

PORTRAITS OF **PROMISE**



Seeing Hope in Kenya's Slum

by Ellery Sadler, staff writer

For too long, many nonprofits have tried to put themselves at the center of the story. At Orphan's Promise, we want the people we serve to be the heroes of their stories. Our role is simply to empower them to begin breaking down generational strongholds—pushing past systemic obstacles to create healthy, happy futures for their own families.

We've learned that you can't create lasting community-wide and country-wide transformation with disempowered families. They are the warriors. They are the superheroes. We're here to create structures of support that empower them on their journey.

That's exactly what we're doing in Mathare—the second-largest slum in Nairobi, Kenya¹. Come and see.

**These are the stories.
These are the souls.
These are the portraits of the
lives we're changing.**

¹<https://mathare.org/history-of-mathare/>







A COMMUNITY IN CRISIS

Stretching as far as the eye can see is a vista of red, rusted roofs on shelters made of tin and mud.

Clotheslines are strung from windows and doorways, creating bright necklaces of color against the brown of the dirt and the huts that serve as homes.

This is Mathare, a collection of slums located in the heart of Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya. In one slum, approximately 500,000 people live in an area roughly half a square mile. Most families live in small shacks without electricity or running water. It is notorious for its poverty, crime, and overcrowding. Children who grow up here are exposed to violence at an early age, both inside and outside the home, as domestic violence and gang violence are both widespread.

In slum areas such as Mathare, almost 90% of the population reportedly do not have plumbing or running water. This means most people use community pit latrines outside their homes; there is no other option. They are often poorly maintained and overused—by



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an average of 100 people per toilet. The poor sanitation exposes children to such health hazards as infections, tuberculosis and diarrhea, among others.

Living in Mathare is also difficult on the family structure. Many children grow up fatherless. The majority of households are headed by a single parent, most often a woman. With small rooms typically only 12 by 12 feet, congestion within the household often forces youth to leave the shelter of their family homes and live on the streets with groups of other young people. Unemployment is high and access to education is limited. Without appropriate adult supervision or much else to do, children commonly use drugs and alcohol. Often, this leads to criminal activities, as well as early exposure to and engagement in sexual activity. Health facilities within the slums are poor, and HIV and AIDS are a challenge to many families. These diseases ravage families, resulting in a rising number of orphans. Without intervention, the cycle repeats from one generation to the next.

For Emmanuel, the slum is home. At the age of five, he has never known anything different.

²<https://www.cnn.com/2016/01/07/africa/kids-photograph-mathare-slum-nairobi/index.html>

A FAMILY TRANSFORMATION

Emmanuel lives with both of his parents. In that sense, he's one of the lucky ones. Still, his family has known the struggle for survival. In 2018, Emmanuel's mother wasn't working when his father lost his job. They couldn't afford to pay the rent for their shack in the slum. They could hardly make ends meet.

That's when they found the Touch of Love project, an Orphan's Promise partner program that is specifically focused on serving the most vulnerable children living in the Mathare slums. We have partnered with them to help improve their staff and fund their feeding program. Additionally, we've helped secure a larger building for





THERE'S STILL TIME
TO JUMP IN



If you love Orphan's Promise and support our work, this is your chance to take the next step in changing the world! Launch your campaign today and invite your friends to help you meet the needs of children around the world! Whether you raise \$10, \$100, or \$1,000, every dollar makes a HUGE difference when we all work together!

Launch your campaign today by visiting
Orphanspromise.org/Fundraise
or
scan the QR Code here!



There are an estimated 70,000 children in the Mathare slums, with only a handful of schools accessible. Many children do not end up getting an education. As in many impoverished areas, children and teens from Mathare are at an increased risk for involvement in drugs and alcohol, crime, prostitution, and gangs³.

Touch of Love so they can reach more children. Through their feeding program, Emmanuel has been able to receive two nutritious meals a day. Not only will this help his growth and health, it is also a huge relief to his parents, who often stayed up at night worrying that their child might go hungry the next day. Growing up in Mathare meant Emmanuel had few structural opportunities for getting a good education or rising above the environment he happened to be born into. Touch of Love changes that. Emmanuel began attending their school, and he received brand-new textbooks and new uniforms, thanks to Orphan's Promise. The boy is very



³<https://www.cnn.com/2016/01/07/africa/kids-photograph-mathare-slum-nairobi/index.html>

intelligent and makes his parents proud by always being near the top of his class. Emmanuel says he wants to be an engineer when he grows up!

Don't miss how extraordinary—how positively transformational—this is. Far too often, vulnerable children miss the crucial opportunity to begin their education at an early age and essentially start out behind their peers. The long-term effects of this delay become compounded and, with fewer resources and opportunities, it can be difficult for these kids to

ever catch up. For Emmanuel, getting the chance to start strong will have a ripple effect for the rest of his life. The project, which brings hope to so many children in this community, also provides a safe place for him to play and engage in healthy activities. He loves to play football and read. Finding fun, safe things to do will also help keep him from eventually being drawn to some of the temptations that await young men in his community who live on the streets.

But we don't just focus on vulnerable children. We want to





Mathare covers an area of only three square miles but it has a bigger population than Seattle, Boston or Denver. In comparison, Seattle is 80 square miles, Boston 42 square miles, and Denver 150 square miles⁴.



lift up the whole family. For Emmanuel's family, that meant employing his mother, who is now a trained teacher. Her salary is paid by Orphan's Promise, and having that stable source of income is helping the family meet their basic needs as well as pay their monthly rent. In 2019, that income was a miracle. Emmanuel got very sick with tonsillitis and had to go to the hospital. Knowing that her salary would be paid on time helped Emmanuel's mother provide for her own family during this trying time.

This is what sustainable change—and lasting, community-wide transformation—looks like. It starts one family at a time. It isn't easy. Emmanuel and his family still face an uphill battle as they fight to create a better future for themselves. The difference is, they aren't doing it alone. Through our partnerships on the ground in their community, this family now has the tools, support, and care they need to equip themselves for success.

⁴https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mathare_Valley



In Mathare, the world sees a slum. We see hope. We see transformations happening in even the darkest corners of communities in crisis. We see Emmanuel—and the other children like him in our 350+ programs—as world changers, those who are going to lead the way for their generation to break free from the abuse, addiction, violence, and poverty that have defined their futures for far too long. Their parents and caretakers, who fight every day to survive and provide a better path for their children, are the superheroes.

And us? We are lucky to get to support them along the way. Thank YOU for being there to help make it happen.



give us a call: 1-800-818-4016

orphanspromise.org

Orphan's Promise, a children's ministry of The Christian Broadcasting Network, Inc., serves orphans and other vulnerable children around the world, taking them from at-risk to thriving through the transforming power of God's love. CBN is a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization and your contributions to our ministry are tax-deductible.

education



nutrition



discipleship



community
transformation



strong families



anti-trafficking

