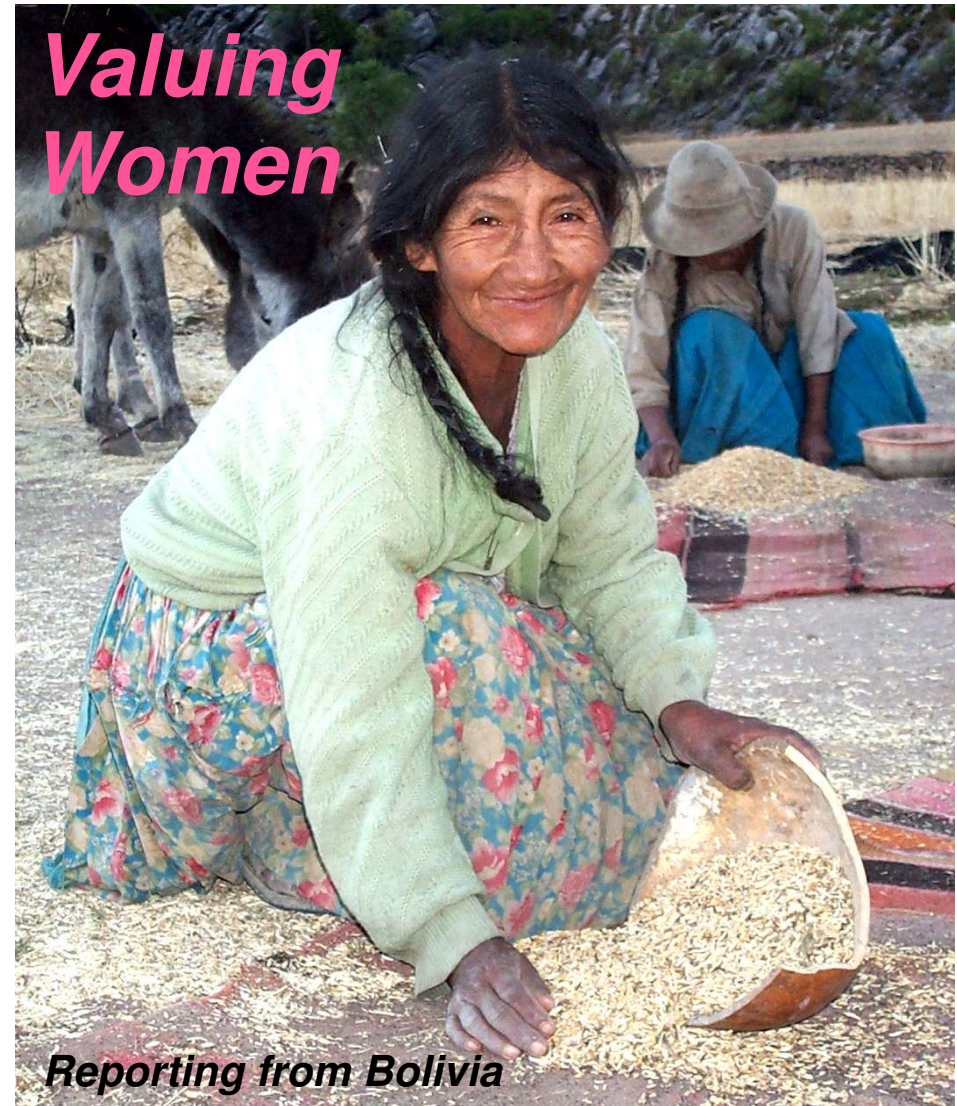




Valuing Women



Reporting from Bolivia

Ideas have consequences! In Bolivia, the idea that women are not worth educating has serious negative consequences, including:

- Risk of domestic violence
- Infant mortality and child malnutrition
- Vulnerability to sudden food shortages
- Lack of voice outside the domestic arena.

**Continued
overleaf...**

Valuing Women

Whilst it is important in all development work to affirm rather than undermine the integrity of local cultures, it is also crucial to recognise that some values and habits are harmful and that they can and should be dropped. Seeking to simply meet material needs is futile unless these value issues are also addressed.

The deeply-rooted belief that women are intrinsically worth less than men leads to domestic violence and perpetuates women's lack of access to resources and voice both at home and at community level. It also puts them at particular risk to the effects of sudden food shortages. Despite their role as principle carers of domestic animals and crops, women have little role in decision making with regard to household livelihoods.

A woman's ability to **earn an income**, to **read and write** and to **lead** in her community increases her respect and regard. This in turn enhances her bargaining powers and voice in the family and community, indirectly ensuring that funds generated at the household level are invested in the family (education, health & nutrition) rather than on alcohol or other vices.

We believe that communities that adopt and that embed themselves in the worldview and principles endorsed by Scripture, **will** see local conditions transformed. FHI/Bolivia thus places enormous weight on effecting behaviour, value and worldview changes that enhance



well-being in terms of material, social, environmental, and spiritual potential of people, and which remain with them long after the agency leaves.

Based on the principle that men and women are equal before God, FHI/Bolivia incorporates a gender strategy in all of its programmes, with the following components:

Income generation. It is clear that a woman's ability to earn an income enhances the family's investment in their children's education, health and nutrition.

Education. The education of women has been found to lead to smaller family size and a marked reduction in child malnutrition and infant mortality. It also greatly enhances the contribution of women to economic and human development.

Decision making. FHI/Bolivia already works with community leadership structures and will foster increased participation of women, so that women occupy at least 30% of leadership positions.

Domestic violence. FHI/Bolivia will address the problem of violence against women by producing educational materials dealing with this issue and its consequences and by working directly with families, and especially men, through focus and discussion groups.

Springing into action in Pakistan

Just 2 days after the catastrophic earthquake in the Pakistan-administered region of Kashmir on 8th October, a FHI assessment and medical team was in action helping the injured. Medical professionals, who had volunteered for a week or two to help as they were able, performed operations that included amputations and surgery for fractured limbs. 8 further teams were sent to the area, which included doctors, nurses and teachers to provide care for the many children suffering trauma. The team climbed high into the mountains to reach and care for those unreachable by the main relief work. The child care team were especially appreciated by the people in Pattika, who said it was the first time since the earthquake that they had heard children's laughter!

A roti (bread) factory was built in Mansehra providing roti to about 20,000 affected people in the area. In addition, donations of clothes, medicine, school supplies and other necessities were made available.



Medical team treats a needy child.

Working in the *hardest* *situations*

Our programme for girl survivors captured by the LRA in Northern Uganda.

Amidst Northern Uganda's heat and drought...Africa's most brutal forgotten conflict has now raged for 19 years...80% of the people forced to live in deplorable camps...young girls abducted during LRA raids and given to rebel commanders as wives...some escaping or sent away...returning home with their own children...thus '*child mothers*'.

Christine's story

Christine's story...God's faithfulness to a grain of faith....told by Janet Shaver, FHI Programme Director, bravely taking care of these children.

One day Christine's Mum asked her 10 year old daughter to go to the market, but instead she stayed inside their hut. Suddenly she heard a great commotion and saw her family running. She shut the door realizing it was the LRA. The rebels were beating people. She was dragged out and made to start walking with her elderly neighbours who pleaded with the rebels to let them stay. In reply, they were made to lie on the ground and were shot one by one. The rebels pointed the gun at Christine and laughed, "*We have sent these 'home' ...if you ever ask to go home again, that is how we will send you*".

Forced to walk 300 kms to the LRA camp at the Sudan border, she stayed there for 7 years, being trained as a soldier and given as a 'wife' to a rebel commander. At only 13 she gave birth to a boy and two years later another. Captivity consisted of night raids by children led by her 'husband' to steal food, capture more children and kill those resisting. Fights with government soldiers often left children killed, wounded or managing to escape.

During one raid Christine managed to escape the rebels. Ambushed by government soldiers and finding the others dead, she was injured by a bomb, shot and passed out, dazed and soaked in blood. When she awoke, soldiers shot her again and took her for questioning. I met her at one reception centre. She had lost her older son, but was still hoping to



find him some day. We prayed and I told her to put her faith in God for He will look after her son.

Travelling on to Kitgum to another reception centre, I talked to two children not knowing one was Christine's. Later Christine gave me the miraculous news that she had been reunited with her son....a wonderful step towards rebuilding her faith in God again.

Programme aims:

Supporting reintegration of formerly abducted vulnerable children and child mothers aged 14 - 24 in Kitgum district through community based Child Development Programmes, implemented by strengthening churches, leaders and families:

- Operating the New Life Centre, Kitgum for care of the most serious cases
- Equipping 360 faith based counsellors and teachers to target 4,125 girls in two camps with social, developmental, educational and vocational support, plus referrals to New Life Centre

This began humbly with an idea that a person can make a difference. It has taken time, prayer, tears and sweat, but never any doubt that God is going to do something very special in the lives of these vulnerable girls.

Focus

The stated purpose of FHI is to meet both physical and spiritual needs of the poor. We want our ministry to be like Jesus - to walk in His footsteps, to continue His work.

I am frequently reminded that Jesus did not come to earth as a millionaire, solving problems with a cheque-book, but as a helpless baby. He came to preach Good News to the poor (Luke 4:18) This Good News is the Kingdom of God.

In Food for the Hungry, we believe that this world can change for the better. But it will only happen as it becomes filled with people who live out a Kingdom of God lifestyle.

That is why our Vision of a Community includes a growing group of Christians, loving God and one another, manifesting the fruit of the Spirit and reaching out to serve others.

We want to connect communities with the One who can really change their lives. Thank you for your partnership.

Executive Officer

Reaching Isolated Communities

In the western highlands of Guatemala



She takes a truck as far as it will go, then Mel Parslow, FHI Staff member from Durham, and other FHI staff, walk further up into the mountains to reach needy isolated communities. What they find is poverty, sickness, alcoholism, broken families, superstition and fear. They offer advice and practical help. They encourage them with scriptures and pray with them, kneeling together on the insect-infested dirt floor.

Mel explains further, *“Living conditions are very poor in makeshift wooden houses, animals wandering around inside the house. Flea-ridden dogs, cats, chickens, ducks, mice, pigs, eating the food from the floor and relieving themselves, along with the children. Our home visits are often with a stressed, overworked sick and exhausted woman with 3 or 4 children and babies hanging onto her, demanding her attention. Usually the man of the house is out at work or has moved to America (often illegally) or to the coast to look for work. The women and children left behind are extremely vulnerable as the houses are insecure and easily broken into. Superstition also haunts them; I talked to one woman whose family*



had been scared by a big snake in their house (understandable!) but they were far more afraid because it was considered an omen that meant that someone in the family was going to die.”

But Mel has also found generosity and openness. She says, *“Most people want to be helped and welcome our visits. We are nearly always given a corn or rice drink and a piece of fruit or a vegetable as a gift from their meagre food supply.”*

FHI’s vision is to see these communities transformed; to see them changed into places where their people are moving towards all that God intends them to be. As FHI works with 3 key groups: churches, leaders and families, the community begins to meet their own basic needs and to reach out in Christian love to serve others.

Mel says, *“Communities really are being changed. I have seen it with my own eyes. The comparison between new communities we are working in and the ones FHI has worked in for a while is very evident. Higher standards and more hope.”*



Praying around the world

The **Horn of Africa** is once again hit by serious drought and the poor are hardest hit. Please pray for rain and for a growing capacity of communities to prepare for and cope with such problems.

Please pray for **Bolivia’s** first indigenous president who took office in January. There are high expectations from the country’s majority Indian population to take tough measures to deal with injustice and poverty. Please pray for peace and economic growth.

Further to our main article in Autumn about the Family and Community Transformation groups in **Bangladesh**, we have received further pledges for funding, but the needs are still great. Please pray for a continued rise in sponsorship.

Please pray for the work to help families and communities in **Romania** to deal with alcoholism. It is deeply ingrained in male culture, but the women and children suffer from neglect, poverty and domestic violence as a result.



Tsunami Recovery

The coalition of churches, Christian NGOs and businesses formed

in the immediate aftermath of the Tsunami is set to continue its recovery work into 2006.

The long-term strategy focuses on livelihood restoration, care and counselling of those still traumatised as well as leadership training to bring greater sustainability.

More than 700 fishing families were enabled to get back to sea with new or restored boats, engines and fishing gear. Micro grants have been awarded for small business start-up and recovery. Tourism workers have received vocational training to increase their employability as hotels returned to operating status.

Programme Director Deb Wilson remarks, *“Around April this year we will begin an evaluation process to determine what is still needed by families and communities. The aim is still to demonstrate love for the whole person, considering physical, emotional, mental and social needs.”*



Motivated by Christ's love, the international partnership of Food for the Hungry exists to meet both physical and spiritual hungers of the poor.

This purpose is met by:

- Speaking out to all people about physical and spiritual hungers.
- Sending people to share Christ's love.
- Facilitating emergency relief and sustainable development.

Food for the Hungry/UK

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