


# TRANSFORMED



international needs  
transformed lives, changed communities

SUMMER 2025 NEWSLETTER



you cannot  
**SHOUT**  
the gospel  
at someone  
who is  
**HUNGRY**



international needs  
transformed lives, changed communities

A girl gathers fresh water  
from a tap in Uganda.

**T**HE GOSPEL IS LOVE and that love needs to look like something. I believe that with my whole heart. In fact, Psalm 113:7 provides a powerful vision of exactly that: He (God) lifts the poor from the dust and the needy from the ash heap.

**The transformational nature of the gospel means it should not just change someone for eternity, but it should make a difference for their life in the here and now.** I know our founder, Ray Harrison, believed that and we continue to believe that today. Ray would often say: You cannot shout the gospel at someone who is hungry. There is so much truth to that, and that conviction is embodied in every program and project supported throughout International Needs.

In this edition of our newsletter, **we're honored to share stories that highlight some of the truly transformational work happening every day**—work that restores dignity, lifts people out of poverty, and brings hope for both this life and the life to come.

**At International Needs, compassion ministries are not just an extension of our mission—they are central to it.** They embody the gospel message in action and serve as a vital cornerstone of all we do. As you read through these powerful stories, I'm confident you'll witness how compassion, joined with the proclamation of the gospel, brings real and lasting change to individuals and entire communities.

Thank you for being a part of this wonderful ministry. We cannot do it without you!

Blessings,

**Jeff Johnson**  
President, International Needs US

# Jovia's Journey: From Silence to *SUCCESS*

**J**OVIA, NOW 18 YEARS OLD, is the youngest of four children born into a humble family of peasant farmers. From birth, **she faced the double challenge of being deaf and non-verbal**—conditions that, in her community, often come with stigma and misunderstanding. For her parents, this made Jovia seem like a burden, and they saw no value in sending her to school.

But everything changed when Jovia was 9 years old. **She was enrolled in the International Needs Uganda sponsorship program, which opened a door that had long been closed.** Though her parents were initially skeptical, this opportunity proved to be a turning point. Through the program, Jovia began her education, learning in an environment that recognized her abilities rather than her limitations.

With time, support, and determination, Jovia discovered her passion for fashion and design. She went on to earn a certificate in the field and **now proudly runs her own tailoring business.** What once seemed like an impossible dream has become a thriving reality. Jovia's story is a powerful testament to the impact of inclusion, education, and belief in the potential of every child. "I am no longer dependent on anyone, and my work has become a testimony to what people with disabilities can achieve."

"In my community, people once looked down on me, thinking my disability would prevent me from accomplishing anything. Now I am an inspiration. I have surpassed the expectations of many and even exceeded the livelihoods of some older members of my community. Thank you for believing in me. **Thank you for showing the world that a disability does not mean inability.**"

Sponsorship has not only changed Jovia's life; it has also reshaped the attitudes of those around her. Her journey has become a powerful example to her family and community, challenging long-held beliefs about disability. Through her success, the community has come to understand that every child deserves a chance to learn, grow, and thrive. Jovia's story is proof that with the right support, anyone can overcome obstacles and unlock their full potential.



An IN school sponsorship gave Jovia the skills she needed to start her own tailoring business.

**“I am no longer dependent on anyone, and my work has become a testimony to what people with disabilities can achieve.”**

A community of villagers in Sri Lanka came together to construct a well for agricultural use.



As a result of the well, the village has new hope. The village is more unified and has reduced alcohol use.



# HOPE IN EVERY DROP

## The Water Project that Transformed a Village in Sri Lanka

**N**OCHIKULAM IS AN ISOLATED agricultural village situated in an arid zone of Sri Lanka, seeing only two to three months of rain a year. The village has a total population of 172, including 41 children. Much of the northern area practices a caste system in which landowners employ workers from villages like Nochikulam. Most of the residents of this village earn a daily wage working on someone else's land.

Prior to the water project, the only source of water was from dug wells on

private property or two tube wells, one of which was in disrepair and unusable. The villagers had been advocating for themselves with the local authorities, but their pleas had gone unanswered. **Through your generous funding, the people of Nochikulam have received the gift of safe, accessible water.**

One tube well was bored for the community, which allows access to clean drinking water. In addition, three dug wells were installed which provide water for agricultural use. The people

of Nochikulam now have access to sufficient water for drinking, bathing, cooking, and their agricultural work. They have also received education on the importance of clean water, sanitation, and proper hygiene.

A local teen from Nockikulam shared a positive testimony to the International Needs Project Coordinator during a field visit. The teen shared that over the last few months there have been positive changes within the community. **The water project brought a sense of**

**hope to this village.** The teens were inspired to set up a volleyball net in the center of the village. Every day they play volleyball until 9:00 p.m. and community members gather to watch them. As a result, there is a reduction in alcohol consumption and greater unity within the community. **This sense of unity and hope is an unforeseen, positive impact among the people of this remote village in Sri Lanka.**

# SANGITA'S STORY: RISING from the ASHES

**A**T 37 YEARS OLD, Sangita has endured a lifetime of hardship, but she continues to fight for a better future with unwavering determination.

A bright student, Sangita excelled in her studies and always topped her class. But her dreams were abruptly cut short in grade 8 when, at just 14 years old, an older boy lured her away with promises of a job and a better life. Unaware of his true intentions, **she was forced into an early marriage.** Her life quickly spiraled into a cycle of poverty, abuse, and loss. Her first child, born when she was only 15, died after just three days. She later gave birth to two more children. Beaten by her husband and struggling to feed her family, she worked as a daily laborer.

Eventually, with no hope left in that life, she returned to her parents' home with her two children. Leaving

them in her parents' care, she took up work at a construction site to survive. It was there she suffered a devastating fall from a three-story building, breaking multiple bones in her legs and rendering her unable to work for a year. **During this time of pain and reflection, she encountered Jesus and became a believer.**

In search of better prospects, a familiar acquaintance introduced her to a man who promised her a job in Kathmandu. Instead, he locked her in a hotel room for 15 days and abused her. Afraid of the stigma from society, Sangita ended up living with him. But this second relationship became yet another nightmare—marked by alcoholism, violence, and exploitation. She gave birth to two more children in this union and eventually found work in a garment factory to feed her family.

Exhausted and hurt, Sangita ended the relationship and later married a third man, a fellow divorcee. Though their relationship has had its own struggles, their mutual decision to build a life together has brought a sense of stability and hope. After 15 years away, Sangita returned to church and brought her new husband with her. Today, they are both growing in faith.

**Sangita's story took a transformative turn when she joined the advanced tailoring training program at the International Needs Nepal Lydia Vocational Training Center.**

Though she had basic skills and had worked in a garment factory, she had long dreamed of learning advanced drafting, cutting, and

stitching techniques. This training, once out of reach, is now equipping her with specialized skills to increase her income—and to dream bigger.

Her vision extends beyond financial stability. **Sangita dreams of starting her own garment business—not just for herself, but to create a safe and empowering space for other women like her.** She hopes to offer them employment, security, and above all, dignity.

Sangita is a survivor who hasn't let life's challenges stop her from dreaming.

**“Sangita dreams of starting her own garment business—not just for herself, but to create a safe and empowering space for other women like her.”**





A mother in Romania accepts Jesus Christ as her Savior.

# A Family Transformed by a **MIRACLE** of **MERCY**

**R**ECENTLY, A ROMANIAN FAMILY faced one of the greatest trials of their lives. Their **8-year-old child lay in intensive care in Timișoara, Romania having spent nearly three months in a coma, intubated, with no hope from doctors.** In their desperation, the parents reached out through Facebook, seeking prayer support from believers.

Gavril, an IN Romania church planter, read their plea, and felt a strong prompting from the Lord to respond. He shared his personal testimony of how God had once intervened in his own family. He encouraged them to call on the Lord for help, and to seek prayer and counsel from spiritual leaders.

Gavril shared, “What I didn’t know at the time was that, in that very moment, the child’s mother was in deep despair—so broken by the diagnosis and circumstances that she was contemplating taking her own life. But God used that message. Instead of giving in to hopelessness, she reached out with a question that moved me deeply: **“Would you be able to come and pray for my child?”**”

“By God’s grace, I was able to visit them in person. In that encounter, I led both parents through a time of repentance and confession of sins. With open hearts, they received the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior.”

“The very next morning, we went together to the hospital to pray for their son. **Praise God—on that very day, the child woke up!** “After months in a coma, God performed a mighty and undeniable miracle.

But the miracle didn’t stop there. The parents soon made a bold step of faith, choosing to be baptized in their city—publicly sealing their covenant with the Lord. **Today, their son is recovering steadily: he can eat, recognize his parents, and move—milestones the doctors had given up hope for. Yet God had another plan.**

**This trial became the very tool God used to draw this family to Himself.** What was meant to break them became the path to their restoration—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. “We continue to pray for the child’s full recovery, but we already rejoice in the miracle of new life, both in body and in spirit” Gavril shared.

**To God be all the glory!**

**“Praise God—on that very day, the child woke up! After months in a coma, God performed a mighty and undeniable miracle.”**



**International Needs**

5570 32nd Ave

Hudsonville, MI 49426

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

Address Line 3

See the ways you're  
making an impact **today**  
and for **ETERNITY!**



## **RACING** to Free Children from Bonded Labor

Team International Needs ran for a cause at the annual Riverbank Run, raising funds to free children from bonded labor in Bangladesh. With the community's support, **we were able to support 60 children!** Through IN's drop-in center, these children will be able to escape the dangers of street life, take care of themselves, and learn about Jesus.  
**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**

