



KENYA “The Wheelbarrow”



Bret Van Leeuwen, founder of Koins for Kenya, was preparing to visit a neighboring village, when something odd caught his eye. About 200 feet down the road, a small group of women were huddled together and slowly moving in his direction. As the group advanced, Bret could see that the women were struggling to push a wheelbarrow along the rocky dirt road. A pregnant woman squatted in the wheelbarrow, and blood was pooling beneath her.

Bret's personnel explained the situation: the woman in the wheelbarrow had been in labor for many hours, but a problem had developed, and she was now losing blood and growing weak. In search of medical assistance, the team of women had transported her with the only available means—an old, rusty wheelbarrow—to the hospital that was still an eight-hour journey away. Bret was stunned by this situation, yet powerless. He recalls, “All I could think was ‘There is nothing I can do; I have no vehicle, and I can't get in the way to offer help.’” He was forced to watch as the women carried on. With the weight of a full-term pregnant woman inside, the five women could only move the wheelbarrow in 15-foot intervals before setting it down to rest and alternate positions.

A few hours had passed when a hired vehicle arrived for Bret and his team. After traveling only a mile, Bret spotted the same group of women trudging down the road and immediately stopped the car. He offloaded his original passengers and cargo and made room for a pregnant Mary and her support team. They traveled to the hospital in just 15 minutes, and one hour later, Mary delivered a baby girl.

This event was truly a miracle, but many other women have not been so fortunate. Others still live knowing that if a complication develops in their pregnancy, the only way to the hospital is in a wheelbarrow. Bret saw this firsthand when, the very next day, the same team of women used the same wheelbarrow to transport a pregnant mother to the hospital. Unfortunately, Bret did not have a vehicle to offer this time, and the poor mother and her baby died along the way.

The survival story of Mary Ojambo and her baby inspired the vision for a women's center in Mnyenzi. Trivani and Koins for Kenya are now in the process of seeing this simple yet life-saving center constructed.



CAMBODIA “Uphill Both Ways”



Many of us can hardly imagine living without an abundance of luxuries, not to mention some of the basic human rights we might take for granted. We may even catch ourselves joking about life’s hardships—even using the phrase “Uphill both ways” to suggest that nothing is really that bad. Unfortunately, life is truly trying for millions of people around the world.

Education is just one of the grueling battles many have to face. For example, meet Pech, an eight-year-old girl from the Cambodian village of Veal. Until recently, Pech rode 12 kilometers to school on her father’s bike, which is so big she can barely reach the pedals. The road to the school is long, rocky, and punctuated by many steep hills—so certain sections were, quite literally, uphill both ways. After a long day at school, and on a sometimes empty stomach, Pech made the same three-hour trek home, where she would go straight to the fields to work. Afterward, if there was enough light and time remaining, she studied and played. Pech’s heavy schedule and the distance to school prevented her from adequately fulfilling her school and family responsibilities, so her family ultimately thought it best to pull her from school.

Fortunately, Pech’s life has drastically changed. In learning of Pech’s hardship, Trivani took the necessary steps to complete a new primary school in Veal Village. Pech is now able to attend school just down the street from her family’s home, and as a result, she has extra time to help with family chores and study and improve her scores in school. The 300 other children in Pech’s village have equally benefitted from the new Veal Primary School.

While Pech’s daily routine has been lightened with the construction of a school in her village, access to an education still remains out of reach for millions of children around the globe. Circumstances we consider unbelievable are actually quite common, and the misfortunes we joke about are a fact of life—but as we’ve seen in Veal, they don’t have to be. We can now add the success of this Trivani-Veal partnership to our portfolio of achievements, and we are encouraged to move onward, supporting more motivated communities in providing education to all.



MEXICO “Sustaining Hope”



The villagers of Mesa De San Isidro, Mexico, have always placed a high value on education—even when the nearest school was three hours away and their children were unable to spend adequate time on family chores. The situation eventually created a strain on village families, however, so the Mesa de San Isidro community decided to pull together and turn a local 3-bedroom house into a secondary school. Each family in the village contributed a small amount to complete the project, and the children soon enjoyed roughly six hours of extra time to help with family chores and excel in their studies.

It wasn't long before community leaders received word from the owner of the building that he was moving back to the village and wanted to take up residency in his home. He gave the school only a few months to relocate, so the villagers decided to take the next step and build their own school closer to home. They knew that constructing a building on their own was risky and that too much time away from their farms could put their families in jeopardy, but despite these potential challenges, the villagers' hope for a better community fueled everyone into action.

Each household again contributed money and time to the construction of the new school, and after several months, the building's foundation was complete. Unfortunately, the building was still missing a roof, windows, and a floor, and community resources had been exhausted. The community sought funds from the government and local fundraisers, but they still came up short. Construction on the school was finally stopped, and the villagers' hope began to fade. The rains were expected to begin soon, which would turn every villager's attention to their farms and make it difficult to finish the school floor. In addition, if the school wasn't finished by August, the village would lose funding for desks, school supplies, and a teacher.

Trivani stumbled across Mesa De San Isidro two weeks before the rains were expected to begin and decided to partner with the community to finish their secondary school. We were impressed by the villagers' initial resolve to improve their community and were compelled to match their efforts and thwart the widespread disappointment that would surely come if the school was not completed. The school was successfully finished in early 2009, and now villagers are confident that with hard work, strong partnerships, and the right vision, anything is possible. They are looking for the next big improvement project for their community.



UGANDA “Emmanuel”



Emmanuel Adoch was born in Kaberamaido, the hub of the rebel group “the Lord’s Resistance Army.” War casualties and deaths were exceptionally high in this district, and Emmanuel felt such effects no less than his neighbors and friends. His parents were able to survive the onslaught of rebel leaders but later died of AIDS, leaving Emmanuel orphaned at age 8. Luckily, Emmanuel had a living relative, his uncle Moses, in whose care his parents left him and his three siblings. But Moses’ guardianship was neglectful at best. He was an alcoholic and had little money to support the children, and he would often become abusive during his fits of intoxication. Moses eventually took the children out of school so they could work in the home.

Soon after Moses’ assumed guardianship over Emmanuel and his siblings, Asayo’s Wish Orphanage opened. Moses did not hesitate; he enrolled the four children in the orphanage and continued his life as an alcoholic. Emmanuel and his siblings thrived at Asayo’s Wish. They made friends, were well-fed and cared for, and above all, they were safe. All four children began to attend primary school, and Emmanuel began singing and performing in productions put on by the orphanage. Although their parents were gone, the Adochs felt a growing sense of home and family.

As the good word of the Asayo’s Wish Orphanage circulated throughout the Kaberamaido community, Moses caught wind of the orphanage’s success. Mistaking his niece’s and nephews’ health and happiness for money and possibility, he forced the children to live with him again in hopes of gaining access to Asayo’s Wish funds. After experiencing the joy of school and the love he received at Asayo’s Wish, Emmanuel could not accept the life his uncle had forced upon him. He ran home—back to Asayo’s Wish Orphanage. Not pleased, his uncle came to the orphanage and forced Emmanuel to return. Emmanuel made the journey to the orphanage four times before his uncle finally gave up.

Emmanuel is now a happy member of Asayo’s Wish Orphanage. He attends primary school and performs regularly for the community. He also looks forward to the day when his siblings will be strong enough to join him at Asayo’s Wish.

Trivani is proud of our partnership with Asayo’s Wish Foundation and appreciative of the opportunity we have to help them feed, clothe, shelter, and educate these beautiful children. Because of the efforts of this remarkable organization, hundreds of frightened, malnourished children are now healthy, happy, and thriving.



NEPAL

“Overcoming Odds”



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PHILIPPINES “Rizal”



Rizal Gutierrez is a nine-year-old boy from the Philippines who suffers from a condition known as frontonasal dysplasia. As a result of this infirmity, Rizal has faced continual ridicule from community members—even from his peers, their parents, and prominent members of the village. Rizal should be in grade 3, but his condition has prevented him from attending a single day of school. In fact, he has rarely left home—it is the only place where he feels safe and loved. Rizal comes from a poor, disadvantaged family, so an operation to improve Rizal's situation has been out of the question. Over time, the Gutierrez family began to lose hope that Rizal would ever lead a normal life.

Hope came the day Rizal's father heard an unusual advertisement on the radio by an organization called Mabuhay Deseret Foundation (Deseret International). This organization claimed to perform corrective and reconstructive surgeries free of charge. At first, the Gutierrez family was skeptical. They had never heard of an organization capable of performing such miracles. Their neighbors and friends said it was a trick and that they would have to pay for the operation in the end. Regardless of these fears, Rizal and his father made the trek to Mabuhay Hospice in Manila, and Rizal soon received two of the three surgeries he would need at no cost. “His first day in Mabuhay, Rizal was very shy,” Manny Hernandez, Director of Mabuhay Deseret, explains. “But in just two to three days, he started playing with other kids and adults in the foundation. In fact, one time, his father told him they needed to return home for a time so he could earn more money, but Rizal said, ‘Go ahead, Dad. I’ll just stay here with my friends.’”

Rizal has one more operation to go before he can return home for good. When asked what's in store for Rizal when the third surgery is complete, his father replied, “He wants to go to school and is excited to lead a normal life. He wants to play chess. Before the surgery, he never left the house; now he is a busy body. He wants to try new foods and become more independent. I hope he becomes a car painter like me.” As Rizal re-enters his community, he will no longer be a source of scorn but an emblem of possibility and miracle. Free to attend school and leave his home as he chooses, he will also be a contributing member of his society.

In partnership with Mabuhay Deseret Foundation, Trivani had funded over 1,000 life-changing corrective and reconstructive surgeries. These important surgeries are evidence that impairments and abnormalities are biological and fixable—instead of a mark of evil or symbol of wrongdoing that many people believe them to be. In the Philippines, over 4,000 children are born with impairments and physical deformities each year. Join us in supporting lifelong community change through corrective and reconstructive surgeries.