



A day to remember African children

The International Day of the African Child has been celebrated on [June 16](#) every year since 1991, when it was first initiated by the [Organization of African Unity](#). It honors those who participated in the [Soweto Uprising](#) in 1976 on that day when about ten thousand black school children marched in a column more than half a mile long, protesting the poor quality of their education and demanding their right to be taught in their own language. Hundreds of young students were shot. The day also raises awareness of the continuing need for improvement of the education provided to African children.

In celebration of this day, Lutheran World Federation – Uganda distributed the following story.

LWF Uganda is working to uphold children's rights and eradicate poverty

Lily sits on the ground with her six-month old twin boys, Isaac and Thomas, snuggled tightly into her chest. The boys are healthy and happy, gurgling away contentedly. Yet just four months ago, they were fighting for their lives. Lily is the fourth and youngest wife in her household, in a village in Pader, Northern Uganda, and her twins are the last born into a brood of many children. This household are among the 52 per cent of Ugandans living below the poverty line on less than \$1.25 per day, and with many mouths to feed, survival is a constant struggle.

In Uganda, many children are living in situations where their human rights are being

abused. From child soldiers, to children orphaned by aids, to children being abused through neglect, many are burdened with hardships that they cannot fully comprehend or protect themselves from.



Lily with her twins, Isaac and Thomas, the day they registered for the Supplementary Feeding Program, in Pader, Northern Uganda. Photo: J. Fisher, LWF World Service, Uganda

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Department for World Service, works in Uganda fighting for the rights of children and supporting guardians to develop ways to meet their children's basic human needs. Lily was visited by Geoffrey, a member of the local village health team, who was trained by the LWF to identify malnourished children. By measuring the twins' upper arm circumferences, they were found to be severely underweight, and Geoffrey referred them to hospital for intensive treatment. However, Lily's husband refused to pay the transport costs to the hospital, and the twins'

health deteriorated. “Day by day my boys got weaker and I felt so helpless” says Lily.

Determined to uphold the twins’ human rights, the LWF staff and Geoffrey made regular visits to the household, counselling the couple on the consequences of malnourishment. Eventually, Lily’s husband allowed the twins to go to hospital.

Several weeks of therapeutic care later, the boys were stable enough to leave hospital and were enrolled in the LWF Supplementary Feeding Program. The twins were given a nutritious porridge blend made from corn, soya bean vegetable oil and sugar, until they reached their target weight.

Three months later, the twins are looking healthy and well fed. Geoffrey continues to visit the family to ensure they remain nourished and well cared for. ‘I’m so very grateful for the counselling that helped my husband see our twins were very sick. Now they are healthy and strong and I have faith they will survive’, says a smiling Lily.

In an effort to contribute to the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 1 and 4 - to end hunger and poverty and to reduce infant mortality - the LWF works with communities training them on improved agricultural practices, so that they can grow enough food to keep their families well fed and nourished. Concurrently, communities are sensitized on children’s and women’s rights, promoting the communities’ role in protecting them.

Throughout all its activities, LWF uses an participatory approach, consulting stakeholders at all levels, from government authorities to village leaders. This ensures knowledge and skills are penetrated through all levels of society, thereby increasing the chances of long-term and positive change.

If Uganda is to meet the MDG 1 goal set to reduce poverty in the country to 24.5% from the current 31%, by 2015, support such as this must continue so that communities can provide fully for their families and live dignified lives for themselves and their children.

Jessica Fisher, LWF World Service, Uganda

CLWR warehouse bursting at seams. Volunteers sought to help clear backlog

Boxes of quilts and *We Care* kits have been arriving at the CLWR warehouse in record numbers during the past few months so much so that the warehouse is nearing capacity. Some relief is in sight as a container destined for the Augusta Victoria Hospital in East Jerusalem is scheduled to be loaded June 22.

Patrick Stewart, coordinator of the Donated Commodities Program, is looking for volunteers in the Winnipeg area who can spare a few hours here and there to help clear the backlog. People are needed to open, check and reseal kits, fold quilts as well as to help with the baling.

If you can help, please contact Patrick by calling 1.204.631.0112 (or toll free 1.800.661.2597).



Boxes of We Care kits and quilts await processing at CLWR’s Winnipeg warehouse.



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- Through your local LCC or ELCIC congregation
- At www.clwr.org
- Toll free at 1.800.661.2597 (CLWR) OR in the Winnipeg area 204.694.5602
- By cheque or money order to:
Canadian Lutheran World Relief
302-393 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg MB R3B 3H6

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