



## **HANDS TO HEARTS INTERNATIONAL**

Nurturing Children ~ Empowering Women

Dedicated to improving the health and well-being of orphaned and vulnerable children and economically disadvantaged women around the globe.

**A Worldwide Problem:** A report from the World Health Organization states that the "lack of personalized care during the early years of life has a devastating effect on a child's health, growth, personality adjustment and cognitive capacity." The impact of this stunted growth has dire individual and societal consequences. An estimated 143 to 210 million Orphans worldwide (UNICEF Report) fall into this category of neglect and it is devastating the fabric of our global community.

**An Effective and Affordable Solution?** Hands to Hearts International (HHI) an NGO dedicated to improving of the health and well-being of vulnerable children through improved early care.

**What is it?** HHI is woman run, non-profit organization dedicated to improving of the health and wellbeing of orphaned and vulnerable children through improved early childhood care.

### **How does it work?**

- HHI provides a simple, low-tech and replicable training program for organizations to apply locally to improve the early development of the world's neediest children who are just surviving in orphanages, refugee camps, and severely impoverished or conflict-ridden communities.
- HHI's program supports parents and direct caregivers to improve their ability to nurture a child's language, social, cognitive and physical skills. Most importantly, HHI's specialized training program enhances attachment and bonding of infants to caregivers, which establishes the base for all future relationships.

### **Why does it work?**

- HHI reaches an average of 20 women with every training. This method of training local female leaders results in the following:
  - HHI's program reaches thousands of children in a short amount of time, creating a positive & immediate impact on their health and development
  - HHI's program is aware and sensitive to local cultures and languages
  - HHI's program is cost effective on all levels, educating and empowering the local community, enabling easy replication and resulting in real sustainability

### **What is taught in HHI trainings?**

- Detailed descriptions of the domains of development from birth to age five- physical, cognitive, language and affective development
  - The connections across the domains and variations in development
  - Early brain development
  - The importance of observation
  - Baby cues
  - Health and hygiene
  - The training molds to different cultures easily, using local songs, dance, games and stories
  - HHI employs a standardized pre and post test of knowledge, as well as a follow up survey to continue to monitor and evaluate our impact
- Bonding and attachment
  - The role of play
  - Baby massage

**Impact?**

- Since February 2006, HHI has trained 2,267 women in India and Russia. These women are providing improved care for 18,868 orphaned and vulnerable children. (Data as of Feb. '09)
- Orphanage Directors have reported that after the implementation of HHI's training, child death and illness rates went down. Additionally, if a child falls ill, they do recover faster (thereby needing less medicines). The children also showed increased weight gain and were easier to soothe. The caregivers took greater pride in their work, were seen to be more nurturing and responsive to the babies, and general hygiene and living conditions were enhanced.
- HHI's early results with children were so remarkable that it was requested to train teachers in the world's largest early childhood development program - India's Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS).

**What HHI is seeking:**

Partnerships with local and international public and private organizations interested in practical and involved training for primary or secondary care-givers in early childhood development; training of trainers, including instruction and support in reproducing HHI's model and results for communities in need; early childhood development care program design in community, foster care and institutional care settings; consultation and support to create effective foster care programming; assistance with performance monitoring and evaluation.

**More Information:** To learn more, please go to [www.handstohearts.org](http://www.handstohearts.org) or email [laura@handstohearts.org](mailto:laura@handstohearts.org).