

ONE VOICE

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

Swapping tramadol for shea butter

Akpan was a mess. Dependent on drugs, he could swallow more than 12 tramadol tablets (a powerful painkiller) in one go. His wife, Lyama, had to buy his clothes because he was unable to look after himself.

'We used to live like dogs,' says Akpan, who lives in Ungwan Bako village in Kebbi State, North West Nigeria. Lyama was left to look after their six children without his help.

Akpan grew up in the same community. His family owned a lot of livestock and Akpan remembers being well fed as a child.

But all that changed when an unidentified illness killed some of their cattle. Soon after, robbers took several sheep. It was the start of a downward spiral culminating in the death of Akpan's father. 'We were impoverished,' Akpan says.

The consequences of this childhood trauma continued into his marriage. But his destructive and painful lifestyle dramatically changed when Reuben Achison, a facilitator appointed by Tearfund's partner Calvary Ministries (CAPRO), came into his life.

Bread and butter

CAPRO identified Ungwan Bako as a poor community that needed support. They chose potential leaders from the local church, including Reuben, to become facilitators. Their role was to form villagers into groups to come up with and develop income-generating ideas.

Lyama had an idea to start a business processing shea nuts to make shea butter. From the proceeds, Lyama paid her children's school fees and bought three goats and a calf to rear and sell. Soon, Akpan says, they hope to be able to buy a machine to process shea nuts into butter oil.

But it is their faith in Jesus that has given them real assurance for the future.

As a result of being part of the group, Lyama and Akpan became Christians. And it has had a dramatic effect on family life. 'Now my family laughs and plays together like children,' Akpan says.

'We are hopeful that things will get better,' says Akpan. 'I am praying that people will come to know the Lord because of what God has done for us.'

PLEASE PRAY

- Akpan asks for prayer that many people will come to accept Jesus because of the testimony of their lives turned around.
- Lyama asks for prayer so that they will be able to buy a shea nut processing machine to earn more income so that all their children will be educated.
- Lift up the work of our partner Calvary Ministries (CAPRO), who – like many around the world – are continuing to carry out their life-changing work in a safe way during the pandemic.

A note from...

'Akpan and Lyama are living examples of the hope and transformation that following Jesus brings. Thank you for walking with us and praying for us as we continue to empower people in Nigeria to step out of poverty and build new and better futures for themselves and their children.'

Paul Mershak, Country Director for Nigeria

Beirut blast: an eyewitness account from a Tearfund staff member

'I was on the phone to my wife when I felt the ground shake like an earthquake. Then – "BAM!" – there was a massive explosion,' says Jaime Abraham, who works in Tearfund's Middle East team and was in Beirut at the time.

The Lebanese capital had just experienced a huge explosion. It happened in the port area of the city on Tuesday, at around 3.15pm local time.

'Before I could even speak to my wife, the shockwave nearly pushed me out of my chair.

'My first thought was that it was a bomb. But when I ran outside to look all I could see was this massive plume of orange smoke. It looked more like a volcano erupted, so I thought it must be something else.

'I immediately ran to check on our neighbours. Many of them had their windows and doors blown out, so I knew it was huge.'

'Heartbreaking'

The latest update from Lebanon's health minister says more than 137 people have been killed and an estimated 5,000 injured. At least 250,000 people have been made homeless by the blast.

Around 1.5 million refugees call Lebanon home, many of them living in makeshift housing in Beirut's slums. Tearfund and our partners have been providing support for people dealing with trauma in the wake of the conflict in Syria. It is this kind of work that is likely to be even more important in the coming weeks and months.

'This is just heartbreaking,' continues Jaime. 'People living in Lebanon have already been through so much, and much of the infrastructure was already hanging on by a thread with the pressure of coronavirus

'Some of the key hospitals were in the vicinity of the blast and are damaged. They were already stretched... and now with thousands upon thousands injured they cannot cope.

'I've spoken to friends whose injured relatives were turned away from a number of hospitals before they finally found someone who could help them.'

Vital support

Beirut's port is a lifeline for the country, but was so damaged by the blast that it can no longer be used. Many jobs and businesses depended on it – and have now been left in ruins. A lot of the country's grain supplies were kept at the port and have also been destroyed, potentially accelerating a food crisis that had already been building.

Tearfund works with three partner organisations in the city. One partner runs the Manara Youth Centre – a drop-in centre for young people in one of the areas worst hit by the explosion.

The mental health work the centre does will be vital in the aftermath of the blast – many of the communities it serves have already been through a lot of trauma, and the explosion may have triggered very painful memories.

PLEASE PRAY

- Pray for people who have been wounded, and those who have lost loved ones.
- Lift up in prayer the emergency services as they work to find people trapped after the blast; and for hospitals who are struggling to cope with the high number of casualties.
- Please also pray for our partner organisations to know how best to serve their communities and recover from this disaster.

Climate crisis forces children into dangerous work

It's been estimated that there are thousands of children working in Burkina Faso's gold mines. It's dangerous work – no place for a child. But, because of the climate crisis, families have few other opportunities to earn money to survive.

Farming used to be a key source of income, but the climate crisis has made the weather unpredictable. Generations of farmers have relied on the frequent rains to keep the soil fertile, which led to abundant harvests. Now, droughts and erratic rainfall have damaged the soil and crops keep failing.

In Burkina Faso, 80 per cent of the population is dependent on agriculture to earn an income. When crops fail, families go hungry.

The climate crisis is pushing families deeper into poverty. It's also forcing them to make hard decisions so they can survive. Like sending their children to work in the gold mines.

Panning for gold

Abdoul* lives in the north of Burkina Faso with his wife and their six children. Like most people in his community, he is a farmer.

'Life is not easy,' shares Abdoul. 'We cannot make ends meet because of bad harvests.'

So that the family doesn't go hungry, Abdoul's children work in the mines, panning for gold. They do this instead of going to school.

But panning for gold has a lot of health risks. It's dangerous work. It also means children miss out on being children – playing with their friends, going to school, learning and dreaming.

A new way

Tearfund's local partner CREDO is working with farmers in the region to help restore the soil. They are also providing training on new farming techniques and have distributed climate-resistant crops, so that farmers are able to adapt to these harsh conditions.

CREDO has supported 625 poor and vulnerable households in the area. This is all being done alongside their other work in the region, working with pregnant and new mothers to help them overcome malnutrition which is an increasing problem due to the climate crisis.

By helping farmers adapt to the changing climate so that they are able to produce abundant harvests, CREDO is able to tackle the root causes of hunger in the region.

And, if farmers are able to earn an income from their harvests again, they are less likely to send their children to work in the mines.

Together for change

Abdoul is one of the farmers who have taken part in the training. He has found it hugely beneficial to him and his family.

'I hope... we will be able to apply the knowledge received to have better harvests and to support the family, and the children will no longer go to mining sites where their lives are in danger.'

None of the training by CREDO is done in isolation, meaning that farmers are able to come together and share in their pains – and their joys. No one has to carry the burden of poverty alone anymore. It's created a deeper sense of community within Abdoul's village.

'The fact that CREDO shows us how to organise and work into groups has created a bond of solidarity between us,' says Abdoul. 'We have the same concerns; working together in the fields makes us become closer to each other. We are stronger united and in solidarity.'

'May God bless Tearfund and CREDO so that they continue to help vulnerable people.'

PLEASE PRAY

- Praise God for how this training has turned Abdoul's life around. Pray a blessing over each of his children's futures now that they will no longer have to work in the gold mines.
- As the climate crisis worsens, it is hitting people living in poverty, like Abdoul, the hardest. Lift up the work Tearfund and our partners are doing around the world to respond to this crisis –

building communities' resilience to droughts and floods, and helping them to overcome hunger.

- There are 152 million children around the world in forced labour. Pray for their protection, and that they will be safely freed from this work. Ask God to heal the traumas they have experienced, and that they will get the opportunity to be children again.

**Name changed to protect identity*

PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

 No one should be stopped from accessing treatments or vaccines because of where they live or what they can afford. As countries around the world work to develop a vaccine for coronavirus, pray that this will be made freely available to all. And keep praying for an end to coronavirus.

 Enforced lockdowns have triggered past memories of violence and abuse for many survivors of human trafficking whom we work with around the world. This has led to them facing nightmares, stress and depression. Pray for their healing and peace. And pray that we will be able to reach those in need with practical and emotional support.

 Parents are facing an uphill battle to feed their families in South Sudan: millions are going hungry. Many are experiencing the ongoing damage of the floods from earlier this year. In one county, 90 per cent of crops were washed away, leaving them without food or income. Pray that Tearfund's feeding centres will be able to reach those in need to help them overcome hunger.