

# ONE VOICE

TOGETHER IN PRAYER FOR AN **END TO POVERTY**

## **DELIVERING HOPE IN COLOMBIA**

**It's 5am. Doors are being knocked on in Baranquilla, Colombia. People answer, still fuzzy with sleep. There are police outside. But something else too... food! Packages of hope amidst all the fear.**

For many vulnerable families here, including a large number who are refugees from Venezuela, existence is a day-to-day battle. People rely on being out and about to earn money for food. Quarantine may be protecting them from a virus, but it means they can't afford to eat.

Through our partner organisation, Tearfund is delivering food to some of those facing worry and hunger. For safety, the team has to start out with a police escort at around 2am, when most people are still asleep. Hunger has made people desperate and it's not uncommon for trucks to be stopped and looted.

But the food gets there.

### **The ministry of chocolate cereal**

'Many people were so excited that they just kept crying when they saw us,' says Adis Márquez, who helps to run the project. 'But the cutest reactions were those of the children. The first product visible in the bag was a chocolate cereal. Immediately their eyes widened in surprise and a genuine smile appeared on their faces.'

'Every time we opened a door, there was a different reaction. Most people were asleep and in the middle of their sleep they were not sure what was happening was real. For many of these families, receiving a food parcel was a dream come true.'

### **Empty handed**

'The most difficult thing for me is when people come to ask us why they do not receive a food parcel if everyone is in need,' says Adis. 'Seeing their faces in pain, despair and even anger when asking for help is too painful.'

'Many people were left out. Although we delivered many food parcels, there are millions of people in need that have not been reached.'

## **PLEASE PRAY**

- Pray for all those facing fear and hunger, that they will be comforted and provided for.
- Ask God for strength and resources to serve those in need around us – particularly at this time.
- Lift up our partners in Colombia and around the world as they carry the hope and love of Jesus to people in practical ways.

We are doing all we can to continue to follow Jesus where the need is greatest during this crisis. As well as the work above, we're providing hand washing stations and hygiene kits. We're also supporting church networks to share crucial prevention messaging in some of the world's most vulnerable communities. If you feel led, please go to:  
[https://www.tearfund.org/give/coronavirus\\_response/](https://www.tearfund.org/give/coronavirus_response/)

### **A NOTE FROM...**

'This crisis is an opportunity to position ourselves to help the less fortunate. As an organisation we would like to reach everyone in need, but our resources are limited. The invitation is to keep these families in our daily prayers, and as far as possible contribute to their relief through the actions we can take.' **Andrea Chajin, Colombia Team.**

## **IN ZIMBABWE PEOPLE FEAR STARVATION EVEN MORE THAN CORONAVIRUS**

**For the people of Zimbabwe, an outbreak of coronavirus could be devastating. But many say hunger feels like the more immediate danger.**

'The real danger for us is hunger. If I stay at home as recommended by the government, my family will starve. Who will feed them?' says Jonas, a father of three in Harare.

Like much of the world, Zimbabwe is currently on a national lockdown. The restrictions come at a time when much of southern Africa has been facing severe droughts caused by the climate crisis. This has led to families struggling to feed themselves.

It's also a nation with a crippled economy, high unemployment and soaring inflation. According to its government, more than 50 per cent of people struggle to put a meal on the table. In the last few weeks there has also been a rise in the number of Malaria cases reported, with 201 outbreaks in different parts of the country, according to Zimbabwe's Ministry of Health.

Thankfully, official numbers of coronavirus cases have been relatively low so far compared to Western Europe (32 cases as of 28 April), but the impact of lockdown is already putting great strain on people's lives. If a major outbreak hits, the health system will struggle to cope without basic resources like gloves, painkillers and even doctors.

### **Piling on the pressure**

In the Zimbabwean language of Shona there is a saying: '*kuwedzera nhamo pane imwe nhamo*', which translates as 'adding problems onto other problems'. According to Earnest Maswera, Tearfund's Country Director for Zimbabwe, the phrase is on many people's lips right now.

Earnest goes on to say, 'If it was just the disease I guess we could find somewhere to start from, but then the disease has brought with it a lockdown – a real lockdown – and this is so hard for people.'

For 36-year-old Tafadzwa coronavirus is leaving people stretched. 'Our nets are completely empty and this will only make things worse,' he says. 'The struggle is real in Zimbabwe and it seems it's never good news for us.'

The lockdown also means children can't go to school. For 14-year-old Mary\*, whose mother is an office cleaner in Harare, it's a sad time. 'I'm losing my education as we don't have any WiFi at home so I can't do any research.' She's also worried about other children. 'Street children rely on people going out to work [to beg for money and food], but I don't know how they will survive.'

### **Reaching those in need**

Since the start of the coronavirus crisis, Tearfund has been working with all four of our partner organisations in the country. Our response has included:

- Sharing information on how to prevent the spread of the disease.
- Building water tanks, providing soap and encouraging handwashing.
- Speaking out against the dangers of gender-based violence, which is more likely during lockdown; and helping survivors to be able to access support.
- Distributing cash to vulnerable families who can't buy food or basic necessities.

Idzai Murimba, Tearfund's Deputy Country Director in Zimbabwe says: 'We were praying and hoping that 2020 will be the year when God will usher us into a new season of rebuilding in Zimbabwe, but it seems that's not the case. On the other hand, there is hope that God can intervene in a way that spares the nation from the worst possible scenario.'

Please join us in prayer for Zimbabwe at this time of great challenges on many fronts.

### **PLEASE PRAY**

Father God,

We lift up to you in prayer those who are struggling in Zimbabwe – the fearful, the hungry, the sick. May the coronavirus not spread any further and grant the government wisdom on when to lift the lockdown. In a nation facing so many challenges, may you be the hope and salvation of its people.

In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

### **TAPPING INTO POTENTIAL**

**Washing hands is vital to stop the spread of illnesses and diseases such as diarrhoea and the coronavirus. But what happens when you're not able to do this at home?**

In many of the countries where Tearfund is working, the nearest source of water can be miles away. The routes are often dangerous – especially for women and children. The water unclean.

Many households will not have safe places to store the water they collect, which not only causes further contamination but means multiple trips are needed. And because of the lack of accessible water, hand washing practices can be almost non-existent.

But this is beginning to change. Communities are becoming empowered to turn their skills to creating new taps for their homes. And it's making all the difference.

### **Enter the Tippy Tap**

The Tippy Tap is cheap, easy to construct and can be made with locally-sourced materials. All that's needed to create one is several sticks, string, soap and a container for the water. The device is then simply operated with a foot lever, which significantly reduces the chance for diseases to be spread as the user only touches a bar of soap, supported by a string.

Tippy Taps don't just improve people's access to clean water, they empower people to build, maintain and use the taps. People have a sense of ownership over them which means that they won't fall into disrepair.

These clever taps are being effectively used around the world in developing countries – outside homes, schools and toilets – to promote good hygiene practices. Tearfund and our local partners have been teaching communities how to build and use them.

'Tippy Taps are very helpful for the rural communities in Haiti due to the fact that water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructures are very poor, almost non-existent in these areas,' says Marc Romyr Antoine, who leads Tearfund's work in Haiti.

Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the world with 84 per cent of people living in poverty. Waterborne diseases, such as cholera, are rife.

### **Safer for everyone**

'Tippy Taps serve as a physical reminder to constantly wash hands which can be overlooked, especially in homes and communities with no infrastructure for running water,' says Marc Romyr Antoine.

A simple reminder, but one that makes a home safer for everyone. Especially for young children.

The second biggest cause of death worldwide for children under five is diarrhoea. It is both preventable and treatable. Safe drinking-water, good sanitation and hand washing with soap significantly reduce the risk of catching this.

There are new threats too. The coronavirus is beginning to hit some of the poorest countries. But the work that Tearfund and our local partners have spent decades doing – providing communities with access to safe water and promoting good hygiene – means that we are well established to help communities limit the spread of this deadly virus.

'Tearfund and our partners are doing door-to-door awareness raising for families,' says Marc Romyr Antoine. 'We are giving them the basic information on COVID-19, signs and symptoms to be aware of, and advice – such as handwashing with soap. For these households who receive the awareness, they also receive support to construct a Tippy Tap in their home.'

This is work we're doing globally to support the most vulnerable people. Tearfund's links with a network of 15,000 local churches around the world mean we can reach even the most remote areas with lifesaving public health messages.

### **Clean water is a human right**

One of Tearfund's main priorities is to improve people's access to clean water. Around the world, 844 million people still do not have access to this basic human necessity. Having fresh water and

good sanitation is at the very heart of escaping poverty. Change someone's access to these and you transform their whole life.

It is an injustice that millions of people around the world do not have access to clean water. We are determined to change that.

### PLEASE PRAY

- From drinking to washing, take a moment where you are to reflect with God on the different ways you use clean water throughout your day. How it makes your life simpler. And safer. Give thanks to God for this resource.
- Lift up to God people around the world who do not have access to clean water. Pray they will be kept safe from illness and disease, and for swift solutions to be found so that they can overcome poverty.
- Thank God for how Tippy Taps are being used to promote good hygiene around the world. Pray that Tearfund and our partners will be able to reach people in need to share with them how to build and use these to protect their families from diseases.

### PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

 The presidential election campaign has begun in Burundi. Tearfund and our partners have brought faith leaders together, equipping them to help spread messages of peace and reconciliation in the run up to election. Pray there will be no outbreaks of violence, that people will be able to vote without fear and the result will be respected.

 Globally, 50.8 million people are now internally displaced because of violence and disasters. They have lost loved ones, homes and jobs. Pray for solutions to be found so they can safely return home. Pray that Tearfund are able to reach those in need, to support and equip them to rebuild their lives and lift themselves out of poverty.

 A group in Yemen has declared self-rule in the areas it controls. This decision could lead to further violence and disrupt aid delivery. Pray for peaceful solutions to this crisis. There are around 24 million people in Yemen already struggling to survive and in need of humanitarian assistance; it's vital support is able to reach them.