

Response to Sister Question:

Editor's note: Each issue, we print responses to our Sister Question. The question for September/October was: Two-thirds of the people living in poverty worldwide are

women, often women with children. How do you think this high level of poverty among women is a cause or an effect of other problems you see? **Rachel Halder, student at Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, responded:**

The smell of poverty dominates Chimbote, Peru, one of the poorest cities in the country. I spent six weeks in La Victoria among the poorest of the poor in Chimbote and lived with poverty at the ground level (as much as a white, middle-class 21-year-old woman from the States possibly could).

The young women of La Victoria must deal with immense issues daily, including: prostitution, domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, gangs, sexual violence and rape, teen pregnancies, and teen female suicides, all of which stem from poverty. With an unemployment rate of around 90%, and with drugs cheaper than bread, it is no wonder the women of this area suffer.

Prostitution is an easy access for money among young girls, therefore many begin as young as 14 years old. Handouts or donations are not the answer. The cycle of depression and poverty of La Victoria has been continuing for so long that it seems to be nearly impossible for people to get out. ☐



Rachel Halder

Photo by Bob Keener

Cup of Water

Stand with marginalized women in Pakistan, who live in isolation, trapped in poverty, with the sense of helplessness that comes from not being able to change the circumstances they face or support their children. MEDA is helping these women unleash their potential as entrepreneurs through training and access to local markets to sell their products. Not only do they earn an income to benefit their families, but they also discover a stronger sense of confidence, identity and self-worth. We invite you to join us in reducing poverty and increasing the dignity of women and families in Pakistan. Please join MEDA in alleviating poverty. Visit <www.meda.org>, or phone Linda Whitmore at 800-665-7026. ☐