

World Vision Insider

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Israeli Troop Withdrawal Leaves New Challenges for S. Lebanon

Lebanese citizens danced in the streets and waved national flags following the rapid withdrawal of Israeli forces from South Lebanon on May 23, 2000. But the end of 22 years of foreign occupation does not mean the end of difficulties for this troubled region of the world.

As the world's attention turned elsewhere, the people of South Lebanon found themselves face to face with a depleted economy and a troubled future.

Lebanese people all over the formerly occupied south of the country are having to start anew. A five-year reconstruction effort—costing more than \$1 billion—has been proposed by Lebanon's prime minister, but the tiny country is dependent on foreign aid to make it a reality.

In the midst of these efforts, World Vision is helping in many areas of need.

World Vision is providing more than 450 families with vouchers good for three months of food, hygiene kits, and cooking gas. Already more than 60 shops in the south of the country accept these vouchers, making the support more easily accessible.

“World Vision is the only operating international NGO on the ground. We have an opportunity to walk with needy families through transition and provide alternatives for the future,” says Stuart Willcuts, a relief manager for the region.

World Vision is also helping with school fees and the provision of fresh water. According to the World Vision country director in Lebanon, the organization plans to expand its Area Development Program approach to meet a broad range of needs for multiple communities.

WV Makes Bold Promise to Address AIDS in Africa

Last week World Vision pledged that within one year every one of its programs in Africa will have a measurable component to help address the scourge of HIV and AIDS.

The promise came in the days preceding this week's 13th International AIDS Conference in South Africa, the largest international forum for sharing new clinical, scientific, and social data about HIV/AIDS. Reports from the conference and from UNAIDS have underlined the importance of World Vision's pledge to address HIV/AIDS on a continent-wide scale:

- 24 million Africans are estimated to be infected with AIDS or HIV.
- AIDS kills some 6,000 Africans each day—more than wars, famines, and floods.
- Millions of African children are orphans and many live with HIV or AIDS.
- The AIDS virus is expected to kill half of all 15 year olds in Botswana, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.
- AIDS is setting back a generation of gains in African development and reducing the life expectancy at birth by more than a decade in the worst-hit nations.

WV Responds to Nicaragua Earthquakes

Two powerful earthquakes shook central Nicaragua last Thursday and Friday affecting 30,000 people, including 5,000 families from World Vision-assisted communities.

A national rapid response team, mobilized by World Vision's office in Nicaragua, assisted more than 1,500 families in the hours following the first quake. Families received food and hygiene kits (containing rice, beans, vegetable oil, powdered milk, and soap), as well as five-gallon potable water containers.

The two earthquakes, with magnitudes of 5.9 and 5.2 respectively, killed 12 people and gravely injured another 100.

Dozens of tremors and aftershocks also shook the country over the weekend, cutting off electricity, collapsing walls, and shattering windows. A World Vision office in the city of Masaya was seriously damaged by a strong tremor late Saturday, although no injuries to staff resulted.

World Vision offices around the world are raising support for the immediate purchase and distribution of the following items for quake survivors:

- Basic food kits.
- Hygiene kits (toilet paper, soap, toothpaste).
- Medicine.
- Blankets and sheets.

Thank you for remembering the survivors in your prayers.

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