



THE NEXT STEP

NEWS FOR FRIENDS AND PARTNERS

CFC# 51472

Jessica Cox visits projects in Asia

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Issue 10 – 8757 Georgia Ave, Suite 420, Silver Spring, MD 20910 USA, (301) 891-2138

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Running from bombs

NEWS

“The bombing followed us everywhere, until we came to Lebanon,” Afisa explains.

From Iraq to Kenya, and South Sudan to Jordan, millions of people have sought refuge from the explosive violence tearing their homes, schools, roads and bodies apart.

The United Nations counts 65 million people displaced inside their countries, or seeking refuge abroad. Among them are millions fleeing heartbreaking conflict with one common element—the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, weapons that don’t just destroy their military targets, but the lives of the people nearby.

“Attacks using explosive weapons, particularly with a wide-area impact, in populated areas have indiscriminate effects,” notes Anne Héry, head of advocacy at Handicap International. Indeed, 92% of victims are civilians. People have little choice but to flee.

The consequences are devastating. Even for those who miraculously escape without injury, the deafening explosions or rapid pops of gunshots and the sight of injured family members, neighbors, and friends is enough to cause serious psychological trauma.

“I wanted to follow my child and die,” Nadia, 33, explains after losing her daughter in a bombing in Syria. “I had bought her new clothes. She wore the clothes only once.”

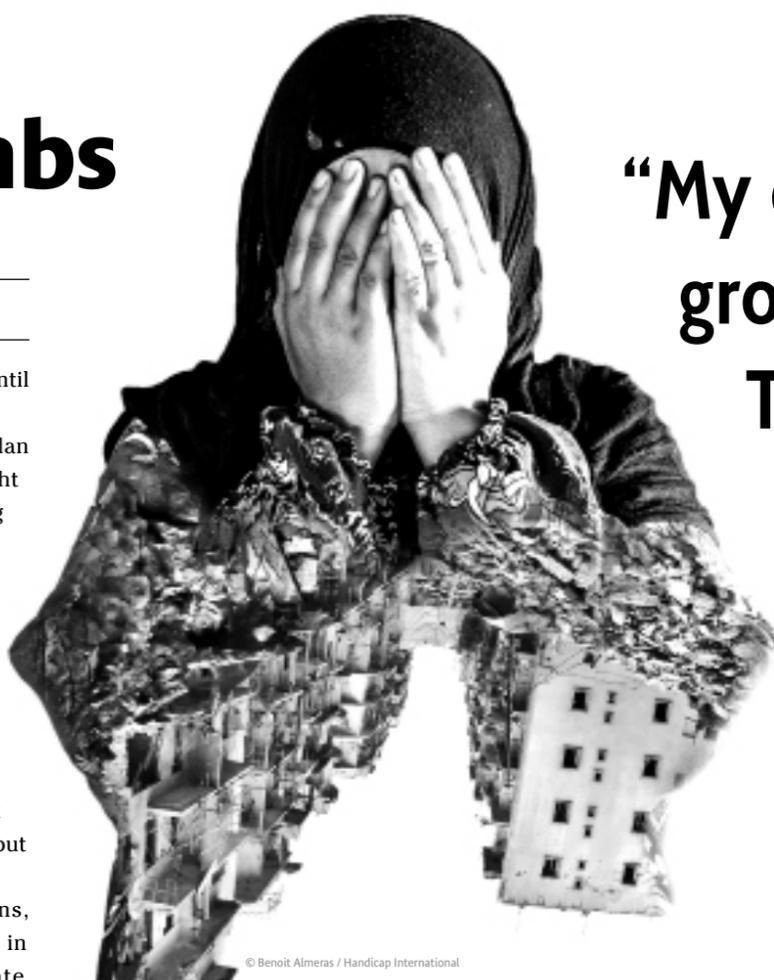
Hanan, a 31-year-old woman from Syria, adds: “There is no horror that I did not see. I have seen things that no human being should see, things that no human being might have ever seen before.”

Our teams respond to the psychological and physical needs of people fleeing numerous conflicts. “Providing psychosocial support is a top priority,” says Jérémie Zahorski, a Handicap International field coordinator in Iraq. “They’ve lost all hope in the future. They’ve been displaced, their homes have been destroyed, they’ve had traumatic experiences...their mental well-being is in a critical state. If you ignore psychological distress, it just gets worse.”

Because of your support, Handicap International is also teaching civilians to spot, avoid, and report the landmines, cluster munitions, and other explosive devices that torment communities for decades after conflict. This vital work helps give the displaced peace of mind that when they do eventually return to their homes, they can do so in safety.



Sign the petition: bit.ly/StopBombs



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“My children have grown up amid war. They have seen people die.”
–Ranim, 31, from Syria



A man in a wheelchair holds his daughter on his lap in Lebanon.



A Syrian family displays all of the belongings they brought to Lebanon.

Crisis alert: Bangladesh under pressure

More than half a million children and adults from the ethnic Rohingya minority have fled to Bangladesh from Myanmar since late August. The 2,000 Rohingyas that arrive in Bangladesh each day are exhausted, hungry, and tell our staff horrifying stories about why they fled for their lives.

Their needs are far from being met. Almost half are still without shelter and more than 80% lack food aid.

Reiza Dejito, HI's country director in Bangladesh, notes that when refugees are occupied in activities to survive, such as standing in line for supplies, people with disabilities are often left behind. “We are particularly concerned about the condition of extremely vulnerable individuals, such as pregnant women, older people without caregivers, people with reduced mobility, people who are severely sick, and unaccompanied or separated children.

They are particularly susceptible to disease, malnutrition, hygiene problems, infections, psychological distress, and more. Handicap International makes every effort to identify them, assess their needs, provide psychological and rehabilitation assistance, and meet their basic survival requirements.”

Thanks to our donors, more than 200 staff are supplying aid to new arrivals. Since August, teams have provided support to more than 20,000 people.

Gilles Nouziès, who oversees Handicap International's Asian programs, notes how “the Rohingya left their villages in haste, taking nothing with them. The crisis is very sudden and needs are great. The rainy season makes travel difficult and our teams find it hard to reach people. We visit the most vulnerable families on foot, [which is] dragging out the assessment stage.”

In recent months, Bangladesh has

also been affected by monsoon rains and severe flooding. Rising waters have ruined crops and food supplies, including livestock, exasperating the already tense situation.



A Rohingya man carries his mother.

© A. Islam / Handicap International



HI Goodwill Ambassador Jessica Cox at an event in Kathmandu, Nepal in September 2017.

Note from the Executive Director



This edition of *The Next Step* illustrates what your gifts make possible—touching lives everywhere from Syria and Burkina Faso to the Philippines and Bangladesh.

We began celebrating Handicap International’s 35th birthday in July. As this incredible, award-winning organization has matured over the decades, so to has the range of our projects and services. No longer does “Handicap International” encapsulate what donors like you make possible. What’s more, the word “handicap” is truly antiquated. Bearing that description diminishes our beneficiaries’ resilience in the face of poverty and exclusion, conflict and disaster.

I’m proud to tell you that we’ll unveil a brand new name on January 24. We’ll pack a special-edition of *The Next Step* in January with news, and more about the surveys and interviews that steered us towards a strong, new identity that showcases how our teams celebrate inclusion and offer compassion and aid that no other NGO in the world can do on our scale.

We’re excited for January 24, and know you will be too. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to reach out to me directly.

Jeff Meer
Executive Director
Twitter: @Jeff_HIUS

Asia visit pushes for greater access to decent jobs

PROJECT UPDATE

Jessica Cox, Goodwill Ambassador and the world’s first licensed armless pilot, raised awareness about the importance of people with disabilities accessing decent, waged employment through visits to HI inclusion projects in Nepal and the Philippines in September.

In Kathmandu, Nepal, Jessica visited a center where women with disabilities learn new job skills. Some now

print Braille books for local school libraries, while others make incense, candles, small felt animals, and clothing.

The work is consistent, and earns these women a fair wage. Jessica was particularly touched by Bhuwan, a woman with a disability who gained confidence and independence through the training. Bhuwan now owns a modified motorbike that she uses to get around with ease.

Nearly 2,600 miles away, in the middle of a rice

paddy outside Roxas City, Philippines, Jessica met April Joy, 24, who has physical and intellectual disabilities. Because of HI’s work after Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, the teams got to know April, seeing that she had untapped skills that would help her earn money if only she could be given the chance.

Our donors provided April with her own computer and wifi access. She’s able to charge local students a small fee for helping them conduct

online research and typing for school, offering a healthy supplement to her parents’ income from farming rice.

Jessica encouraged everyone she met, as well as people who learned about her story on local TV shows. However, she says she was the one most inspired by the work we’re doing to ensure that people with disabilities can reach their goals.

Ramesh: Going for gold



THE BIG PICTURE

May 2015 →

The April 2015 earthquake collapsed a building on the legs of Ramesh Khatri, now 18. The crushing injuries left doctors with no choice but to amputate his legs. Physical therapists and the rest of the Handicap International rehabilitation team began providing him with vital support not long after his surgery at the hospital.



← September 2017

HI Goodwill Ambassador Jessica Cox meets Ramesh in Nepal after he performed a dance to welcome her to the vocational training center of the organization Bodhisattvas In Action. The center trains wheelchair users to create traditional Nepali handicrafts.

April 2017 ↑

Two years later, Ramesh is training at a swimming pool in Kathmandu. His walls are decorated with numerous medals from swimming meets and wheelchair races, and he dreams of representing Nepal in the 2020 Paralympic Games in Japan. Go for the gold, Ramesh!



Samadou practices mathematics with support from his teacher at a school in Burkina Faso.

Your gifts help Samadou learn



NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Samadou is an energetic seven-year-old boy from Tenkodogo, in eastern Burkina Faso. Born with one leg much smaller than the other, neighbors referred to him by his disability, rather than his name. So it was no surprise that his mother kept him away from school: she feared he would be bullied.

In many low-income countries like Burkina Faso, children with disabilities are more likely to be hidden at home and missing from official records. Children like Samadou illustrate the complexities behind a seemingly simple ambition: learning.

Such complexities become the very barriers that prevent bright kids like Samadou from a chance to shine as students. Over time, our teams have learned that a simple lesson in the rights of people with disabilities goes a long way. When they met Samadou's family, that's exactly where they began.

After teams worked with Samadou's parents to encourage them to send him to school, they contacted local teachers and community groups to ensure that everyone understood

Our inclusive education projects are helping 170,000 children across West Africa.

what the law dictated about rights. The teams also worked with the government of Burkina Faso to ensure that census takers count every child to understand the big picture of disability in Burkina Faso.

Teachers are often anxious about accepting a child with a disability into their classroom. They told our teams that they feared that the child would require too much of their time, and disrupt classmates. Or else they said they lacked teaching strategies, or the physical resources to make learning practical.

To give them more support, our staff integrated a cohort of visiting teachers who have been extensively trained in providing one-to-one support. These teachers can also help children with visual or hearing impairments to learn Braille and sign language.

Meanwhile, at national teacher

training schools, we advocate for future teachers to learn about inclusive education. The teachers learn how best to welcome a child with a disability to their classroom, and to support the students' education so they can lead independent lives as adults.

Samadou loves school. He attends all of the same classes as his classmates and is progressing well. He also benefits from a visiting teacher at home. Together they follow an education plan that is adapted to his needs, and are working to make the school more physically accessible.

Most important, he is involved in activities outside of school. He can be seen chasing lizards with his friends, or speeding along on the back of his brother's bike!

Handicap International was recently awarded the Knight's title in the Order of Academic Palms of Burkina Faso for our work on the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools.

Why we work in inclusion



Hervé Bernard
Handicap International
Head of Inclusion

I remember the day that I first realized what we were up against. It was 1994, and I was working with Cambodians with disabilities. They had recently returned to their communities after being refugees in Thailand. Many returned to Cambodia with no prospects for work and faced deep-rooted prejudices that prevented them from earning a living.

I was shocked. I developed a project so they could build a career working on adapted agricultural activities and livestock breeding, helping them rebuild a better life than the one they left behind. That project grew to 40 projects, in 28 countries today.

Our work isn't just limited to employment. Our inclusion team makes sure that people with disabilities are a part of their communities starting at an early age. HI's programs begin with inclusive education, communities and sports, ensuring they can participate in all areas of their lives. When an emergency strikes, people with disabilities are among the most vulnerable. With your gifts, our teams are on the ground, making sure that they are not left on the sidelines.

Background

Geography

Located in West Africa, Burkina Faso is a landlocked country that covers 105,900 sq. mi. Its capital city is Ouagadougou, and it is bordered by six countries: Mali, Niger, Benin, Togo, Ghana, and the Ivory Coast.

History

Burkina Faso is one of the world's poorest countries. The most marginalized community members, including people with disabilities, frequently live in poverty and have no access to education or healthcare.

Mandate

Working in Burkina Faso since 1990, Handicap International improves access to key services and promotes greater societal inclusion for people with disabilities. Teams there also work with women's organizations to ease tensions between Malian refugees and local host communities.

Donors give Rachidatou a fresh start

BENEFICIARY STORY

Nine-year-old Rachidatou lives with her family in Burkina Faso, on the outskirts of Tenkodogo. She had a highly-complicated birth. At a mere 20-days-old, doctors performed a below-knee amputation.

"I didn't think my daughter had a future," her mother Zoénabo recalls. "I felt angry because of her missing leg."

Rachidatou wasn't able to walk, and had other problems that left her isolated from children her own age. She rarely spoke, and used gestures that were difficult to understand.

But in 2016, Rachidatou's life changed: she met Handicap International.

At HI's Tenkodogo orthopedic center, physical therapists gave Rachidatou an artificial leg and taught her how to walk comfortably. Because of donors like you, this

cheerful, bubbly little girl now runs and plays with her friends.

"She's been given another chance," her mother says.

In June 2016, a fire destroyed the orthopedic center. Reconstruction of the center is due to start in 2018. Until then, Rachidatou continues to attend physical therapy sessions and enjoy school.



Rachidatou rests against a building in Burkina Faso.

Brazilian soccer star joins HI family

AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT

This summer, we welcomed Brazilian soccer sensation Neymar Jr. as the first-ever Global Ambassador of Handicap International. Through this partnership, Neymar Jr. is lending his huge fame to a good cause: empowering the most vulnerable people in the world, people with disabilities living in poor countries and victims of conflicts and natural disasters.

Neymar Jr.'s first action as ambassador was to send a message of support to people with disabilities across the world. On August 15, he went on the top of the 39-foot Broken Chair monument in Geneva and called for more inclusion of people with disabilities in society. Symbolically, this message took the shape of a soccer ball with the HI logo on it. He then kicked the ball down the row of flags in front of the Palace of Nations. The event was followed by a press conference hosted by the United Nations.

The Broken Chair is the work of the Swiss artist Daniel Berset, erected 20 years ago by HI in front of the United Nations headquarters to call for a ban on antipersonnel landmines.

The star initially met our team in 2016 to discuss access to artificial limbs for amputee children, a subject that's particularly close to Neymar Jr.'s heart, and a cause he has already supported. He wanted to support similar actions on a global scale, and got to know Handicap International's prosthetic and orthotic programs.

In October 2016, Neymar Jr. showed his support to Haitians impacted by the devastating Hurricane Matthew by urging his followers on social media to



Neymar Jr. with an HI soccer ball in front of the row of flags in Geneva, Switzerland.

support our work in the hard-hit nation.

This September, he told his 81 million Instagram followers that he stands with our Stop Bombing Civilians campaign by writing "STOP" on his hand, then posting a selfie on Instagram. In Sao Paulo, Brazil, children benefiting from his foundation, Instituto Neymar Jr., added their support by taking pictures with the "STOP" message written on their hands, too.

This effort was part of HI's social media campaign to create buzz for the global advocacy campaign that demands an end to the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. We're thankful to Neymar Jr. and the other 365,000 people who added their voices to this important effort, getting us even closer to our goal of 1 million signatures that we'll present to political decision-makers at the United Nations next year.

In North America, Handicap International benefits

from the committed support of two Goodwill Ambassadors: American pilot, motivational speaker and *RightFooted* star Jessica Cox, and Canadian *Dark Matter* actor Anthony Lemke.



Neymar Jr.'s "STOP" selfie from Instagram.



Neymar Jr. kicking a soccer ball off of the Broken Chair.



Handicap International's website has the most up-to-date news, plus photos and videos of the people your donations help.

Sign up for regular e-newsletters: www.handicap-international.us/join

Follow your impact:



We're real people and we'd love to hear from you! Touch base any time with comments, questions, or suggestions.

ReachOut@handicap-international.us
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Spot the difference!

Earlier this year, we celebrated our 35th birthday with cakes made by our staff. Can you spot the nine differences between these two delicious-looking pictures?



Answers: Wall outlet, "ans" on paper, candles now pink, photo sticks now yellow, ball on photo now pink, Khenod's pants now green, 3 different photos on sticks