have seen a lot of changes. Previously ... I would be overwhelmed by the cases of child neglect, spousal battering, drunkenness, all sorts. But since the coming of this project, I have a lot of time to concentrate on other community developmental issues. My village has changed for the better."*

—Village leader

Church/community changes as a result of the project



# SING A NEW SONG TO THE LORD

*Yerosen's earliest experiences with Sunday school left her with little understanding of Jesus' love. But after her church participated in the Ethiopia Christian Witness Project, she learned to love stories from the Bible and found her voice in the church choir.*

Although Yerosen's parents faithfully brought her to church each Sunday as a child, she says that she really didn't learn much about Jesus.

"We used to simply go to church, spend some time with friends, and get back home with no knowledge added," she says.

The Sunday school volunteers at Yerosen's church realized they weren't teaching effectively, despite their desire to help a new generation grow in their love for God.

One of the teachers, Genet, says, "At the beginning, I volunteered at the church to teach small kids, only because I love children." But she knew that simply reading the Bible to them really didn't engage the children's interest.

This changed after Genet attended World Vision's training for Sunday school teachers.



*Yerosen sings with her church choir.*

"I now know and feel confident that children benefit from what I am teaching them," she says. "I say this because I see their development and their day-to-day interaction. All our children in the Sunday school are polite, confident in expressing themselves, and they are good performers in their formal education, too."

As Genet and the other teachers began to use interactive methods such as games, skits, and memory verses, children participated more enthusiastically, which increased their understanding of the Bible.

Yerosen noticed the difference in her Sunday school. As teachers caught

the attention and imagination of the children, Yerosen says she became more interested in listening to Bible stories.

But Yerosen's real passion is music. She loves the worship songs she learned in Sunday school and decided to join the church choir. Although she was nervous at first, now she says she is "happy and confident to perform any time." Her dream is to write and record her own songs on an album some day.

"I am grateful to World Vision for ... giving me the chance to teach children in a better way," says Genet.

*"I know I can preach the Word of God through the songs I sing."*

*—Yerosen Tilahun, age 14, Shashemene program area in Ethiopia*



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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