

COMPASSION

MAGAZINE



DANIELLE STRICKLAND

STOPPING FOR ONE CHILD




BEHIND THE

PROJECT GATES

Protecting children through sport

RELEASING
CHILDREN
FROM
POVERTY

IN JESUS' NAME


Releasing children from poverty
Compassion
in Jesus' name

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2016 ISSUE 2

COMPASSION-SUPPORTED CHILDREN ARE KNOWN, LOVED AND PROTECTED

IN THIS ISSUE

July's edition of the Compassion magazine celebrates the fact that Compassion-supported children are known, loved and protected. We meet Alexie, an incredible young lady who shares how her Compassion project in Rwanda supported her when others turned away. With a summer of sports ahead, discover how football is protecting children from sex trafficking in Thailand. And finally, learn all about the new faster journey for child letters.

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Photographer: Ella Dickinson

DEAR FRIEND,

This is my first real opportunity to say hello and thank you for the warm welcome I've received as the new CEO. Before I introduce myself, I want to say what an honour it is to receive the baton of leadership from Ian Hamilton. He has led Compassion UK since its inception and has done so with wisdom and insight. He is deeply loved and respected.



In the last few months we have celebrated the fact that, with your support, Compassion UK has crossed the 100,000 sponsored children mark. I'm excited to lead a ministry that refuses to rest on its laurels but pushes on to reach as many children as we can as quickly as we can.

I have four children; Holly, Emily, Benjamin and Samuel. I love them all; each in their own way. My wife, Nicky, and I have hopes and dreams to see them fulfil all that God has put in them. We want more than anything to protect and provide for them and would do anything to see them secure in the knowledge that they are known, loved and protected.

As I have travelled, I have met many more parents like me, each with hopes and dreams and a desire to protect and provide for their children. What I love about Compassion is the way it walks alongside those parents, and the local church, to help them see those hopes and dreams become reality as it works to release the potential in every child.

So, I'm excited as I look to a future working with you as we change the world, one child at a time, bringing God's Kingdom to earth, as it is in heaven.

JUSTIN DOWDS

Chief Executive Officer
Compassion UK and Compassion Ireland



KNOWN,



LOVED &



PROTECTED



04

I can remember sitting alone in a dusty doorway, waiting for an aunt I'd never met. I was terrified. That morning I'd been taken from the only home I'd known: the prison where my mother was being held for genocide crimes.

Those years were very hard for me, but God has done great things in my life.

My name is Alexie and this is my story.

Starting when I was just one, I lived with my mother in prison for four years. My mum was a community

leader at the time of the genocide in Rwanda. When I left prison I lived with different family members but no one could afford to care for me. It was a very worrying time. But this is when I was registered at the Compassion project.

PROTECTION AND PROVISION

If Compassion wasn't there in my life, I would never have studied. I would have faced great challenges with poverty. The people in Musambria

town survive on farming, but there is very little land and they can't make much profit from it. So many children have to drop out of school too early without reaching their dreams.

With Compassion's help, I went to school without having to pay school fees. I was given school materials and a free uniform. I'm now in secondary school and I see myself as a girl with a bright future. I want to go to university and train to be a journalist or a professional translator.

KNOWN AND LOVED BY ANOTHER FAMILY

As a young child, I was alone. My mother gave birth to me



Alexie holding a photograph of her family

“

If Compassion wasn't there in my life, I would never have studied."

alone and I never got the chance to meet my father. The project was able to stand in the gap. Even now I see the project director as a father.

My dear sponsor was also a good parent to me. She has

sacrificed a lot to see me through this life. I hope one day to meet her and give her a big hug! In her letters she tells me that she thinks about me daily. This encouragement has moved me from one place to another.

As well as getting support from the Compassion programme, what we do at the project also makes me happy. I have many friends there and we do traditional dances together and sing in the choir. We play football and volleyball and even compete against other projects. Being with friends like this has helped me find God and be grateful in life. I've learnt how to read the word of God. It's changed my life and helped me grow as a Christian.

RECONCILIATION

My mother was in prison for a long time. When she was released, she reconciled with God. Now we read the Bible and pray together. We live together in the same home which makes me very happy. I feel like I want to be a daughter who can make her proud. I want to study hard so I am able to help my mother and my family.

Just as Compassion did for me, I am encouraged to do good for others. I want to be a blessing for my community.



Alexie with her mother



BEHIND THE

PROJECT GATES

The benefits of sport often stretch beyond the obvious.

At this summer's Olympic Games we can marvel at the dedication of the world's greatest athletes. Sport has a lot to teach us and its benefits often stretch beyond the obvious. As one of our projects in Thailand discovered, sport is a great way to protect children from the sex trade.

As Peersak pulls his brightly coloured football shirt over his head and ties the laces on his boots, he feels a great sense of pride. Being on the football team has given this young man a safe place to come when his parents are at work and a huge boost to his confidence.

Growing up in the slums of Kampang Nagam, Thailand, is incredibly hard. Parents work long hours at the night markets, leaving their children to fend for themselves. For Peersak and his friends, there was nothing to do but while away the hours at game arcades, where children are easy targets for sex trade recruiters who take advantage of their vulnerability. Lured with false

(Above) Peersak

(Right) Two boys practising on the football pitch

promises of high earnings, once a child becomes trapped in the sex trade, it is very hard to get them out.

In 2013, Chiang Mai Acts of Grace Church saw the problem and were determined to respond. They began by setting up a football programme to give local children from the slums an alternative to the arcades. Shortly after, they partnered with Compassion and were able to reach out to even more vulnerable children through the programme. Children like Peersak.

Peersak and his friends don't give the arcades a second thought anymore. In the comfort of the church they can learn and play without fear, surrounded by loving Compassion staff who care for them and know them by name.

As well as playing football, children learn about building good friendships and staying healthy. They also hear about the love of Jesus. The impact is clear, as project director Mr Wanchai says, "Now, because they're tired from the football practice, they sleep! The children stay home and are well rested for school the next morning."

MORE THAN JUST SPORT

Across the world, sport is an important part of childhood. It not only impacts a child's physical wellbeing but also teaches valuable skills like teamwork and fair play. It gives even the most vulnerable child a chance to have fun; a chance to be a child again. That's why sport and team games are part of every Compassion project. It's just one way we can ensure that children get every opportunity to fulfil their potential.



THE POWER OF ONE

08



What difference can one person make? In a world where more than 400 million children are trapped in extreme poverty[†], one person can seem small. Insignificant. Powerless. But the reality is you have the power to change lives.

When you sponsor a child in poverty, you literally change their life. That child can go on to change their family, their community and even their nation. This is why sponsorship is such a powerful tool in the fight against poverty. As Jane' Alam, a Compassion graduate says: "I know the difference sponsorship makes, because it happened to me."

[†]World Bank data, 2015 [†]



Jane' grew up in a slum community with 10,000 people and two toilets. His father heard about Compassion and enrolled Jane' into the local Compassion project where he was sponsored. Sponsorship meant Jane' was the first child in his community to go to school. It gave him the chance to eat regular meals and receive medical check-ups as well as the opportunity to learn to read and write. He even taught his parents how to write their names.

Jane' went further than anyone could have dreamed. He finished high school at the top of his class, obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Business and won a scholarship to the University of Manchester to study his Masters. In 2014, Jane' finished his Masters and graduated with a first class degree. One of the most articulate, intelligent, yet humble, people you'll ever meet, Jane' was once a child waiting for a sponsor. He says, "My sponsor completely transformed my life and, to be honest, it scares me to think what my life would have been, where I would have been, had he not chosen to sponsor me that day."

“
*You have
been an
answer to
my prayer,
thank you.”*

**SONOKA,
GRANDMOTHER OF
SPONSORED CHILD
SANKRITHA.**

Today, Jane' is not only a Compassion graduate, he's also a Compassion sponsor. He sponsors Sankritha, a little girl with a cheeky smile who lives in a slum made up of abandoned industrial drain pipes. Now that she is sponsored, Sankritha is able to go to school and has a future filled with hope and possibilities. Her grandmother, Sonoka, says, "God has blessed us through Compassion; I don't know how else to describe it more. You have been an answer to my prayer, thank you."

Every child deserves the chance to dream, to go to school and to have a future free from poverty. This Compassion Sunday, you have the power to change the life of a child by talking about Compassion with your family, friends or church. Because each child matters. Because each child is special.

By speaking up on behalf of one child, you'll be changing their life, forever. Together we can change the world, one child at a time.

Join us this Compassion Sunday by ordering your free resources at www.compassionuk.org/compassionsunday or calling **01932 836 490**.

THE FUTURE OF

YOUR CHILD LETTERS

For the first time your letters and those from your sponsored child could arrive just weeks after they are written. Over the past year we have been working on a new system which means faster letters.

Even the briefest message or photo has a powerful impact, reminding your sponsored child that someone across the world loves and cares about them.

YOUR SPONSORED CHILD'S LETTER TO YOU

Here's how the journey of your letters will now look...

1

Your sponsored child writes and their letter is delivered to the Compassion country office.



2

Straightaway the country office scans their letter. It is then translated online by a local translator.



3

Within three weeks, you will receive the new letter in an email which you can read right away.



4

You receive the paper letter shortly afterwards.



YOUR LETTER TO YOUR SPONSORED CHILD

Your sponsored child will also receive their letters more quickly...



FASTER LETTERS

means you receive:



Up to date
prayer requests



Timely news updates



A wider range of new cards
and letter templates in
myCompassion

For more information, head to:
[www.compassionuk.org/
yourletters](http://www.compassionuk.org/yourletters)

PROTECTED FOR THE **FUTURE**

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Globally, one in four women give birth without a skilled attendant present[†]. In line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality figures by 2030, Compassion's Child Survival Programme works to ensure mothers give birth safely.



Dilcia, a single mother of eight, lives in northern Honduras. Like many women in rural Honduran communities, Dilcia gave birth to six of her children at home, assisted only by her mother. Thankfully all her children survived, but for millions more born without a skilled attendant, their chances of survival are significantly reduced.

The Child Survival project run through Dilcia's local church began after she delivered her daughter Stefani. Where possible the programme intervenes before birth, providing pregnant mothers with health check-ups and assistance during labour. This intervention is critical. Research by the World Health Organisation (WHO) shows

that two-thirds of newborn deaths could be prevented if a skilled attendant assisted during birth and made a follow-up home visit within the first week.

Whilst pre-natal intervention is ideal, support at any stage of a baby's life is valuable. Dilcia has learnt a lot from the programme. She says, "I was not aware of the importance of post-natal care and a baby's first vaccinations. But, I have learnt about their importance through the Child Survival project, and I wish I had known about this before."

Through home visits, post-natal care, vaccinations

and awareness workshops provided by the project, both Dilcia and Stefani have been given the best possible start for their life together. Life remains tough as Dilcia struggles to support her family on the small income she makes from washing clothes, but she's no longer on her own.

Here at Compassion we believe no child should be born into poverty. That's why we are standing in faith to see extreme poverty eradicated in our lifetime. By supporting pregnant and new mothers, we can ensure children are known from the start, so they are protected for the future.

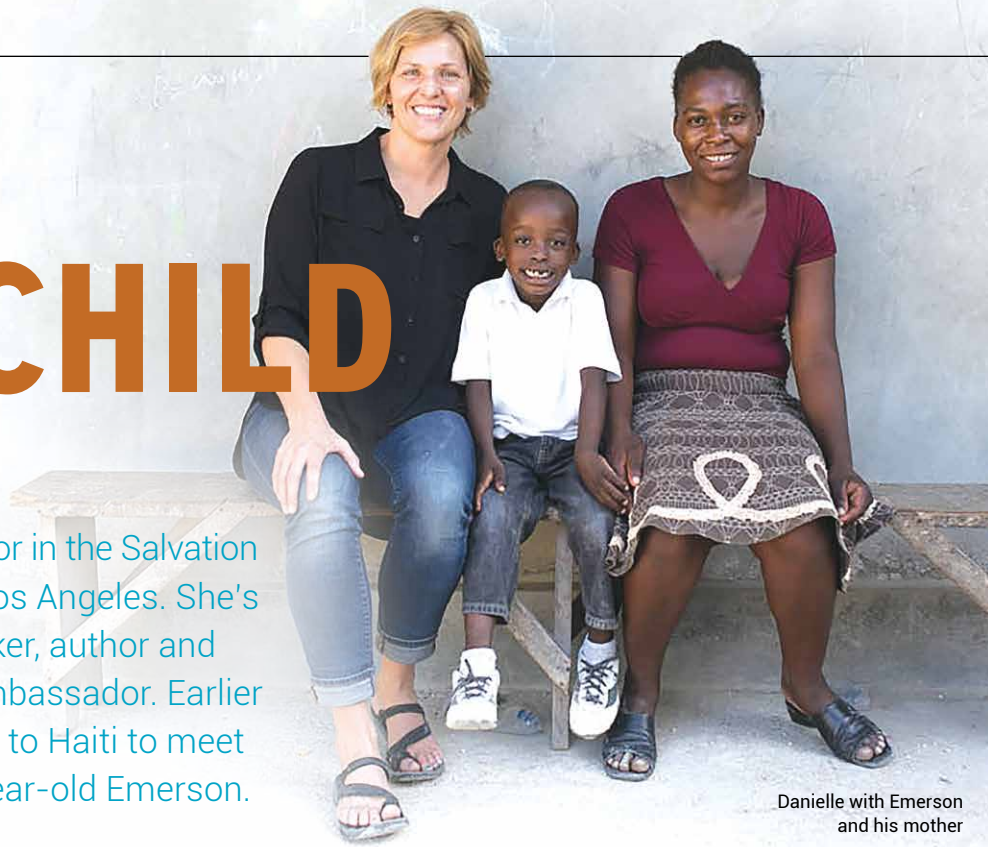
GIFTS IN WILL

We are able to support mothers like Dilcia thanks to your generosity. One of the ways we fund our Child Survival Programme is through the generous gifts our sponsors leave in their Wills. For more information, visit: www.compassionuk.org/gifts-in-will



STOPPING FOR ONE CHILD

Danielle Strickland is a major in the Salvation Army, currently based in Los Angeles. She's also an international speaker, author and dedicated Compassion Ambassador. Earlier this year, Danielle travelled to Haiti to meet her sponsored child, six-year-old Emerson.



Danielle with Emerson and his mother

“

When you're in a place like Haiti, experiencing poverty first hand, the first question you ask yourself is

“what can I do?”

DESCRIBE THE CONNECTION BETWEEN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS AND YOUR HEART FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE?

As you get to know Jesus, he invites you into the margins. He invites you to this incredible plan. He has to redeem all things, in all ways. Salvation means the whole of you being completely dedicated to the purposes of God. To lose your life to gain the Kingdom of God is well worth it. When Jesus invites you to this radical way of life, that changes the way that you live and think, you don't want to pass Jesus up on that invitation.

WHAT WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE OF HAITI?

When you're in a place like Haiti, experiencing poverty first hand, the first question you ask yourself is “what can I do?” Seeing extreme poverty makes me angry. It's weird because it makes some people cry, but for me it just makes me angry. It's not because people have to live like

this or because it disempowers people, it makes me angry because I know we can stop it.

Sponsoring Emerson has opened up a bigger story than I could have possibly imagined. It's a story of redemption; a story of every single person mattering and being made in the image of God.

CAN HELPING ONE PERSON REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY?

Jesus demonstrated that it can. He went to the one, he stopped for the one, he touched the one, he healed the one and he knew the name of the one. The child sponsorship model is powerful because it's choosing to see one individual. It's like saying, “Emerson, I see you. No one else does, other people might say you're one of those kids that doesn't have enough, but I choose to see you.”

God's Kingdom works one at a time: the lost son, the lost coin, the lost sheep. It is the nature of God Himself. I believe this one-on-one model can change the world.

PRAY

WITH US

Take a couple of minutes and join us to pray for children in poverty – together our prayers will change lives.

ZIKA VIRUS

The mosquito-borne disease is now “a threat of alarming proportions”.¹ Our projects in Central and South America have been responding by distributing mosquito nets and insect repellent.

Pray for the ongoing prevention initiatives and for God's healing for vulnerable children and mothers who have contracted the virus.

GANG VIOLENCE

In 2015, there was a 70 percent increase in violent deaths in El Salvador. Children and young people living in the poorest

communities are often vulnerable to being recruited into local gangs.

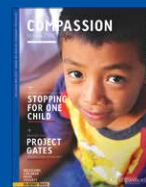
Please pray for God's peace and stability for El Salvador. Pray for the teenagers we work alongside week in, week out.

EDUCATING GIRLS

Across the world 31 million girls are missing from the classroom.² When they should be sitting at desks, many are out working, fetching wood, cleaning the house and herding cattle.

Pray for our project staff as they work with parents and community leaders, advocating for girls to stay in education.

Releasing children from poverty
Compassion
in Jesus' name



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Design and production
The Drummer Agency

Sign up to receive the latest prayer requests
from children in poverty straight to your
inbox at www.compassionuk.org/prayer

Scan the QR code for our latest prayer updates



¹ World Health Organisation, Feb 2016

² World Bank, Dec 2015

**RELEASING
CHILDREN
FROM
POVERTY
IN JESUS' NAME**

CHANGE THE WORLD FOR **ONE CHILD** *this Compassion Sunday*



Share Compassion with your church, family and friends this September and inspire another person to sponsor a child in poverty. Hundreds of people across the UK will be uniting this **Compassion Sunday** and we'd love you to join us. Imagine the difference we could make! Together we can change the world, one child at a time.

RELEASING
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To join in, order your **FREE** resources at
www.compassionuk.org/compassionsunday
or call us at 01932 836 490