



# Stories of transformation



# Gaining confidence and getting involved



## Albania: Alesia



Alesia grew up in a small village in Albania. Her father was a migrant construction worker, and her mother was a teacher. She was quiet, anxious and shy as a young person. Schools in her village were very poor, both in terms of infrastructure and quality of education. There was little in the way of support or materials that made lessons more understandable for children.

That changed for Alesia when she started joining summer camps as a World Vision sponsored child. "They taught me all sorts of important stuff, like children's rights, why early marriages are a problem, how to deal with bullying, and the value of a good education." Through World Vision's IMPACT club, she learned skills that helped her gain confidence and get involved in community projects with her friends. IMPACT clubs empower sponsored children to become active citizens with life skills, assets and agency gained over the course of a year that includes a mandatory curriculum and service learning.

She also joined a Reporter's group where young writers write about various topics impacting children and youth in their communities. And she attended several boot camps and youth festivals organised by World Vision Albania. "There I learned new information, but mostly it gave me the confidence to share my thoughts and create new experiences and meet new people with whom we share the same issues but different perspectives. This new confidence made me more involved both in my family and in my community".

In addition, Alesia and her family took part in World Vision's Celebrating Families, where families come together to do fun activities and discuss important topics. "Previously, my family and I would not get together and talk about discipline or abuse or play together or organise activities at home. Me and other children rarely would get together to participate in training about community engagement, environment, abuse, leadership and almost never undertake initiatives to implement in benefit to the community."

"World Vision helped me connect more with my family and identify problems that affect me and other kids in our village. Most importantly, it taught me how to solve those problems. World Vision did not only help me but my entire community," says the 18-year-old. Alesia is now part of the Dibra Municipality Youth Council where youth work together to solve problems that affect children. She is also part of the Youth Lead project, supported by the US Embassy.



**My involvement with World Vision made me brave. I can share my thoughts and ideas without fear.**



## Self-sufficient and Independent Albania: Jetjoni

Jetjoni was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder in kindergarten. Part of the diagnosis also revealed some associated disorders such as learning difficulties, aggressiveness, and speech issues.

Jetjoni's mother, Monda, recalls, "This was the most challenging period of my life because no one provided me with information or explained the health issues my son had in a trustworthy way. Perhaps it was due to the lack of information at the time, but I know that for a long time, I wandered without finding answers to many questions and concerns that troubled my mind and heart. This hindered me from providing the necessary help to my child."

Jetjoni lives with his parents, a brother and their grandmother. The family struggles to make ends meet with just the income that his father manages to secure. Monda had to quit her job years ago to take care of Jetjoni and to take him to the various therapies he needs.

She also makes sure Jetjoni gets to school where he takes part in the Development Space implemented by World Vision Albania. He's been attending the Development Space for the past four years. This space provides essential support for children facing psychosocial challenges.

During this time, a collaborative Individual Education Plan (IEP) was developed, crafted by a team of professionals, support teachers, and parents to address his specific needs. A dedicated learning support teacher works with him daily, contributing significantly to his growth and development. In this friendly environment, he builds his capacities and is able to socialise with his classmates.

The Developmental Space has had a positive impact, not only on Jetjoni but also on his family. It's provided answers to their questions and allowed them to closely witness the progress in his development.

In addition, Jetjoni has also been part of the Hello Teen project where he works on functional life skills that will lead him to be self-sufficient and independent one day. His parents support and encourage him to carry out daily tasks at home to meet those objectives.

Jetjoni has been receiving speech therapy support for two years, which has significantly improved his articulation and communication skills. He can now respond clearly to commands and write sentences, reducing his frustration. And a recent dental intervention addressed speech issues related to his teeth structure, further improving his overall well-being and development.

Through sponsorship, Jetjoni, who is now 12 years old, is getting the education and life skills he needs to become a self-sufficient adult one day. His parents are grateful for the skilled help their son is getting, which relieves a huge burden in their lives.



**The Developmental Space has had a positive impact, not only on Jetjoni but also on his family.**



# Passionate about science and numbers

## Albania: Katerina

Katerina became a World Vision sponsored child in her hometown of Maliq when she was 10 years old. Joining the sponsorship programme was a new experience for Katerina, serving not only to break boundaries but also to gain a fresh perspective on life.

“I had very little information about what was happening beyond my small town. Through the sponsorship programme, I had the opportunity to communicate with a friend from the other side of the globe.”

“With the mediation of World Vision staff and under parental supervision, I exchanged letters periodically with my sponsor from Hong Kong, who was among the first to encourage me to focus on education, pursue dreams, and build self-confidence as the best way to discover my full potential. This lasted for several years. I still cherish the motivational letters, stickers, and postcards she sent me and am grateful,” she recalls.

Through sponsorship, Katerina also got involved in an IMPACT club which helped her develop knowledge, skills, and understanding, to be an active citizen and contribute to the social and cultural life of her city.

There was something different about the IMPACT clubs, recalls the now 25-year-old. “The spirit of cooperation, the activities they did, the initiatives they undertook, all had an impact. I really wanted to contribute to improve community life.”

Over the years, Katerina continued to participate in programmes and activities organised by World Vision Albania in her city. She enjoyed participating in community discussions or initiatives to bring positive changes to the lives of children and young people.

Katerina became a leader of the IMPACT group in Podgorie where she worked hard to overcome barriers that kept other girls from joining the group. “In the village where I led the IMPACT group, there was noticeable difference between boys and girls. Girls did not enjoy the same rights as boys. They were not allowed to leave the house.”



Initially, there were only two girls who were part of the IMPACT groups, as the rest were not allowed to join by their families. Through discussions with parents, I managed to include other girls in the IMPACT groups.”

Passionate about exact science and numbers, after high school she completed bachelor’s and master’s degrees in accounting-finance, but had to work for two years as a cashier in the capitol city to make ends meet. She eventually found short-term work as a finance officer with World Vision Albania which led eventually to her getting a position in the private sector. “Regardless of where I work,” she says, “I will continue to be involved in social and community initiatives focusing on empowering young people, especially girls.”



**If we combine integrity and love with professional skills, then we will be successful.**





# Rising above her circumstances

## Armenia: Gayane

Gayane felt the weight of her family's financial struggles from a very young age. Her parents divorced, leaving her mother to support the family on a teacher's salary while her elder brother pursued university studies.

For over 15 years, Gayane was a participant in a sponsorship programme run by World Vision. The programme provided her with more than just material support, it offered her diverse activities and programmes designed to boost self-esteem and life skills. Through her involvement, Gayane learned about leadership, communication, and teamwork. At the age of 12, her curiosity about social work was sparked by World Vision's operations, and she began to immerse herself in various meetings, discussions, life skills trainings, and camps.

As she grew older, Gayane's confidence blossomed and her passion for social work became her guiding light. The activities organised by World Vision kept children like her engaged and occupied in a positive way. Through these activities, Gayane and her peers developed crucial social skills, which are essential for their future social well-being.

"I couldn't imagine my life without World Vision," says Gayane. "My friends and I were always eagerly waiting for World Vision's projects for children, as there wasn't another organisation in our community making children so happy. I will always cherish the unforgettable days spent in camps, excursions, trainings, and conversations."

Inspired by World Vision staff members who made a significant impact on her and her family's life, Gayane pursued a degree in Social Work at university. Today, she is an advanced student, deeply committed to her studies and to the field of social work. Her passion for making a difference in the lives of those in need drives her hard work and dedication.

Now 17, Gayane's long-term vision is to create a positive impact on society by supporting families in need and working tirelessly to improve the welfare of her community. "My dream is not just to be a good social worker but a great one," says Gayane. "And I understand that it requires a lifelong commitment to learning, growth, and service."

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my life without  
World Vision.



# May all children live in peace



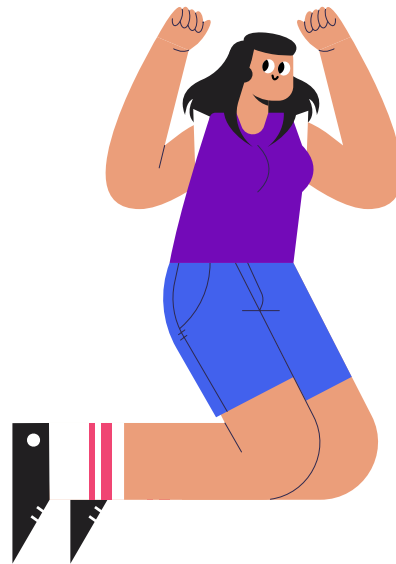
## Armenia: Lilit

Lilit, now 16 years old, was one of the first children to be sponsored in the World Vision Noyemberyan area programme, and her journey since then has been nothing short of inspiring.

Growing up in a community where children had limited access to extracurricular activities, Lilit's life changed when she was included in World Vision Armenia's various programmes and projects as a sponsored child. She eagerly participated in activities like summer camp, child rights training, advocacy club, media literacy club, and spiritual nurturing events organised at her school. Each experience added a new dimension to her growth and development.

Lilit's involvement in the media literacy club was particularly significant. It was here that she discovered her passion for journalism. Yevgine, Lilit's mother says, "Before World Vision came to our community, children didn't have the chance to participate in these kinds of activities and clubs. Thanks to the media literacy club, my daughter now dreams of becoming a journalist."

Pursuing her newfound dream, Lilit, along with three of her peers from the media literacy club, began



volunteering as journalists for the local Tavush TV channel. They supported the TV staff in developing programme scenarios, capturing video clips, editing footage, and more. This experience was invaluable, allowing Lilit to develop her skills and gain practical insights into the world of journalism.

Beyond her professional aspirations, Lilit also found joy and fulfillment through the support of her sponsor. With the sponsor's generous donation in addition to her sponsorship support, she was able to buy a guitar, making another one of her most cherished dreams come true. Now, Lilit can play her favorite musical instrument, adding another layer of happiness to her life.

"My dear sponsor, thank you for everything you did for me. May God bless you and your family with safety, health, and love. Let there be no wars in the world, and may all children live in peace," she expresses with deep appreciation.

Lilit's story highlights how access to opportunities and nurturing environments can unlock a child's potential, enabling them to pursue their dreams and contribute meaningfully to their community. Through determination, support, and the power of dreams, Lilit has transformed her life and is on a path to making a significant difference in the world of journalism.



**Access to opportunities and nurturing environments unlocks a child's potential.**

# Developing leadership qualities



## Georgia: Nini

Nini comes from Kvenmo Khodasheni in the eastern part of Georgia. She became a sponsored child at the age of six, which immersed her in a world beyond her small village. Her connection with her sponsor marked the beginning of a life changing journey. She fondly remembers the moment when she had her first picture taken clutching a small piglet.

Growing up, Nini completed her schooling in her village, but her journey was uniquely shaped by her early connection with World Vision. World Vision staff started creating school clubs in villages focusing on various topics like youth participation, bullying prevention and personal development.

Active and enthusiastic, Nini was one of the first to participate in these activities. She learned how to manage her emotions. She discovered that life is full of difficulties but there are many strategies to use to cope with stress and resolve conflicts. Understanding and controlling her emotions became a cornerstone in her development, helping her navigate life's challenges more effectively.

Through her involvement, she learned that everyone deserves help and support, and this philosophy guided her actions. Nini became an integral part of her school's anti-bullying committee, conducting trainings, creating engaging games, and working tirelessly to reduce bullying in her community. Her efforts paid off, and within a year, there was a significant decrease in bullying cases.

Recently, Nini participated in a competition and was selected as a SKYE Leader. She leads the youth club in Kakheti, empowering other young people through skills development and mentorship. She is gaining valuable experience through a paid internship at the volunteer non-government organisation Helping Hand, where she mobilises local youth for voluntary work. She devotes herself to bringing positive change to her community, inspiring those around her with her passion and commitment.

Nini also excels academically. She is a dedicated student of food technology in winemaking at Telavi University. This field is close to her heart, as winemaking is a cherished tradition in Kakheti, where almost every family has a vineyard. Nini's family is no exception, and she has been involved in the grape harvest and pressing process since childhood. Following her father's advice, she chose

this profession and is now excited about the prospect of developing the family business alongside him. Her father has always been a pillar of support, helping her achieve her dreams.

"I am deeply thankful for the opportunities World Vision has provided me. I truly believe that my life would have taken a completely different path without your support. Your organisation opens up excellent opportunities, and we, the young people, are eager to seize and utilise them for our growth and development. Today, I am a strong, independent person, striving to make a positive impact in my community and beyond," says Nini, who is now 19 years old.



Today I am a strong, independent person, striving to make a positive impact in my community and beyond.



# My greatest aspiration is to become a highly qualified doctor

## Georgia: Sopo

Sopo was 12 years old when she entered World Vision's Child Sponsorship programme. "I knew that other children in our school were already part of the programme, with sponsors who sent them letters and supported them. Seeing this, I also had a desire to have such a caring friend. That's how my journey with World Vision began," she reflects.

Many families in her village faced financial problems, while the school lacked engaging activities to motivate children. World Vision opened a school library, providing books and offering various activities and trainings for children. Families received financial assistance and equipment like tractors for agriculture, significantly improving their living conditions.

"I am deeply thankful to my sponsor and her family for their kindness in supporting children in another country. I remember her very well, she was called Nanci and despite the geographical distance, we developed a very friendly relationship. Nanci regularly sent me presents and letters, and we exchanged photos. She and her family were farmers, and she often shared updates about life on their farm. In return, I wrote to her about school and my academic journey. Once, she graciously sent a sum of money (in addition to the monthly sponsorship contribution), which my family and I used to purchase desks and bookshelves for our school. In gratitude, I sent her a photo of me and my classmates with the new furniture, which pleased her immensely," Sopo adds.

Apart from essential support, the school library and youth club played a pivotal role in shaping Sopo's strong personality, equipping her with knowledge and essential life skills. Writing projects and leadership

I sincerely hope [my sponsor] receives as much kindness in her life as she has shown.



skills were among the key abilities she gained, which she continues to use in her profession even today.

During her school years, Sopo was highly active and participated in every project. She became a peer educator for several years and later advanced to become a club leader at school. She took part in establishing an anti-bullying committee at her school. These and other important initiatives made her realise that she wants to help others by saving lives, and she remains steadfast in following her mission. Looking back, Sopo cherishes her relationship with World Vision, which she attributes to fostering her independence and guiding her towards her professional goals. Her journey underscores the transformative impact of humanitarian aid on individual lives.

Currently, Sopo is a third-year student at Medical University in Tbilisi. "My greatest aspiration is to become a highly qualified doctor, and I am building on the solid foundation that my connection with World Vision has given me."







# A dreamer found the support she needed

## JWG: Marah

From very early in her life, Marah, now a 23-year-old woman, can remember having a dream: that she would finish school and get a degree. She had learned from her parents that, for her and her two brothers, the best way to achieve a fulfilling and secure life was to get a good education. But at times, from her small village, this dream looked distant. Struggling to make ends meet on the single salary of her father, a daily labourer, the family of five was very familiar with empty cupboards and sacrifices.

When she turned 13, she became a sponsored child. Over the next 10 years, Marah developed a strong relationship with her sponsor. Writing frequently, she would share details about her day-to-day life in her community. Her sponsor would respond, creating a strong relationship with the girl.

“It felt very good to have someone on the other side of the globe telling me about their family, culture and daily life, and to know that this person cared about what was happening in my life, thought about me and supported my decisions,” said Marah. “The relationship with my sponsor taught me a lot. I became more open, social and confident. Corresponding with my sponsor introduced me to different cultures and lifestyles, and made me a better person in my community,” says Marah.

However, as Marah was finishing high school, the dream of going to the university was looking more fragile than ever. Despite all their efforts and sacrifices, it was clear that her family had no way to cover all the expenses that studying at the university involves. However, her sponsor, like Marah’s parents, believe that nothing was more important than education for girls and decided to help her in covering some of her university expenses until she graduates.

This support changed everything. Marah is now in her first year at the university, studying social work. She also works as a sales associate in a clothing store to help her family. Inspired by her experience as a sponsored child, she is an active member in her community, volunteering through the village council to support activities for children.

“It feels great when I see the smiles of children during the activities,” says Marah. “The sponsorship experience opened my eyes to the importance of helping and caring for other people, no matter how small our support. Even small things matter and can make a positive change, and this is what encouraged me to study, and achieve my dream in education.”

“Because of the sponsorship programme I am the person I am now: an educated woman who advocates for the importance of education for youth, especially girls. Thanks to my education, I am more productive and effective, and I want my whole community to benefit from it.”



**Even small things matter and can make a positive change.**



# Defending the rights of children

## JWG: Minas

Minas is from a small village near Jenin in the north of the West Bank. She grew up in a village where children face significant challenges due to poverty, restrictions on movement and constant violence.

She became a sponsored child at the age of nine. Minas reflects positively on this experience and joyfully remembers how she would desperately wait for her sponsor's letter so she could share about her progress and achievements. "In my letters to my sponsor, I used to love sharing about what was going on in my life."

Minas feels grateful for the opportunity to be sponsored by a Canadian woman who was very interested in her life. Having someone on the other side of the globe caring for her gave her a great confidence boost and she started to have hope in her future.

"We would desperately wait for the summer camps and other activities that would involve children, parents and

the whole community. There was always something exciting happening organised by World Vision." When she was at school, Minas benefited from tutoring sessions. She enjoyed the new safe play built in her village. A few years later, she took part in activities organised for adolescents by the local student parliament that helped her develop her skills and capacities.

A turning point for Minas was when she was nominated at age 15 to participate at an international children's conference at Tanzania. She proudly recalls how she spoke on behalf of Palestinian children at the conference and offered a story about them through a sand drawing. The experience exposed Minas to the suffering of children around the world and encouraged her to be part of the global efforts to defend children's rights. She recalls how she told her parents that she wanted to defend children's rights when she grew up.

Back then, her parents looked at her with amazement, as they did not believe that this experience would have had such a huge impact in her life. Today, they are proud of their daughter as she worked hard, overcoming a lot of challenges, to accomplish her dream. She recently graduated from university and is now practicing law. She is planning to get a master's degree to specialise in the defense of the rights of children. In the meantime, she is also volunteering with World Vision and other organisations in her community, and visiting children at the local hospital.

Looking back, Minas is grateful for her experience as a sponsored child and plans to sponsor other children in the future.



**There was always something exciting happening organised by World Vision.**



# From sponsored child to sponsor

## JWG: Yara

Yara is a 23-year-old woman from a small village in the central West Bank. As the oldest of five siblings, Yara used to have a lot of responsibilities at home. And she faced challenges in her community: poverty, constant episodes of violence and attacks, and very poor infrastructure. Several times, intruders attacked her schools, throwing stones at the terrorised children who would take shelter under their desks” to “Several times, her schools was attacked and terrorised children had to take shelter under their desks.

When she was 12, she joined the sponsorship programme. “I started to receive letters from my sponsor. I insisted on learning English so I could respond by myself to my sponsor. Knowing that someone cares about me and my life really gave me a lot of confidence in myself. Throughout the years, it also allowed me to learn about the rest of the world. For example, I was surprised to learn that in Canada, the country of my sponsor, it was raining even during summer or that in some parts of the country there was snow almost all year,” said Yara.

“When I saw World Vision’s work in my community, I realised that being a sponsored child is not just beneficial for myself, it also benefits all children in my community – my peers at school, the children in the kindergarten as well as their mothers and even the newborn babies,” recalls Yara. Through the sponsorship programme, the playground and sanitary units of her school were rehabilitated. To protect children from attacks and violence, a protective fence was installed, and first aid kits were provided. Soon, a public kindergarten opened its door to the children of her village.

A few years later, Yara joined the children’s committee who regularly met with the village council to discuss the situation of children and take part in decision making. Yara’s strong personality, enthusiasm, and excitement qualified her to soon become an effective leader in the local club for adolescents. In 2019, Yara graduated from high school and got a job in public relations.

However, she has remained committed to give back to her community. “Being a sponsored child made me realise the importance of helping people, lending a hand, and volunteering,” Yara says. After graduating, she also trained at the Ministry of Health. “I really want to volunteer as a community health worker in my community”.

Yara’s mother notes, “My daughter is ambitious and eager to learn new things. She used to be very shy, especially when it comes to speaking in public. However, through her participation in World Vision’s activities, she became confident, and she used her new confidence to advocate for children’s rights.” “And it all started the day I received the first letter form my sponsor,” Yara added.



**It all started the  
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# Everything changed for me

## Lebanon: Amara

“Like every other Lebanese child, the economic crisis has affected my education, my way of living, and even the basic needs of my family. Many children drop out of school because their families couldn’t afford it, and many families struggle to meet their needs,” explains 15-year-old Amara.

Despite these difficulties, Amara also spoke about her hopes and dreams for a better future. She is one of the sponsored children in her community and takes part in many of its activities and events.

A key moment in Amara’s journey was when she took part in the “See Us” event, which was part of an initiative called “The Crisis as Told by Children.” This initiative used different forms of communication, like art and stories, to give children a chance to share their concerns and needs. During this event, Amara gave a speech where she talked about what children her age are lacking, especially during the economic crisis Lebanon is going through. She highlighted the challenges they face, such as not having access to education, enough resources, or the chance to pursue their dreams.

“This was when everything changed for me – it was like a turning point in my life. I was standing in front of high-ranking people and giving a speech while others only said a few statements. I felt important and strong,” says Amara. She went from being “scared of my own shadow” to becoming a comfortable and capable public speaker.

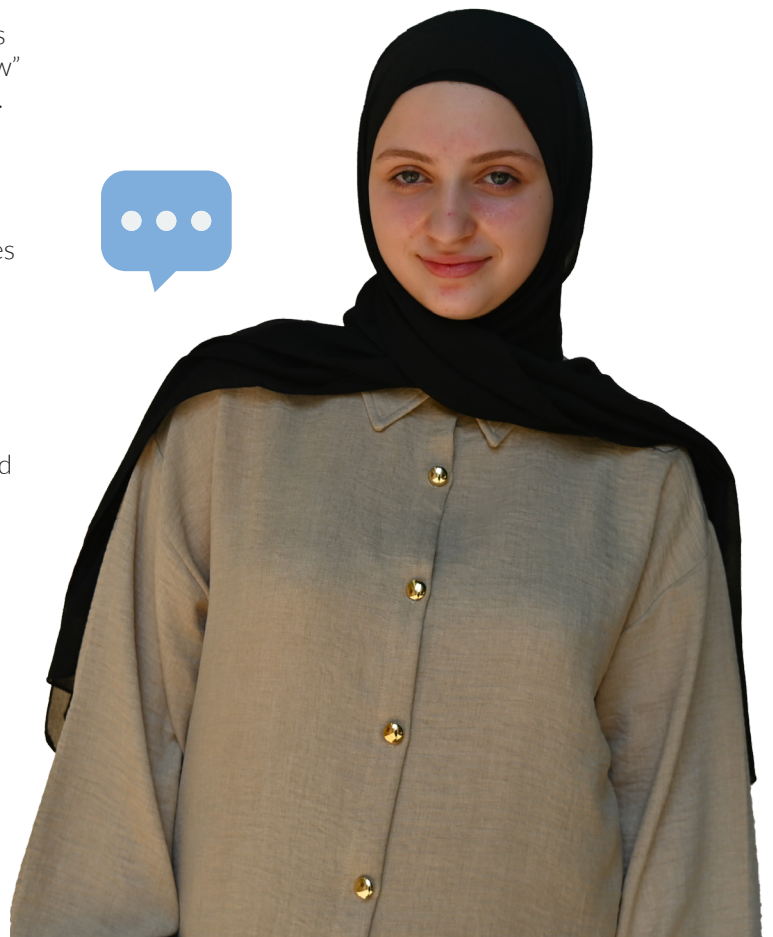
Amara highlights how she constantly waits for the next World Vision event – explaining her eagerness to participate and claiming that she feels comfortable, confident and seen in that setting. It is where she makes friends of different ages and from all over Lebanon.

Amara was actively involved in World Vision’s 2025–2030 Strategy Validation Consultations, a key process where youth were consulted on whether the proposed strategy effectively addressed the needs in their communities. Amara expressed that this experience made her feel valued, as her opinions were



sought by World Vision. She was particularly pleased to provide feedback on priority sectors affecting her community. “It’s empowering to know that my thoughts and concerns are being taken seriously. I feel like I’m contributing to real change in my community.”

Amara dreams of one day joining World Vision because of all the good work being done. “I will select a major at university according to the field that will help me make my dream of joining World Vision come true,” she says.



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# Gaining confidence to make a difference

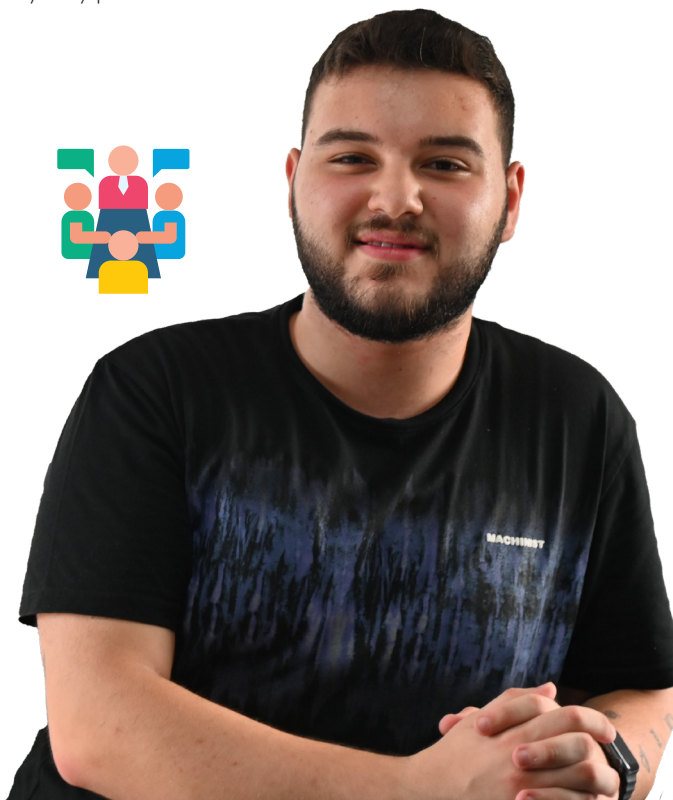
## Lebanon: Elie

Elie is from Akkar in northern Lebanon, one of the most vulnerable areas in the country. Lebanon's economic crisis is driving a high number of children out of school in this area. Many households cannot afford adequate food and other basic needs. Violations of children's rights are increasing due to the crisis all over Lebanon.

Growing up in Akkar, Elie knows about these struggles firsthand. He was registered in World Vision's sponsorship programme for 10 years. Now 21 years old and no longer a sponsored child, he continues to give his time and energy to the programme and to his community because of the positive experiences he had.

World Vision events and activities taught Elie a lot about himself and played a significant role in shaping who he is today. He recalls being very introverted as a child. Through World Vision's various programmes, Elie gained increased self-confidence, learned how to best express himself, and let go of the fear of what people might say or think about him.

Elie is part of the Youth Committee for Child Protection and has been their representative for the past two years. Committee members hold meetings and check on activities that youth are taking part in. This activism opportunity by World Vision strengthened his sense of community in that he now always seeks to help out in any way possible.



“When I see a child working on the streets, I say to myself, ‘What can I do to help? What have I learned that I can apply in this case? What can be done to get this child off the streets and back to school?’”

In 2022, Elie hosted World Vision's Virtual Field Visit as the representative of the Children's Rights Committee. Elie spoke about the effect of the economic crisis on the vulnerable children of Lebanon. “I was given a platform to carry out discussions on the topic, rather than being allocated a specific time and specific lines to recite,” he recalls. “I gratefully say that thanks to my journey with World Vision, I know that my opinion matters, and I will keep on voicing it with respect and power to make a difference wherever I can.”

Initially an Agricultural Engineering major, he decided to switch majors and shift to what he is most passionate about: graphics and social media. He is currently pursuing a degree in Graphic Design and is certified in Digital Marketing. Elie is also the proud owner of a social media management platform that he launched almost three years ago. Elie believes that he can never really excel in anything if he isn't passionate about it, so he intends to nurture his passion with the help of the confidence that he gained from his journey at World Vision.



**When I see a child working on the streets, I say to myself, ‘What can I do to help?’**



# They are my family

## Lebanon: Julia



“World Vision’s sponsorship programme changed my life in a big way. Before joining, things were hard for me and my family. We lived in a small, crowded house, and it was difficult to get everything I needed. The programme helped me think in ways I couldn’t learn at home. Once I joined, everything started to improve. I got the support I needed to learn, grow and look forward to a better future,” says a grateful 22-year-old Julia.

“They are my family. They are a piece of me,” explains Julia, explaining the profound impact the World Vision Sponsorship Programme had – and continues to have – on her life. She joined when she was eight years old. Julia reflects, “It was one of the best things that ever happened to me.”

The nurturing environment of World Vision’s events and activities helped Julia develop into a sociable, knowledgeable, and confident individual. “I learned to set targets and I don’t rest until they are achieved,” she says. Her experiences in the programme fueled her curiosity and desire for continuous learning.

Julia’s passion for sharing knowledge is driven by a heartfelt desire to transform lives. She began leading a book club for children. She explains how rewarding it was for both her and the children, noting that the spark she saw in the kids’ eyes reminded her of herself when she took part in World Vision activities as a registered child.

The book club not only enriched the children but also deeply touched the parents, who repeatedly asked if it would continue each summer. “I used to be very shy. Now I walk around the neighbourhood and people stop me to ask about the book club or other activities, wanting to know if and when they are set to take place,” she says.

Sponsorship creates a lasting bond between a child and their sponsor, strengthened by ongoing communication via letters and photos. The connection Julia formed with her sponsor remains a cherished memory. “I know it was quite a few years ago, but I remember very vividly how I would impatiently wait to communicate with my friend,” she reminisces. “I find it remarkable that someone from across the ocean cares about me, my future and my well-being,” she says.

Now majoring in Specialised Management and Education, Julia feels a deep connection with inclusion training, a field she discovered through World Vision’s activities in awareness, education, and health. These experiences ignited a fire within her, revealed the profound importance of inclusion and fueled her commitment to making a genuine difference in the lives of others.

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# Greater than his condition

## Lebanon: Omar

Omar's childhood started roughly, as he was born with a mass in his brain. Over time, his condition developed and affected his tear gland and created a mass above his eye as well. Surgery was performed on the mass above his eye, but because of the critical area where the other mass is in his brain, surgery couldn't be performed. This has impacted many important aspects of Omar's life.

"Omar doesn't have a lot of friends. He doesn't go out a lot and doesn't have a proper social life. Omar's life revolves around the hospital and house, no more than that. He is tired after the hospital stays and can't even do the things he loves," says Nour, Omar's mother.

But just like any other child, Omar has the right to a healthy, normal life. To cater to Omar's condition, he was recently enrolled in the Children's Council as part of the World Vision Sponsorship Programme, where he can socialise with other children and engage in interactive activities that help him learn and have fun.



The Children's Council not only provides a safe space for children like Omar to thrive but also actively works to advocate for their rights. They work on a local level with municipalities and local communities ensuring that the needs of children are addressed and met. Their involvement with children includes organising educational workshops, recreational activities, and community events that promote social inclusion and personal development.

Omar is now a 9-year-old who goes to school, although his mother struggles to pay his school tuition and provide him with proper nutrition because of the economic crisis in the country. She also struggles to provide proper medical care for Omar due to his condition, which makes him fragile and prone to injuries. World Vision's health insurance has been able to help. He recently broke his arm falling off his bike and was taken care of as part of the Preventative Healthcare Package programme which provides health insurance in cases of emergencies for children like Omar.

Undaunted, Omar is much greater than his condition as he aspires to be a farmer when he grows up. He likes planting and has even planted various fruits and vegetables in pots that he cares for everyday on the balcony of his house.



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# Sponsorship means personal and social development

## Romania: Marian



Marian's situation was typical for most rural families in Lebanon. He was the youngest of three boys. His mother worked as a school janitor and his father was involved in subsistence farming. Between his mother's minimum wage salary and what they could produce at home, it was difficult to support all their family's needs.

In addition, Marian was diagnosed with insulin-dependent diabetes when he was in kindergarten. Because of that, he requires regular check-ups and blood sugar tests, along with a strict treatment plan and diet.

Starting when he was 12 and for six years, Marian was involved in World Vision Romania's sponsorship programme, which offered more than just material support. It provided a pathway to personal and social development. Participating in a variety of activities, Marian learned about the importance of education, emotional management and social interaction. The programme introduced him to engaging games and activities that helped him build confidence and social skills during his formative years.

Marian recalls how the support he received was crucial in guiding him towards his goals. "The encouragement and advice from wonderful people involved in the programme were invaluable," he says. "They helped me stay on the right path and taught me that nothing is impossible if you are dedicated to your dreams. The positive energy and empathy I received made me realise that I must always strive for what I want."

A significant part of Marian's experience was his connection with his supportive friend who helped him but also helped

by sending money for medical tests, treatment costs, purchasing a blood sugar testing device, and ensuring Marian could maintain a proper diet.

Through their correspondence, they shared daily experiences, offered mutual support, and helped each other navigate challenges. "It was incredibly meaningful, and it inspired me to support other children in my community," says Marian.

Marian's journey also included participating in World Vision Romania's activities, which provided him with opportunities to interact with peers and learn valuable lessons during his teenage years. These experiences were important in his development, especially during the challenging adolescent phase.

Today, Marian is a 20-year-old student at the Faculty of Construction and Installations in Iasi, Romania, focused on achieving his dream of becoming a construction engineer. He aspires to contribute to building medical centres, such as hospitals and clinics, and to engage in environmental projects like reforestation.

Marian's message to his future self is to remain positive, optimistic, and resilient, despite challenges. "Stay positive and keep fighting for your dreams, even when things seem tough," he advises. "Try to learn something new every day and explore what you truly enjoy."



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