

World Vision Insider

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Number of Displaced Colombians Continues to Grow

In conflict-torn Colombia, perhaps the greatest tragedy of all is the victimization of children.

In the past hour alone, 20 children have been driven from their homes by warring guerrilla, paramilitary and government forces.

In the next 24 hours, another 480 children will be forcibly displaced by spreading violence and conflict. One week from now, their numbers will have increased by 3,360. And in another month, some 14,400 more children will be made homeless.

The plight of these children—and Colombia's entire displaced population of nearly 2 million—remains of little

apparent importance to foreign governments and the media around the world. Although vast sums of foreign assistance are being channeled to Colombia's military, only a trickle has been allocated to humanitarian aid.

This is a clear and critical challenge for World Vision. These children—the displaced and forgotten victims of violence in Colombia—remain hidden from the eyes of the world.

Until very recently, World Vision was assisting 9,000 displaced Colombians. Yet just nine months after establishing four urban-based pilot programs for these internally displaced people (IDPs), only one of them is still operating.

The reason for closing the other three programs is simple: we have a shortfall in funding.

The result of their closure is painfully clear: All of the 6,000 IDPs—about 1,000 families—have been left to fend for themselves, locked in a daily struggle to meet even their most basic needs.

We are committed to continuing and, God willing, expanding this important ministry to Colombia's displaced people in the months ahead.

Please join us in praying for the safety of our local staff, for wisdom in responding to this emergency, and for the future of our ministry in Colombia.

WV Boosts Relief Efforts for Ethiopia's Starving

World Vision will boost its relief efforts to counter soaring rates of starvation in southern Ethiopia.

World Vision health team leader Dr. Hector Jalipa announced the need for expanded relief efforts following a recent visit to the Sodo Zuria district, about 240 miles south of Ethiopia's capital city, Addis Ababa.

Dr. Jalipa explains that 25 percent of children under 5 in the district are suffering from some form of malnutrition, up from 16.7 percent just a month ago.

An estimated 1,500 children are suffering from acute malnutrition, weighing less than 70 percent of their normal weight.

Dr. Jalipa says World Vision and government aid efforts have been swamped by the dramatic increase in need.

"The numbers registering for food distribution have increased more than five times over the past weeks. Initially we only targeted a group of 9,000 vulnerable people, now that's up to 56,000," he explains. Elsewhere in Ethiopia, World Vision is set to feed more than 500,000 people in drought-hit areas in June and July.

"We can't refuse people," says Dr. Jalipa. "They present a desperate picture when one sees their malnourished children."

Dr. Jalipa says World Vision has reached an agreement with the Ethiopian govern-

ment to open a therapeutic feeding center at the regional hospital in Sodo, which would care for up to 100 of the most malnourished children. The center is expected to open by mid-June.

Dr. Jalipa admits the center might easily be swamped with cases, stretching World Vision's resources.

Please remember our programs and the Ethiopian people we serve in your prayers.

World Vision