An international NGO started in 1972, AVSI Foundation continues today its mission of promoting human development with a focus on education, according to Catholic social teaching.

AVSI-USA sustains long-term partnerships with local organizations in order to enhance capacity and broaden impact in the areas of education, early childhood and youth development, economic livelihoods, health and nutrition.

**OUR APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT**

**Focus on the Person** - We cherish human dignity of each person we encounter. We understand that the individual cannot be reduced to a social category or limitation such as poverty, disease, conflict or disability.

**Starting from the positive** - Every person and community represents a potential resource for development, regardless of vulnerabilities. We look for local initiatives and solutions and find ways to build on and strengthen those.

**Working together** - The approach to project planning and implementation starts from a relationship with people. Together we implement activities that empower the local community and can lead to mutual education.

**Civil Society & Subsidiarity** - The key to sustainability is the capacity of civil society and individuals to respond to needs and opportunities. We recognize and support the creation of local institutions and we transfer skills and knowledge to enhance their initiatives.

**Partnership** - The challenges of extreme poverty and marginalization are too great for anyone to confront alone. We forge partnerships with public, private, local and international partners in order to create synergies and optimize resources for lasting results.
Dear Friend of AVSI-USA,

Last year on these pages we reflected on the beauty of lives woven together by relationships of mutual concern, affection and solidarity. Throughout 2014, we have continued to be fascinated by the idea that the “other”, which can be anyone we meet, from the influential policy maker to the frail grandmother selling tomatoes, is a good for me. Each person I meet is worth my time, my complete attention and an openness to his or her experience and desire. Why is this good for me? Because true human encounters help each of us to be more fully alive.

In our experience, development is fundamentally about the passion for living. While this thrust towards life and its fulfillment is natural, as we can see in the squalls and motions of any little baby, it is so often threated, squashed and suppressed by factors in our environment, society and by ourselves.

Conditions of poverty, deprivation, injustice or selfishness can so easily cloud our gaze and wear down this love for life. Despair and resignation push out hope and isolation crowds out companionship. AVSI-USA shares with the AVSI network a conviction that the human spirit can be reawakened through encounters which like a spark touching dry leaves rekindle the spirit, frees it from isolation and opens the heart up to a gaze full of love.

The goal of our work is not to solve problems. Rather, our intention is to help each other to stand tall in the face of life’s circumstances. We respect the dignity of the people we meet by sharing their needs and accompanying them in their journey, which means looking for solutions and creative responses to the challenges faced.

In 2014, we have seen again how, over time, this method does bear fruit.

In Mexico, women like Esperanza have been transformed. Years ago she was resigned to her plight as an abused, illiterate woman whose children were lost to the violence and rampant drug abuse of their urban slum. Today, she is working hard to keep her family together, staying close to her children and challenging them to have high expectations for their lives. Esperanza rediscovered her dignity through the relationship with the people working at Creemos, the local organization partner of AVSI, and over time the hidden beauty of her person was revealed. (See page 10)

In Uganda, the SCORE project began with the premise that even the poorest households had the inherent resources to pull themselves out of poverty with only a bit of outside support and continued accompaniment. Today, XXX households have proudly graduated out of the USAID funded SCORE project, giving space for other households to participate when they continue on their way towards greater stability. AVSI took the chance and believed in these families and in the method we have learned together over the years: start from the positive and build something lasting together. (See page 6)

In Lebanon and Jordan, young Syrian children are suffering deeply. Many aid agencies have rushed in to help the refugees, distributing lifesaving food and other goods that make life in transit more bearable. AVSI has remained with the Lebanese and Jordanian communities we have worked alongside for years to help them receive the refugees, to welcome them with openness and to begin to serve the needs. When trauma and uncertainty abound, it is true human relationships which make a difference. (See pages 12 and 13)

Thank you for sharing with us this year, for being open to the needs of others which allows our own needs to become more evident. We hope that this walking together has also enriched your journey. Sincerely,

Ezio Castelli
President AVSI-USA
US Government Agency Collaborations
Multi-year projects in 4 countries

Ivory Coast: USAID - OVC Ivory Coast, 4 years, $15 million.
Kenya: State Department PRM - Education and Livelihoods for Somali Refugees in Dadaab, 2 years, $1.6 million.
Rwanda: USAID - Global Communities, OVC Rwanda, 3 years, $700,000.
Uganda: USAID: SCORE Uganda, 5 years,

US Foundation Support
$225,000 for projects in 5 countries

Ecuador: International Foundation - Early Childhood Development and O’Neil Foundation - Passion for Living Youth Program.
Haiti: Engelhard Foundation - Art Education and Nutrition.
Mexico: Raskob Foundation - Crecemos Nutrition and Education.
Rwanda: Bodini Foundation - Urinzira Community Center Renovation.
Uganda: Bristol Myers Squibb - St. Joseph’s Hospital and Anonymous Donor – Luigi Giussani Institute for Higher Education.
Interns and Volunteers
Mexico, Ecuador and Uganda

Emergency Responses
Over $20,000 from individuals for 4 countries.
Challenge:
Throughout Uganda, a large number of children live in households which face a number of vulnerabilities to food insecurity, child protection violations, and economic instability. Each family has its own unique challenges and difficulties as well as its own set of assets and resources. Project interventions have often fallen into the trap of a “one-size fits all” approach and create dependency on external resources.

Response:
AVSI designed the SCORE project to “fit the project to the people” with family-specific household development plans, featuring the mix of activities deemed most appropriate for the needs of each household. With a multi-sectoral, family-centered approach, SCORE intervenes within four technical areas for various members of the beneficiary households. The SCORE program is designed with a project graduation model so that each family will be able to move past dependency and towards self-sustainability.

Results:
✓ Since the beginning of the project, a total of 28,386 household of vulnerable households throughout 35 districts of Uganda have enrolled in the SCORE program.
✓ Approximately 68% of households have transitioned to a lower vulnerability bracket through the utilization of SCORE project's graduation model.
✓ Over half, 54.3%, of the active households have graduated from the SCORE program, and an additional 33% are in the pre-graduation stage.
Challenge:
The Dadaab refugee camps in northern Kenya are home to # people, % of them youth. On average, the refugees have been living in these camps for # years. Specific challenges include the tension between the refugees and the host community as well as environmental degradation and uncertainty over the future. Youth have few opportunities for recreation, leadership, or constructive interaction with the host community. Scouting has emerged as a viable response and opportunity for youth engagement but the Kenya Scouts Association of Garissa County has gaps in terms of scouting uniforms and supplies, scout leader training and resources to participate in local and regional events. Kenya Scouts Association of Garissa County has gaps in terms of availability of scouting uniforms, scout leader training, and resources to participate in joint scouting events in the county for both the host community and refugee scout units.

Response:
The Kenya Scout Association has been active since 1915, and the small chapter of Garissa County Scout Association expressed interest in expanding its ability to offer scouting the host, Kenyan communities as well as to the refugee populations living in the camps. The partnership with AVSI allowed the local scouts to mobilize donations of camping materials and to spread the word about camping. The Scouting curriculum includes Peace Building and Peace Education which creates space for discussion with youth about the conflicts between the refugees and the host community, as well as modules related to care of the natural world.

Results:
✓ 512 boy and girl scouts participated in intra-camp competition.
✓ All 32 camp primary schools and 5 host community school formed scouting troops.
✓ All scout leaders received training or refresher courses in leadership.
Challenge:
Ugandan schools have largely lost the trust of parents and students due to the poor quality of the education offered and weak links with parents, communities and the real world of work and culture. The Luigi Giussani Institute for Higher Education (LGIHE) has emerged as an innovative hub of resources which complements the official teacher certification track offered in Uganda with continuous professional development options for teachers and school administrators. As with any emergent social enterprise, LGIHE lacked stable funding which would allow for deepening its human resources, services, and administrative capacity.

Response:
LGIHE seeks to improve the quality of education provided in Ugandan schools through a holistic training program offered to teachers and school faculty, based on The Risk of Education principles. AVSI-USA pursued a partnership with LGIHE in order to strengthen the organization’s capacity to fulfill its mission, document the effectiveness of its services, and solidify its foundation in order to make a significant contribution to the quality of education in Uganda in the years to come.

Results:
✓ Developed methodology to test the effectiveness of teacher training
✓ Hired business consultant to thoroughly review management and accounting systems and to submit recommendations to improve LGIHE operations as “social enterprise”
✓ Hired and trained new staff.
✓ Gained recognition by the Ugandan Ministry of Education as a tertiary institute for higher education.
✓ Completed formative assessment of the impact of the basic training on teachers’ attitudes and behaviors with quantitative and qualitative methods.
Challenge:
Rural communities in Rwanda are most often disconnected from quality services, information and main markets. AVSI’s outreach activities, social and educational interventions were making a difference in Gicumbi district, but needed a “home.” As a result of AVSI’s close relationship in the community, the local government of the Gicumbi district awarded AVSI use of an old building to house the Urinzira Community Center located near Kinyami. However, before AVSI took possession the property it had been left unoccupied for years and had fallen into disrepair.

Response:
The Urinzira center is a community managed facility available for community and group meetings, services for children and youth and access to information. AVSI-USA provided funds to rehabilitate the roof and rooms of the building as well as to properly furnish the space so that children and families could have an adequate, safe and dignified space for studying, recreation, and community activities.

Results:
✓ All the walls were rebuilt and painted. Windows and doors were replaced and reinforced and the roof, which had been entirely rusted over, was replaced.
✓ Furniture, books, play equipment and other resources were supplied.
✓ 306 youth and 583 families from the areas surrounding Kinyami and Rukomo now use the space on a regular basis and have increased access to important health and social services provided by the Urinzira center in a central location that is easily accessible.
✓ The center hosts valuable community services such as day-care, “uruboho” group
Challenge:
In Oaxaca, Mexico, AVSI’s long-term partner, Crecemos (meaning “growing together”) faces financial constraints and uncertainty as a local organization providing services to vulnerable populations with varied and changing needs. Fluctuations in donor giving and institutional support present numerous challenges to the ability of Crecemos to offer stable, high quality and responsive services. Crecemos responds to issues such as children’s poor nutrition and dietary habits which hinder early development and learning. Furthermore, the education system in Oaxaca has serious deficiencies due in part to frequent clashes between teachers’ unions and the government, resulting in periodic closures of schools. Children are being left behind. In addition, families living in poverty cannot access sport, extracurricular support and enrichment activities for their children, resulting in limited horizons and opportunities for positive personal development.

Response:
Through its Opportunity giving program, AVSI-USA is building a solid base of donors who contribute to operating costs and help Crecemos maintain its focus on relationships and quality services. Individual donor support is leveraged to access foundation funding and maximize impact. To learn more visit our website.

Long Term Goals:
1. AVSI-USA will assist Crecemos with grant writing, fundraising, and strategic planning to further strengthen its organizational and fundraising capacity.
2. Crecemos will deliver nutritional and educational services to support healthy child development and expand the horizons for children living in poverty.
3. Crecemos will help mothers and families live with positivity and hope and become active protagonists in their lives and in the life of the community.
Challenge:
Youth in marginalized communities of northwest Quito have a high risk of exposure to or involvement with substance abuse and violence.

Response:
AVSI Ecuador has developed a youth life skills methodology based on *The Risk of Education* principles for use within its Youth Program in the Pisulli neighborhood outside of Quito. This project enabled AVSI Ecuador to increase the number of participants in the program. Aware that the issue is much greater than what the Youth Program can respond to, AVSI Ecuador also sought to share the model with other educators and community-based organizations.

Results:
- The youth center was able to expand its scholarship program from 105 full-time participants in June 2014 to 163 full-time participants in May 2015 and was able to welcome as well another 20 participants who occasionally attend activities. Scholarships in the form of school kits were distributed to all participants.
- Youth ages 12-19, were provided with study spaces and workshops on a variety of activities through the center. Educators were present to teach as well as to create, maintain and deepen relationships with each of the program’s participants.
- The workshop based on the methodology of *Risk of an Education* was held at the local public high school “Colegio Pisulli”.
**Challenge:**
The growing presence of ISIS in Iraq has resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of people seeking safety within their home country. The violence and insecurity has given people, especially ethnic and religious minorities including Christians, Yazidi and Shia Muslims, but to flee their home villages. An estimated 180,000 Iraqis have been displaced and have sought asylum in Erbil, in the Kurdistan region (since when??).

**Response:**
AVSI-USA has raised funds from hundreds of generous individuals and families to provide these refugees with essential goods like mattresses, blankets, hygienic products and food while subsidizing housing costs and rent within Erbil where refugees have found safety but are finding it difficult to live with dignity. AVSI supports local congregations which have historical roots in the region and are committed to serving the community for the long-term.

**Results:**
- Thanks to the outpouring of generosity of many friends and supporters of AVSI from the US and other parts of the world, AVSI was able to contribute to the cost of covering the rent and provide for basic necessities.
- In early 2015, thanks for funds raised by the AVSI-Iraq campaign AVSI was able to work with the Dominican Sisters to open the “Baby Jesus House”, a kindergarten for refugee children in Erbil, Northern Iraq. This school gives 130 children the chance to have their own space where they can learn, play, be together, and experience some normalcy in their lives.
Challenge:
Displaced Syrian Families in Jordan and Lebanon lack in basic needs after they left everything to flee the violence of the Syrian Civil War
Hundreds of thousands of Syrian children living in refugee camps in Jordan and Lebanon have their education disrupted as they are left out of school in the course of their families seeking asylum.

Response:
Creation of an emergency support program for the education and protection of children in southern Lebanon.
Provide assistance to both the refugees and the more vulnerable indigenous population to foster a peaceful life in community.

Goals:

**Lebanon:**
- To make available multi-sector assistance for vulnerable Syrian refugees and Lebanese host communities in South Lebanon through a holistic approach covering primary health care and nutrition, child protection and gender based violence and education.
- To provide informal education for roughly 10,000, and health and nutrition screenings for 4,000 refugee children.
- To supply psychosocial support for a target 4,000 refugees, and polio vaccines for 25,000.

**Jordan:**
- To address urgent needs of vulnerable households affected by the Syrian crisis and ensure access to education for 1,200 children in the urban areas of Madaba and Aqaba.
- To provide winterization support items and cash distribution for 500 refugee families.
## Support and Revenue

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>471,490</td>
<td>598,997</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Service Revenue</td>
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<td>13,738</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest Income</td>
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<td>352</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Income</td>
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### Total Revenue

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<td></td>
<td>491334</td>
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## Expenses

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Services</td>
<td>317,249</td>
<td>165,815</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overseas Programs &amp; Grants</td>
<td>162,993</td>
<td>451,078</td>
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<td>Management &amp; General</td>
<td>62,442</td>
<td>63,982</td>
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### Total Expenses

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>542,684</td>
<td>680,875</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changes in Net Assets</td>
<td>(71,479)</td>
<td>(67,788)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets, Beginning of Year</td>
<td>90,461</td>
<td>158,249</td>
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### Net Assets, End of Year

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>168,983</td>
<td>90,461</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Given the scale of change, it is no longer possible to find a specific, discrete answer for each part of the problem. It is essential to seek comprehensive solutions which consider the interactions within natural systems themselves and with social systems. We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.”

Pope Francis, Laudato si’