



“Alone. Did anyone care whether I died?”

Rwanda Garden Project Rebuilds “Community” & Dispels Despair of Returning Refugees

Loneliness consumed Josephine. Day in and day out she sat in her house. There was no one to talk to and no one to listen. It seemed like no one cared how much she was hurting on the inside.

We sat on a wooden bench near the garden that Josephine helped maintain. She was very quiet and I wondered if she would be willing to open up and tell me her story. It was day two of my visit to Rwanda. The purpose of my trip was to meet the beneficiaries of our new agriculture project.

Deep in the hills of Kayonza, we sat surrounded by banana trees. Hands and feet covered with dirt from working in the garden, Josephine began telling her story...

She was one of the fortunate survivors of the war in Rwanda. Josephine had fled to a neighbouring country as a refugee, and years later returned with her husband and four children to begin rebuilding her life. Shortly after returning, her husband became very sick and eventually became paralyzed. I could see the look of pain in her eyes as she continued her story. “The doctors could not help him,” she

said. “And he died.” She was staring at her hands with her head bowed as she continued. “I had my children, but they were getting older. Soon they all got married and left me. I don’t know what happened to me. I felt very alone. I did not want to leave my house; no one came to visit me. I became so sad that it hurt. My mind started feeling sad. I was tired and I wondered why I was alive and if anyone would care if I died?” My heart hurt for Josephine realizing that her depression had become so severe.

One of the aspects of this project was to create community gardens. For so many years, the people of Rwanda were mainly dependent on cattle as their main source of food. Gardens and vegetables were rare. The spread of HIV also compromised immune systems. Affected parents were left weak and fragile and found it very difficult to care for their children. ADRA’s initiative not only taught them to grow gardens, but also how to choose vegetables that would specifically benefit their conditions.

Josephine continued her story saying that she had learned about the new project ADRA was introducing in her community. Something inside told her that she should go to the information meeting being held for people interested in joining the project. Surprising even herself, she went.

“I began going to trainings,” Josephine said. “At first I was very

“I did not want to leave my house; no one came to visit me. I became so sad that it hurt.”

▲ Above:
Josephine works in her garden with renewed spirit and purpose.

“I saw Josephine thank God for sending ADRA, for bringing her friends and teaching her that she is never alone..”

shy; I thought that no one wanted me there. But then we had to start working together, learning together and I started talking to people and they were talking to me!” She pointed to a garden not far from where we had sat down. “That is where I go to work every day...with my friends!” As she looked at the other ladies around us she smiled. “These are my friends. I am not alone anymore, I am not alone!” The translator repeated that she was not alone a few more times and Josephine’s contagious smile soon spread across the face of everyone that stood around us. “I have friends, and they care that I am living.”

As I skimmed over my notes later, I realized that this story was not just about receiving proper training on how to grow gardens so that people would not starve. Sometimes we focus so much on the technical aspects of a project that we miss the bigger picture.

“How has this project truly changed someone’s life?”

In Josephine’s case, it GAVE her life, a reason to wake up every morning. Josephine and her community named their cooperative Duteraneinkunka, meaning “Let us help each other.” She will forever be grateful to donors like you that support ADRA projects. Your gifts have helped heal and rebuild a very broken community.

The feeling of loneliness is one I am sure we can all relate to. We may not live high up in the hills of Rwanda, shut out in a clay hut by ourselves, but I’m sure we have experienced the uncomfortable, sad feelings of thinking we are alone. For people in Rwanda like

Josephine, this is very common. Although not spoken of, the HIV epidemic and the displacement of refugees after the genocide, has left a trail of neglected, unsure and afraid individuals.

My eyes were open to a completely different side and meaning of “humanitarian.” I saw Josephine thank God for sending ADRA, for bringing her friends and teaching her that she is never alone because she has a God that is ever loving, ever powerful and ever present.

That day, high up in the hills of Rwanda, I saw the power of community, the strength of people coming together, and the work of a God that never, ever abandons us.

Today, as you read this article, I hope you’ll decide to be a part of rebuilding strength, confidence and opportunity. Your gift can bring communities that were torn apart, back together again! You can plant the seeds of change, feeding not just their hungry bodies but also their souls.

Please use the enclosed envelope and give a gift that can Plant Change today.

Suzie McIntosh is the Donor Relations Associate for ADRA Canada

Friendships grow and community spirit thrives at Rwanda garden project. ►



“I am your chosen one. You won’t leave me in the grave or let my body decay. You have shown me the path of life and you make me glad by being near me. Sitting to your right side. I will always be joyful.” — Psalms 16:10-11 CEV

YOU
ASKED

Why Does ADRA Focus on Communities?

A DRA believes empowering communities is the most crucial step in breaking the poverty cycle and that it will bring about real change for those most in need – especially children. When community life and family life improves, life for children also changes for the better. To ensure lasting, positive change in a child’s life, ADRA works closely with those who have the greatest influence on a child’s development – parents, teachers, health workers and local authorities. Our projects work in communities with high nutrition, health and education concerns.

There is great power in a community: familiarity and support, knowledge and shared experience, a sense of oneness, solidarity and ownership. We work hard to tap into this spirit and empower the community to own and drive development, providing the training, resources and support they need to build their own secure future.

Enabled by your generous support, ADRA works hand-in-hand with communities to improve access to their own food, water, health care, education, economic opportunities and justice.

Isn’t it exciting to know that your gift is helping so many people at one time!

Have a question about the work or ADRA? Write to StayInTouch@adra.ca and your question may appear in a future Global Impact.



ADRA • Canada

www.adra.ca • 888.274.2372

YOU DID IT!

Kids Inspire Others to Give Back

Bella Coola Adventist School ADRA Garage Sale Becomes Community Event

Nestled along the Central Coast of British Columbia you will find a small community with a huge heart... and a very enthusiastic group of students and teachers!

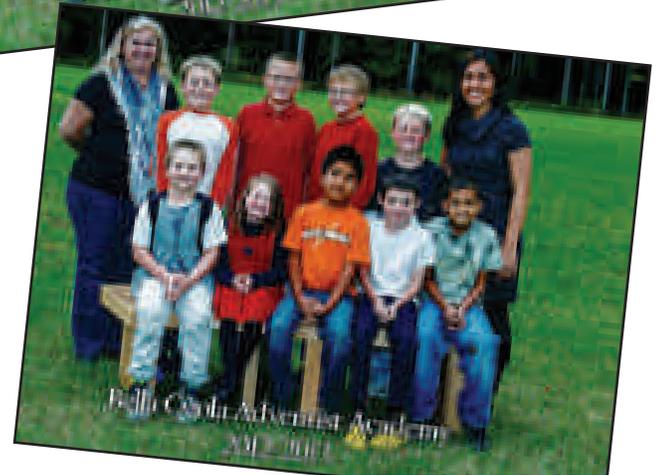


For the past five years, students and faculty of the Bella Coola Adventist School have adopted a project from the **ADRA Canada Really Useful Gift Catalogue** and have been helping children and families in need around the world. Each fall and spring the school has been holding a

community garage sale to support the work of ADRA Canada. Yes, that's right! They have so much fun, and the sale is such a success with the community, that they hold it not once, but twice a year!

Everyone pulls together, students, teachers, parents, friends and neighbours. Everyone contributes items for the sales and all show up on the big day. For many, the event is a welcomed opportunity to give back to ADRA as they remember how ADRA helped the community immediately after the flooding in 2010. On average, at the end of sale day, the students can have up to \$600 for their chosen project, such as for Haiti disaster relief, water for a family, goats, emergency supplies for disaster survivors and the Native New Health Ministry.

Hats off to everyone in Bella Coola for getting involved and giving back! You did it...you are changing lives!



SHARE

YOUR ADRA STORY

We'd love to hear from people involved in ADRA's mission. Why not send us a few lines about what you and/or your group are doing? Send 200 words, a picture* of your activities and your contact details to StayInTouch@adra.ca.

*Digital photos should be a minimum of 3 megapixels.

By sending photos and stories to ADRA Canada you give permission for either to be published at the discretion of ADRA Canada.

Emergency Food Restores More Than Health to Drought Victims

Mother Finds Opportunity and Dignity with Small Business

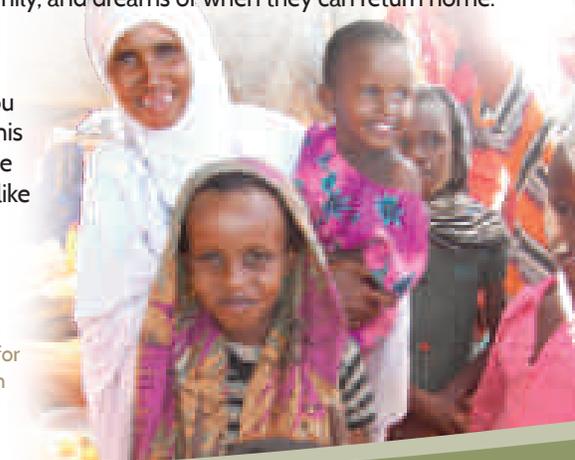
On Labour Day in Somalia, Zainab, a 38-year-old mother proudly showed me her market stall. The stall, a medium-sized square table, covered with a plastic sheet, is scantily arrayed with bagged rice and sugar, onions, chilies and spices. It may not seem like much, but for Zainab it is a step toward independence.

You see, in 2011, civil conflict in Mogadishu destroyed Zainab's home, killed two of her sons and forced her to flee with her remaining children. It took days for the family to walk to the Kabaseh Internally Displaced Persons camp in Dollow where, exhausted and starving, the family found refuge. As the sole breadwinner, Zainab was eligible for a joint ADRA and Canadian Foodgrains Bank emergency food project. For three months, the family received rations of wheat flour, sorghum, beans, rice, cooking oil and salt. Zainab was able to feed her family and see everyone grow stronger. As her strength and determination returned, Zainab used her meager savings to open a

small business. With her market stall, Zainab has the dignity of providing for her family, and dreams of when they can return home.

When you support ADRA's emergency response efforts, you make projects like this happen and you give new life to families like Zainab's.

Dreams of returning home closer to reality for Zainab and her children thanks to successful market stall. ▶



LIVELIHOODS FOR LIFE Project Protects Cambodian Youth from Human Trafficking

Dangerous Migration to Cities Curtailed by New Employment Opportunities

Jorani was thrilled to be accepted as a village Youth Peer Instructor for the ADRA Livelihoods for Life project. She has seen the crisis firsthand – young people leaving the village to follow the promise of work in garment factories or other low income jobs in the city. Many are never seen or heard from again. From those who have returned, she has heard the stories of how they had been tricked. There were no legitimate jobs waiting for them, only sexual exploitation and abuse.

As part of ADRA's Livelihoods for Life project, Jorani now understands that poverty is a root cause of human trafficking. When there are no income options, people in communities like Jorani's are prone to accept offers of employment for themselves or their children in distant and unfamiliar settings. Unfortunately, the employment is not always what was expected or promised.

Now Jorani is helping her community increase income opportunities for young people that encourage them to remain in the village. Young farmers learn improved agricultural techniques to expand their vegetable farm business. Others are launching new chicken farm businesses. A group of girls are learning how to run their own small businesses by selling nutrient rich noodles. Jorani also conducts Youth Night shows that help people understand the potential risk for those deciding to leave the village for work in the city.

"I know there will always be the lure of the city," says Jorani "but thanks to Livelihoods for Life, our young people now have ways to support themselves and their families right here at home. And, if they still wish to go to the city they know about the risks and how to protect themselves."



Youth peer groups learn how to protect themselves from sexual exploitation and abuse when they take jobs in the city.



Be sure to come see us at Camp Meeting or stop by our booth to say "Hi!"

Ontario International Centre June 29

- 10:40 – 10:45 a.m. ADRA Highlights
- ADRA Plant Change Booth in Exhibit area

Man/Sask Camp Whitesand July 13

- 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. Sabbath School & Lesson Study provided by ADRA
- ADRA Plant Change Booth in Exhibit area

Alberta Foothills Camp July 15 – 19

- Daily 10:30 – 11:15 a.m.: A Gospel of Community & Social Action Seminar Series
- ADRA Plant Change Booth in Exhibit area

Newfoundland Woody Acres Camp July 24 – 27

- July 25: 10:30 a.m. ADRA at Youth Chapel
- July 27: 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. ADRA Feature
- ADRA Plant Change Booth in Exhibit area

British Columbia Camp Hope August 3

- 9:20 – 10:20 a.m. Sabbath School & Lesson Study provided by ADRA
- ADRA Plant Change Booth in Exhibit area

Maritime Camp Pugwash August 1 – 3

- Aug 1: 6:45 – 7 p.m. ADRA Feature
- Aug 3: 9:05 – 9:40 a.m. ADRA Sabbath Feature
- ADRA Plant Change Booth in Exhibit area

ADRA's Mission:

ADRA works with people in poverty and distress to create just and positive change through empowering partnerships and responsible action.

Executive Director
James Astleford

Donor Relations Director
Michelle L. Oetman

Finance Director
Stephen Keys

Program Director
Analynn Bruce

Global Impact
Michelle L. Oetman, Editor
Karen Widdecombe, Co-ordinating Editor

