

World Vision Insider

Special Edition — July 27, 1999

Watch ABC's "20/20" on Wednesday, July 28

World Vision's ministry to Rwandan orphans—a work made possible by your generosity—will be included in a "20/20" report tomorrow.

A report on Rwanda, which is expected to include World Vision's child-headed household program in Rwanda, is scheduled to air on the ABC news magazine show, "20/20", on Wednesday, July 28. Check your local television listings for airtimes in your city.

The ABC news crew traveled to Rwanda last month to document the plight of some 300,000 Rwandan children who have lost both of their parents, mostly to 1994 genocide which claimed more than 500,000 lives, the AIDS epidemic, and other causes related to endemic poverty and disease.

Rwanda has an estimated 65,000 child headed households. World Vision is helping 200,000 of these children.

The ABC crew was assisted in its coverage by Warren Nyamugasira, director of

World Vision Rwanda, and Geoffrey Ngiruwonsanga, a former street child himself who directs World Vision's efforts to aid Rwanda's orphans.

According to the producer, the scheduled segment shows how a household of six children is able to survive with assistance from World Vision.

Additional information on World Vision's work in Rwanda is available at World Vision's web site, www.worldvision.org.

Orphans in Rwanda: Is Food and Shelter Enough?

It is estimated that half of all Rwandan children in 1996 witnessed the killing of another person—often a close relative. These children silently bear enormous amounts of grief, anger, guilt, and stress.

Food and shelter is essential to keeping these children alive. But without emotional and spiritual therapy, the killings will continue—in haunted dreams and imagined revenge.

Like the ethnic tensions that simmered in Rwanda for 30 years then exploded in a bloody six-month spree of killing, the kettle will eventually burst for these children. They have no way of coping or integrating their traumatic experiences into their lives.

World Vision designed a community-based psycho-social approach in 1997 to

provide these children with a healthy way to cope with their experiences.

As part of the program, World Vision sensitizes and trains local social agents to recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma and determine the best approach to assisting each child.

Counselors help children process their emotions and experiences through art, drama, recreation, and group sessions in a secure, non-threatening environment. Children are encouraged to reflect on their trauma while integrating the experiences into their lives.

For many children in Rwanda, life stopped mentally in 1994. We are hopeful that through our trauma therapy, life can start again.

FAST FACTS:

The Scope of the Orphan Crisis in Rwanda . . .

- 65,000 households in Rwanda are headed by children.
- 75 percent of these CHHs are headed by girls.
- 300,000 children in Rwanda require immediate trauma therapy.
- Receiving or paying for health care often means begging or long hours of back-breaking work to earn extra money.
- Most CHHs lack cooking utensils, beds and blankets, furniture, clothing, garden tools, seeds, and fertilizers.
- There is no social service structure in Rwanda capable of meeting the needs of these children.

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