

MEDIA FACT SHEET



COMPASSION INTERNATIONAL

WHO WE ARE

Compassion International is a holistic child development ministry that works to release children from poverty in Jesus' name. Compassion pairs compassionate people with children who are suffering from extreme poverty in 25 countries worldwide. Its partnership with the local church allows the ministry to release children from spiritual, economic, social, and physical poverty. The goal is for each child to become a responsible and fulfilled Christian adult.

HISTORY

Compassion began in 1952 out of one man's determination to help 35 children orphaned by the Korean War. Reverend Everett Swanson flew to South Korea to minister to American troops fighting in the war but grew increasingly troubled by the sight of hundreds of war orphans trying to survive alone on the frigid sidewalks of Seoul, where many died of starvation, exposure and disease. Swanson vowed to find a way to help the children. He raised enough money to support a Korean orphanage and established an organization that gave American sponsors the opportunity to help by paying a small monthly fee to cover the orphans food, shelter, health care and Bible-based education.

Today, Compassion is a global ministry that serves more than 1.8 million babies, children and young adults by partnering with more than 6,700 churches in 25 countries to help break the cycle of poverty. We believe that changed environments may assist children, but transformed children will inevitably change their environments.

OUR PROGRAMS

Compassion's [Child Sponsorship](#) program is rooted in a long-term, holistic approach to poverty reduction and Christian child development. For some, it begins with prenatal care and can continue through postsecondary education and leadership training.

OUR STRATEGY

Compassion's approach to fighting poverty is:

CHRIST CENTERED – Children and families served through Compassion do not have to be Christians, but they are offered a clear presentation of the gospel. As they experience God's love in the physical world, many receive Christ and grow into healthy, educated, confident believers, ready to serve God and others in need.

CHILD FOCUSED – Compassion believes extreme global poverty can be eradicated in our lifetime and is committed to helping whittle it away by serving the most vulnerable citizens – impoverished children. When children living in poverty are nurtured and equipped to overcome their circumstances, they are empowered to pursue their dreams,

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OUR STRATEGY

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driving change into their families, communities and nations.

CHURCH BASED – Compassion builds a direct route to the children who need help most by partnering with indigenous evangelical churches located on the front lines of poverty. All Compassion programs are delivered through these community churches because they are uniquely qualified to understand the real needs of their areas and serve as a safe haven to children and their families. Everything from food and medical care to curriculum and counseling is orchestrated by volunteer church workers.

KEY STATISTICS

- Compassion International affiliates with 11 independent global partners with reach into 21 countries to market its holistic child development program through sponsorship. These affiliates and the countries they serve are: Australia; Canada; France (includes Belgium); Germany; Italy (Italy and Spain); Netherlands; New Zealand; Norden (Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark); South Korea; Switzerland; United Kingdom (includes England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland); and the United States.
- Compassion is a five-time recipient of the Gallup Great Workplace Award for having “one of the most productive and engaged workforces in the world.”
- Numerous financial accountability groups and accrediting agencies have recognized Compassion for superior financial integrity, including the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA), Charity Navigator and the Better Business Bureau (BBB).
- Compassion was named one of America’s Best Midsize Employers in 2017 by Forbes Magazine and is ranked the 15th largest U.S. charity by Forbes.
- The NonProfit Times ranks Compassion #26 on its Top 100 List.
- The Chronicle of Philanthropy ranks Compassion #24 on its Philanthropy 400 List.

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MILESTONES

- 1952** Rev. Everett Swanson begins a ministry to save the starving war orphans he sees on the streets in Seoul, South Korea.
- 1954** Rev. Swanson develops the ministry into a sponsorship program in the United States, allowing people to give a few dollars each month to provide individual South Korean orphans with food, clothing, educational supplies, medical care and Christian teaching.
- 1963** Canada becomes Compassion’s first partner country. Today, 11 partner countries (including the USA) continue to build a diverse network for sponsors around the world.
- 1965** The first “sponsor tour” of 113 sponsors and friends visits Compassion-assisted orphanages and projects in South Korea. Today, Compassion conducts Sponsor Tours in every region we serve, including Africa, Asia, South America and Central America/the Caribbean.
- 1968** Compassion goes global, building ministries in countries including India and Haiti.
- 1974** Compassion begins setting up school projects to help sponsored children receive an education, so they may break their generational cycle of poverty.
- 1978** Compassion establishes a fund to meet critical needs caused by issues such as natural disasters and medical crises that may afflict sponsored children and their families.
- 1993** Dr. Wesley Stafford, a former missionary child in Africa’s Ivory Coast, is named Compassion’s President. His presidency spanned 20 years.
- 1994** During the carnage of the Rwandan genocide that claims an estimated 1 million people, Compassion distributes relief supplies and offers trauma counseling to sponsored children and their families.
- 1996** Compassion launches the Leadership Development Program in the Philippines to help students receive a university education and Christian leadership training and mentoring. The program now serves nearly 3,000 students in 18 countries.
- 2003** To help children in developing countries survive their first few critical years of life—when malnutrition, pneumonia, malaria and diarrhea take the highest toll—Compassion starts the Child Survival Program.
- 2004** A massive tsunami kills more than 220,000 people in 13 countries and leaves millions more homeless. Compassion constructs 83 new homes for families on Breuh Island in Indonesia.

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MILESTONES

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- 2009** Fellow Kpodo, an 8-year old boy in Togo, becomes Compassion’s 1 millionth sponsored child. His sponsor is Jang Mi-Ran in South Korea—the same country where the heart of Compassion was born.
- 2010** An earthquake destroys most of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, killing more than 200,000 people and leaving a million homeless. At Compassion Child Development Centers, children and their families receive medical care, safe water and trauma counseling. With Compassion’s assistance, all of the affected Compassion projects resumed service, accommodating more than 15,000 children for school education in 409 classrooms. Since the earthquake, Compassion has served more than 60,000 Haitian families through its recovery and restoration efforts, including the construction of 30 new school buildings.
- 2013** Santiago “Jimmy” Mellado, former president of the Willow Creek Association (WCA), is appointed Compassion’s fifth president.
- 2016** A massive 7.8 earthquake strikes near Ecuador’s central coast, killing at least 673 people and injuring more than 16,600 others. Nearly 9,500 Compassion-sponsored children and 23 church partners are impacted - including 17 Compassion children, caregivers and siblings deaths. Compassion distributes relief supplies and offers trauma counseling to sponsored children and their families
- 2017** Compassion ends operations in India after 48 years of releasing children from poverty through its child development-through-sponsorship programs there.

COMPASSION’S HOLISTIC CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

CHURCH BASED. CHILD FOCUSED. CHRIST CENTERED.

25
countries
worldwide

6,700
international
church partners

1.8
million currently
assisted children

4.4
million sponsor-child
letters exchanged



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