

A photograph of three young children, two girls and one boy, sitting at a wooden table. They are all smiling and resting their heads on their hands. Behind them is a large, colorful educational display on a yellow wall. The display includes various cutouts: a calendar with months like February, April, July, and October; a 'The Week' section with days of the week (Monday, Tuesday) and corresponding fruit cutouts; a 'The numbers' section with numbers 1 and 2; and color words like RED, BLUE, YELLOW, and GREEN in colorful shapes. The World Vision logo is in the top right corner.

World Vision®

EMERGENCY
RELIEF

SYRIA AND IRAQ CRISES »

2017 RESPONSE UPDATE

Prepared March 2018

EMERGENCY RELIEF FOR THE SYRIA AND IRAQ CRISES

A LETTER FROM RICH STEARNS

Last Fall, I returned from my third visit to Lebanon, where one of every four people is a refugee. This beautiful Mediterranean country is staggering under the extra burden of displaced Syrians. But it's the refugee families who continue to suffer the most.

I visited a tented settlement in the Bekaa Valley that had been rebuilt after a fire swept through four months ago, destroying everything. About 100 families had to start all over again—heartbreaking. But World Vision is standing with them. One of our staff members was among the first on the scene after the fire. And our Bekaa team is helping them recover, including providing clean water and sanitation.

What gives me so much hope is that World Vision is not alone in assisting refugees. We have strong church partners who are in this crisis for the long haul. They are forming deep relationships with refugee families as they meet their basic needs. By providing education for underserved refugee children, churches are investing in these boys' and girls' futures. Most of all, their unconditional love is a powerful demonstration of the love of God—and it's making a deep impression. Talking with Syrian refugees who are now attending church services was deeply moving for me personally.

As you read through this report, I hope that you too are profoundly touched by the stories of renewal and examples of tangible impact in the midst of unimaginable hardship. And I pray you are encouraged by the critical role you are playing as part of the body of Christ responding to one of today's greatest humanitarian crises. Thank you for your unwavering dedication.

May God bless you,

Rich



In Lebanon, Rich visited a tented settlement in the Bekaa Valley (top), and met with church leaders who are partnering with World Vision to serve refugees in unique and profound ways. Maher el Hajj, director for Youth For Christ Lebanon (lower photo), is providing youth with educational and spiritual support, vocational training, and opportunities for reconciliation.

2017 RESPONSE OVERVIEW

785,760 PEOPLE EVERY MONTH* received life-saving and life-changing emergency relief in 2017. In December alone:
*on average

- 290,000 refugees in Jordan and Lebanon received food assistance
- 477,000 people in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria benefited from clean water, sanitation, and hygiene services
- 23,660 people in Jordan and Iraq received livelihoods assistance
- 41,900 people in Syria and Iraq gained access to medical care

CRISIS UPDATE

Through the faithfulness of our donors and partners, World Vision is deepening our commitment to the world's most vulnerable children, including those in Syria and Iraq.

World Vision is responding near the front lines of war across these crises, reaching hundreds of thousands of people each month with humanitarian aid. Tragically, the war in Syria has killed more than 500,000 people in the seven years since it began.

The crises saw significant changes over the past year. The city of Raqqa, ISIL's former stronghold in Syria, was retaken by a coalition of fighters supported by the United States in

October 2017. In July, Iraq's city of Mosul was liberated from ISIL after months of heavy fighting. Thousands of Iraqis are starting to return to their home cities. For them, the future holds fresh promise, and significant challenges.

While World Vision maintains our support for the millions still living in refugee camps and informal settlements, we also have begun to assist families that are returning to their homes and attempting to rebuild their lives among the rubble.

This humanitarian crisis is far from over. Currently, more than 13 million people are in need of assistance in

Syria, including 3 million in hard-to-reach and besieged areas. More than 5.1 million Syrians are still living as refugees in surrounding nations. In Iraq, 2.6 million people have been forcibly displaced from their homes.

The children of Syria and Iraq remain the most vulnerable people in this conflict. Yet it is the children who will be tasked with moving their nations forward, toward peace and stability.

Thank you for partnering with World Vision to reach children who would otherwise be a forgotten and lost generation.

WHERE WE WORK

World Vision's emergency relief locations:



2017 HIGHLIGHTS

Health

World Vision made great strides over the past year in our aim to provide the most vulnerable people of Iraq and Syria with essential medical services.

Through local partners, we launched three healthcare clinics in southern Syria, where no services previously existed for tens of thousands of

people. The clinics are now screening for malnutrition and providing affected children with treatment.

Although grant funding is now supporting these clinics, it was gifts from private donors in the U.S. that allowed World Vision to begin this vital work (read more on page 7).

In Iraq, World Vision served an average of 13,000 people per month through health clinics, including mobile units that reach displaced people living in hard-to-reach areas. In two camps, we also provided women and children with mental health services to help them recover from trauma and loss.

Life-saving Healthcare for Children Fleeing Violence

In February 2017, 4-year-old Moratab and her family fled Hawija, a city in northern Iraq, after hunger and death threats drove them to risk the dangerous journey to escape. Shortly after they arrived in a camp, Moratab fell ill. In August, her situation dramatically declined when uncontrollable vomiting took over her body. Moratab's father learned about a World Vision health clinic, where she finally received the treatment she needed. Children like Moratab, who have been displaced by conflict and now live in camps and host communities, are most at risk and in need of support.

With funding from the Office of U.S Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), World Vision set up seven mobile and static clinics in northern Iraq to provide life-saving healthcare to thousands of the most vulnerable children and their families.



The people of Atmeh, Syria, celebrated the grand opening of a new hospital on May 25, 2017, thanks to the support of private donors in the U.S. and institutional partners.

Located near the Turkish border, this facility is the sole provider of healthcare for women and children in the area, and the only hospital in northern Syria that offers radiology services and pediatric ventilators. These two services alone will save countless lives in the years ahead.

"If it wasn't for the hospital, my baby would have died," said the father of one of the first infants born at the new hospital.

An average of 5,000 women and children visit this hospital each month.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

Every month, World Vision serves between 350,000 to 500,000 people across Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon with water, sanitation, and hygiene services.

These services are ultimately essential in World Vision's work to save lives and reduce suffering across the crises in Syria and Iraq. Besides providing access to clean drinking water, they:

- Prevent outbreaks of disease and illness
- Help people maintain their overall health by equipping them with the tools for proper hygiene
- Preserve human dignity
- Build a foundation for resilience in the communities
- Free up children to attend school or informal education classes



Where water systems do not exist, World Vision installs tanks that are refilled with clean water on an ongoing basis, until longer-term solutions are in place.

In Jordan, World Vision ensures that 20 tons of solid waste is collected on a daily basis for nearly 32,000 refugees in Azraq camp. Though we are blessed in most areas of the U.S. with efficient sewer and garbage systems, one can imagine what life in this camp would be like without this critical service.

In the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon, we deliver water to areas that don't have water systems, or where the systems are insufficient to serve the influx of people to the area. These activities keep people alive and healthy until longer-term water solutions are developed.

Whenever possible, World Vision helps families keep their children healthy and in school. In Idlib, Syria, we rehabilitated the water and sewer systems in 18 schools to provide children with safe drinking water and a healthier learning environment. In addition, World Vision stepped in to provide emergency sewage system rehabilitation services for 80,000 people living in and around A'zaz, Syria—where a high concentration of displaced people have settled.

In Iraq, World Vision is helping families return to their home cities by rehabilitating water networks that were destroyed in the conflict. We also continue to support those who are displaced. In one new camp, we constructed latrines and showers over the summer months. These gender-separate facilities promote safety and dignity for all.

Food and Emergency Supplies

Through the support of our donors and a partnership with the World Food Program, World Vision is reaching vulnerable families with food, warm bedding, heaters, cooking kits, shelter materials, and other essential supplies.

Currently, these distributions are focused in Jordan and Iraq, with smaller distributions in South Syria

and Lebanon. In Jordan, we served over 7,000 children across four camp schools with a daily meal. Not only does this program ensure proper nutrition for children, it also allows parents to prioritize their children's education.

Whenever possible, it is preferable to provide families with food support through distribution of

cash and e-vouchers that they can use to purchase the food supplies of their choice. This stimulates local economies and allows families to purchase their highest priority items.

Though the amount of money may not seem significant, it is a lifeline to displaced families. In Iraq, a typical cash card provides 20,000 Iraqi dinars, which equates to roughly \$17.

Child Protection and Education

Children across the crises in Syria and Iraq face many challenges. Often their days consist of being cooped up in their tents or wandering the camp. Some families resort to child labor to ease their financial burden, or child marriage, which is sometimes considered the best way to protect and provide for their daughters. The children's normal development is disrupted, and their rights are taken away.

Education is key to protecting children and helping them recover. Across the region, World Vision is providing educational opportunities to children, and advocating for their safety in many ways.

In camps across Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon, World Vision installed solar panels to provide lighting that helps maintain safety at night, especially for women and girls who are vulnerable to assault.

In Jordan's Azraq camp, we created a 32-team soccer league for refugee children, which provides them with a safe and constructive outlet.

In other areas, World Vision is training teachers, equipping parents with coping and parenting skills, and providing safe spaces for children to learn and play.

Education in Lebanon

Throughout 2017, 7-year-old Ahmad attended a World Vision education center in the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon, an area that hosts hundreds of thousands of Syrian families in tented settlements. Ahmad gained critical skills in reading, writing, and math at the center—and developed a sense of confidence and acceptance among his peers. This was especially important because a past arm injury left him feeling embarrassed and hesitant in social settings. But now, “I love it here,” says Ahmad, “I made two best friends.”



In Lebanon, 200 refugee children ages 3 to 6 are attending a World Vision early childhood education center that is helping prepare them for formal schooling. The children ride in buses from the informal tented settlements and attend either morning or afternoon sessions. In colorfully decorated classrooms staffed by attentive teachers, the kids learn Arabic and English—as well as numbers, colors, good hygiene practices, problem-solving, and social skills.

Equipping Churches to Serve Refugees

By working through local churches across the region, World Vision is maximizing its reach to vulnerable families. Often, our church partners can go where no other organization can. Below are a few highlights from last year's work:

- In Lebanon, 19 churches and Christian organizations are assisting thousands of people with a variety of services. The Baptist Church of Rayak developed a vocational training program that is teaching refugee women how to sew and sell traditional clothing. Toward the end of 2017, the group received an order to sew school uniforms for children in one of the refugee camps.

Working through Youth for Christ, World Vision equipped a youth center in Bourj Hammoud to provide Christian and Muslim youth with a safe place to discuss their differences, build peaceful relationships, and participate in recreational activities and vocational training.

- In Jordan, World Vision partnered with the Catholic Church's Messengers of Peace to provide families with cash assistance for meeting their most urgent needs such as housing, food, and healthcare. One recipient of this support said, "I've been here in Jordan for three years now, and all the money I had with me is now over. If it wasn't for World Vision and this project, I don't even know what would have happened to us."

In addition, World Vision and Messengers of Peace created a digital learning hub, where Syrian youth and community members will gain computer literacy and job skills.

- In Iraq, World Vision equipped five churches to work with more than 3,000 youth and their families to help them cope with trauma and stress, develop self-confidence, and make plans for their future. To support families returning to the Ninewa region after its liberation from ISIL, youth were trained in safe hygiene behaviors, water treatment procedures, basic first aid, and disease prevention.
- In Syria, two churches reached more than 1,200 people with health, hygiene, and psychosocial support. Through one church partnership, 700 highly vulnerable people gained clean water access and sanitation services through the installation of toilets, showers, and sinks in 100 apartments that were completely lacking infrastructure.

Empowering Youth to Rebuild their Lives

SKYE (Skills and Knowledge for Youth Empowerment) workshops were launched during FY17, helping youth gain skills such as critical thinking, money management, and applying for jobs. SKYE helps fill the gaps that youth experience when their formative years are disrupted by war and displacement from their homes. The workshops require teams to identify a community problem and then create a solution, which includes fundraising as necessary to implement their solution. This helps youth learn skills that are vital for rebuilding their communities and their own lives.

During the last half of FY17, 15 SKYE leaders were trained, including members of both the displaced and host communities. As a result, five youth SKYE clubs were formed.

The SKYE youth club in Ankawa chose its community service project to be a celebration of the members' Christian heritage. They created a wall mural with Christian symbols, and raised more than half of the needed funding from the community. Youth also worked with the local heritage museum for traditional costumes to wear at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.



The Power of Leveraged Funds: Expanding to Under-Served Communities

Starting operations in a new geographic region requires an initial investment of funding, usually from private gifts that allow flexibility. Institutional donors are often hesitant to fund an agency with no prior presence in a region, therefore a lack of resources can be a key barrier to geographic expansion, especially in fragile contexts. Using private funds as “seed funding” is a strategic use of resources that can multiply World Vision’s ability to reach the world’s most vulnerable people with life-saving and life-changing aid.

In southern Syria, a private donor’s initial investment of \$1 million allowed World Vision to launch healthcare programs for displaced families suffering from drastically declining health, and no access to medical care. To begin, 100 percent of the project costs were covered by the private gift while staff worked to acquire grant funding. Within one year, a U.S. government grant was secured and the flexible private funds were free to launch other projects in the region. The healthcare project is now a grant-funded operation that serves 10,000 people each month with life-saving aid.

LONG-TERM IMPACT

Economic Empowerment

To address the longer-term needs of refugees and displaced people, World Vision launched economic empowerment initiatives in Iraq and Lebanon over the past year. Due to the protracted nature of this conflict, sustainable solutions are needed to help communities begin to thrive.

In Iraq, we are linking olive, pomegranate, and potato farmers with cooperatives that will help increase their profits through price negotiation and marketing support. This pilot project will inform future initiatives on how to best serve those who have been displaced.

In the Bekaa region of Lebanon, World Vision is connecting Syrian refugees with steady income through formal employment. Currently, a screening of more than 700 companies is under way to determine where job opportunities exist, along with the willingness to hire qualified Syrians. Simultaneously, Syrian job seekers have been recruited and will soon receive vocational training in trades such as mechanics, general electricity, hair styling, or beauty services.



Seventeen-year-old Saihan lives in a remote camp in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. She fled Syria three years ago when the war came close to her hometown and all the schools shut down. Saihan recently participated in World Vision’s livelihoods program and completed a Permaculture Design Course. With World Vision’s support, the students are starting their own nursery business using a plot of land near the camp.



“I have changed a lot, and they are my brothers - Kurds are my brothers, Turkmen are my brothers.”

—Jamal, age 12

A BEACON OF HOPE

Jamal and his classmates are learning how to promote peace in their school, and in their community, through World Vision's peace-building initiatives in Iraq.

Twelve-year-old Jamal lives in Kirkuk, a diverse area of northern Iraq where people of many cultures and ethnicities live together. In his school of 600 students, there are Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen, Christians, and Muslims.

His area has been hit hard by the ongoing crisis. Tensions between different groups often run high, causing further instability and conflict.

But Jamal has become a beacon of hope amid the turmoil. He's part of a student group that World Vision began at his school, where he has learned to promote peace and acceptance among his peers.

“Now I cannot find a difference between me and the other ethnicities. I have changed a lot and they are my brothers—Kurds are my brothers, Turkmen are my brothers,” said Jamal.

The principal at Jamal's school, Wasa, agrees there has been significant change since the program began. “Before World Vision, the students would say to me ‘that Kurd hit me’ or ‘that Arab was mean to me.’ After the student groups, they are avoiding the problem from the start. The student groups meet regularly and prevent these conflicts from happening.”

World Vision also initiated parent and teacher groups that develop and implement school improvement plans. Teachers have been trained in

classroom management and peace-building strategies, which they are equipped to share with other teachers through their own training sessions.

To increase social cohesion, the student and parent groups organize community events where everyone from different religions and ethnicities can come together to celebrate peace.

Jamal's school hosted a Dabcha dance festival. The Dabcha or Dabka is a traditional dance performed all over the Middle East at weddings and other ceremonies. Each country and ethnicity have their own version of the dance.

Jamal remembers dancing as a young child with his father at family parties. “I like dancing the dabcha... and I wanted to show my way of dancing. The festivals are a good way to understand each other and to know each other, and to start a relationship.”

Wasa expressed her desire to continue the groups. “We are the people who have felt and seen the change. From the educational part and teaching the students, but also teaching the community and bringing them together.”

World Vision is working with 48 schools across the Kirkuk region to improve the quality of education, increase social unity, and help out-of-school children restart their education.



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,

