

Romanita Hairston
World Vision Vice President
U.S. Programs

Growing up in Arkansas and the inner city of Seattle, Romanita Hairston has first-hand understanding of the struggles of rural and urban poverty in the United States. Today her personal and professional expertise motivate her work in empowering children and youth in under-resourced communities across the nation. Romanita believes everyone can make a difference in the life of a child both at home and internationally.



“The most important thing that I remember is we are a human family,” Romanita says. “Every child is really ‘our’ child. I am compelled to do my part and to never lose sight of the vision of life in all its fullness for every child.”

Romanita knows the impact of living in an under-resourced community. She also understands how powerful programs, a supportive family, and meaningful community relationships can transform a child’s life. World Vision’s global focus on impacting poverty and building a better world for children is lived out in the United States in its U.S. Programs. Romanita leads U.S. Programs with a conviction and desire to “give back,” which also was fostered by her upbringing. “I had a really strong mom,” Romanita recalls, “and ‘a really strong village.’ Early on I remember people from nonprofit organizations who were integral mentors in my life.”

Romanita has dedicated her life to improving the lives of vulnerable children and families for 15 years, including more than 12 years of service with World Vision’s domestic programs. An academic all-star in college, Romanita considered law school, but her heart was calling her to help children change their lives. While still in college, she created a tutoring program for high school students.

Romanita has served as director of KidREACH, World Vision’s elementary-age intervention for urban and rural children that provides academic and social mentoring. Later she became Executive Director for World Vision’s work across Washington State. She also has piloted the national launch of a long-term, community-based development strategy to improve the academic, social, physical, and interpersonal development of vulnerable youth. Today she leads World Vision’s work in nine U.S. locations (both urban and rural) and is responsible for the annual distribution of more than \$61 million in donated goods, and partnerships with some 3,500 organizations that serve more than 1.7 million beneficiaries.

Romanita holds two bachelors degrees from the University of Washington, as well as an MBA emphasizing leadership in nongovernmental organizations from Eastern University of Philadelphia. She currently serves on the boards of Urban Impact, The Center for Transforming Mission, The Washington Rhinestone Club, and The Renaissance Leadership Group. She also is as an adjunct professor at Seattle Pacific University, and speaks regularly on community economic development as well as leadership and justice.

With a creative knack for storytelling and technical know-how, Romanita is comfortable in various event settings, from faith-based to corporate to university venues. She believes that transformation begins with each one of us, and she speaks to those who desire to know how they can make a difference today.