

ONE VOICE

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

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Do you dread being asked ‘what do you do for a living?’ Vedette, from the village of Huye, Rwanda, doesn’t mind at all. ‘I make clothes for Jesus,’ she says with a broad smile.

She hasn’t always been so cheerful...

Vedette was left at home caring her five children. ‘Some of them were delayed going to school because of our lack of money.’

A stitch in time

Her chance to change that came when the local Vivante Church offered a training course in tailoring. It had been offered by the Rwandan Christian organisation AMU, who partner with Tearfund in the country.

Vedette is already making her own clothes as well as taking commissions. She shows off the the crisp white shirt she has made, and wears with pride. ‘I believe that when you dress well, it is like glorifying God.’

WWJW?

There’s another way that Vedette glorifies God: ‘I dress Jesus every day... every day!’ She declares. ‘Because now I always make clothes for the poor.’

‘The doors to this church were permanently shut until we opened them on Sunday morning,’ remembers the church’s minister, Pastor Innocent. Now it is open all week.

‘I told people God was going to work a miracle in Huye and they didn’t believe me. Many people have come to faith because of this work.’

Vedette poses for more photos. ‘This tape measure is my future – my bright future!’

PLEASE PRAY

Lift up the nation of Rwanda as it marks the 25th anniversary of the terrible genocide – looking back and planning new ways to move forward as a nation. Thank God for all those who are offering communities fresh ways of escaping poverty, through schemes like the ones in the village of Huye.

A NOTE FROM...

‘Twenty-five years have passed since the unspeakable tragedy of the Rwandan genocide, and the nation is still healing. But stories like Vedette’s show that there is hope. God’s love shines through all; please pray that it will continue to shine in Rwanda.’

Douwe Dijkstra, East and Central Africa Lead

AFTER THE CYCLONE: HOW TEARFUND IS RESPONDING

Since Cyclone Idai on 15 March, we've been working with our partners to respond across Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe.

The full scale of the disaster is yet to be established, but more than 740 people are known to have been killed and almost 3 million people are in need of emergency aid.

Reaching some areas is proving difficult as many bridges have been washed away. But some people who fled their homes as flood waters rose are returning home and aid is getting through.

People's most urgent needs are clean water, emergency shelter, food, health assistance, sanitation and hygiene, and trauma counselling.

Here is a summary of the relief work Tearfund and our partners have been able to carry out so far:

Malawi

Just before Cyclone Idai hit, heavy rain fell in Malawi causing widespread flooding.

More than 850,000 people were affected, with 59 deaths and hundreds injured. Over 170 makeshift camps have been set up by people who have lost their homes and have nowhere else to live.

The Goma camp in Chikwawa is sheltering 1,832 people including 43 breastfeeding mothers and 330 children under five. Tearfund partner, Eagles, is distributing food to those who managed to escape the floods. Each person is receiving a bag of maize flour, beans, cooking oil and salt. Currently there are enough supplies to reach 1,500 people.

Zimbabwe

Chimanimani and Chipinge, in the east of the country, were the hardest-hit districts. An estimated 270,000 people have been affected and many of the roads have been damaged or destroyed.

Staff from Tearfund's partner, Zimbabwe Orphans Through Extended Hands (ZOE), visited communities in Chimanimani. Boulders, trees and rocks made it impassable by car, so they walked 12km to reach the community.

They found several houses had been completely destroyed, leaving people homeless. There is also concern at the likelihood of diseases such as cholera and malaria spreading as sanitation facilities have been washed away.

We are working with our local church partner, the Evangelical Fellowship Zimbabwe (EFZ), to provide emergency relief to those affected by the flooding.

Mozambique

The official death toll in Mozambique has risen to 518 people, according to its government. Meanwhile, 247 cases of cholera have been reported in the city of Beira.

Tearfund's partners have been part of search and rescue operations across Buzi, Nhamamtanda, Dondo and Beira – the most affected regions.

They have also been mobilising local churches to raise awareness and educate people in how safe hygiene practices can help prevent disease.

They are distributing chlorine tablets and clean drinking water to prevent waterborne diseases from spreading, as well as tents and food.

Tearfund's Jennipher Sakala, who leads Tearfund's work in Southern and East Africa, says: 'The current need is great and we are working tirelessly around the clock with our partners to ensure that we offer vital assistance to our affected brothers and sisters.'

PLEASE PRAY

- Continue to pray for all those people who have lost loved ones, homes and livelihoods following Cyclone Idai.
- Ask God to protect and strengthen all those bringing relief to people in huge need.
- Thank God for the generous outpouring of support from the public. So far, £25 million has been raised through the Disasters Emergency Committee, of which Tearfund is a member. Pray for this to continue.

EGYPT STREET SMART

Meet Noreen, she's learned a thing or two. You won't get much past her these days...

Over the past seven months, 18 women have been meeting together in Alexandria for two hours, four times a week, learning to read and write. Noreen* is one of the class and it's been a game changer.

'Before, I would get onto the wrong bus because I couldn't read the sign, now I can read the final destination on the bus and know what bus to take,' Noreen says.

Spelling success

The project, and several others like it, is run by EpiscoCare, one of Tearfund's partner organisations in Egypt. The women taking part are already reaping the rewards of their literary progress. 'In the beginning I could not write my own name,' says one. 'Now we can read road signs and therefore we know where we are going,' adds another.

The literacy classes also benefit entire households, because the women transfer their skills and knowledge to their children: 'We can now study together with our children and help them with their schoolwork.'

As well as literacy classes, EpiscoCare offers small business loans. Noreen has taken this opportunity to start a small business. She took a loan of 1,000 Egyptian pounds (around £43) and bought wholesale clothes to sell on to the local community.

Fool-proof

Noreen's basic literacy and numeracy skills have helped her run the business. 'I can do the calculations, and I've learned how to sell and buy,' says Noreen. 'But most importantly, now no one can trick or fool me as I can read the documents myself.'

As well as help with their homework, Noreen's children have also benefited from the work of EpiscoCare. Her youngest daughter is part of their 'My Dear Daughter' mentoring programme, which encourages girls to continue past primary school and get a full education.

Meanwhile, EpiscoCare's financial support allowed her oldest son to receive medical care when his tonsils needed removing.

A successful business has improved Noreen's social and economic status too, which is good news for the whole family. 'For sure,' she told us, 'in the future this will bring us more successful lives and my children will know more as they are continuing in their schools.'

And as for Noreen, nobody pulls the wool over her eyes any more...

Tearfund is due to end its 25-year presence in Egypt this month. To mark this we are sharing stories of amazing work our partner organisations are doing – and will continue to do, after we have departed.

PLEASE PRAY

- Pray for EpiscoCare in your prayers as they continue to empower women and girls in Egypt, through literacy work and mentoring.
- Also remember in your prayers, the other organisations that Tearfund has been partnering with: Refuge Egypt (working with refugees), The Council for Services and Development lending schemes for young people), Think and Do (supporting the most vulnerable) and Freedom Ministries (accessing healthcare for marginalised people).

**Name has been changed to protect identity*

PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

-  At least 28 people were killed on Sunday night when a strong rainstorm swept through southern Nepal. Powerful winds destroyed houses and flattened trees. Pray for rescuers to get through blockages of electrical poles and fallen trees to reach the hundreds of people who are injured and in need of help.
-  Please pray for South Sudan. More than six months ago a peace agreement was signed, but the humanitarian situation remains severe and there has been a continuation of conflict in the southern part of the Central Equatoria region. Please ask God to heal divides and bring peace to this long-suffering nation.
-  Please pray for the protection and security of the citizens of Burkina Faso, west Africa. A new wave of violence has broken out and at least ten people have been killed in the last week. Pray also for the safety of our partners in the country.