

ONE VOICE

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

A RECIPE FOR HOPE

How cooking classes are opening doors for children with Down Syndrome in the Central Asian States.

Children born with Down Syndrome in Central Asia are often rejected by society. Some communities even consider them to be cursed. It is not unheard of for the father of a child with Down Syndrome to abandon their families, leaving mothers and children without any support.

In one area that Tearfund is working in, a group of mothers banded together to set up a centre for children with Down Syndrome. This provided support and solidarity for these families, setting up social events and summer camps.

These were incredibly successful, but they wanted to do more to help the children integrate into society. They had the will, but they needed a way.

A pinch of potential

Despite being poor themselves, the local community wanted to help. They knew that these children were not being allowed to fulfil their potential.

Tearfund runs community development courses in the area, and offers grants to help communities get projects off the ground. After attending the course, the community decided to team up with the mothers and set up culinary classes for the children.

The classes would give the children new skills, help them make more friends, and tackle the negative stereotypes placed on them by society. The grant from Tearfund enabled them to buy the kitchen equipment they needed, and the classes began.

A dash of healing

'The first classes were held in a tense atmosphere,' said one of Tearfund's partner staff. 'For the mothers and children with Down Syndrome it was unusual that somebody was happy to see them. For community members it was unusual to communicate with such a group of children. It was a challenge to unite the groups and find common ground.'

Yet over time, relationships and trust began to grow. The project was building people up, and breaking down barriers in society. Volunteers noted how much pain and disappointment the mothers had, and how many of their wounds were caused by relatives and friends. To help, counselling sessions were arranged to help the mothers.

As time goes by, the wounds are slowly beginning to heal, and the women are rebuilding their self-esteem and self-worth. Moreover, the children are having a great time, and can look forward to a brighter future.

PLEASE PRAY

- Thank God for this project, and pray that it will continue to change the lives of children with Down Syndrome for many years to come.
- Pray that attitudes in societies across Central Asia will change, so that these children will no longer be marginalised.
- Pray that more people will be inspired to take action on behalf of their local communities.

A NOTE FROM...

'This story shows that the help most people need is not large amounts of money, but community. The chance for people to come closer and listen. To care for each other. It takes a few of us, so may we be that for people in need. And where we lead let us pray others shall follow.'

David Mbuvi, advisor on inclusion

DIVIDED WE FALL

Democracy is a wonderful thing. However, election campaigns themselves can be hurtful and divisive – and it's not just the feuding politicians that bear the scars.

This morning I heard a longstanding and respected MP say that she wouldn't be standing again at the forthcoming general election.

The final straw had been an anonymous tweet she had received, in which she had been called a murderer. It came after months of anger and recrimination that had been directed towards her.

The MP in question has decided she's had enough and is going back to her old line of work.

Premium irate

You'll often find the anger is at its worst on Facebook and Twitter. We seem to be emboldened to speak our minds in a way we wouldn't dream of doing if we were talking to someone face-to-face.

One (hotly contested) recent opinion poll suggested that over half of people asked considered that the risk of violence against MPs was 'a price worth paying' to get their preferred Brexit outcome.

It's sad to see how many Christians have been sucked into the hostilities, myself included on occasion.

Disagreeing well

As God's church we are not called to agree on every issue. However, we are called to disagree well. We need to watch our hearts and our tongues as we engage in dialogue with people who see the world very differently from ourselves.

To show there is indeed 'nothing new under the sun', the following is a quote from John Wesley's journal in 1674: 'I met those of our society who had votes in the ensuing election, and advised them: to vote, without fee or reward, for the person they judged most worthy; to speak no evil of the person they voted against, and; to take care their spirits were not sharpened against those

that voted on the other side.'

We are tribal creatures and it's tempting to divide the world and even our fellow believers into 'us' and 'them'. However, the Apostle Paul reminded the churches: 'There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'
(Galatians 3:28)

This nation may well be at a crucial crossroads regarding its future political and economic direction. However, I believe we are at another crossroads (along with much of the world).

Are we going to become steadily more entrenched in our political and social opinions and tribes? Will we choose to grow more intolerant of people and opinions that are different?

Our nation is deeply divided; it needs people who can disagree well. And people who sow peace and reconciliation in their lives. Jesus said that our most distinctive feature must be the love we show one another (John 13:35); this election is the perfect opportunity to put that into practice.

Pray for the church, that we can be a voice for unity, as well as speaking up for the poorest and most vulnerable around the world.

PLEASE PRAY

An election prayer for your church:

God Almighty,

Thank you that we live in a country where we can freely and safely vote.

Thank you that we can speak to those in power without fear.

Thank you that no matter what happens during this election you can work all things for your good and glory.

Protect our hearts, friends, families, communities and churches as we disagree.

Protect our country as we undergo changes in our politics.

Protect our leaders and politicians as they lead us.

Give our leaders wisdom and vision to govern well, overcoming poverty and injustice and showing concern for God's creation.

Give us the energy to play our part in society.

Give us a vision of how we can continue to bring your Kingdom here.

Amen.

FINDING COURAGE IN THE MIDST OF THE YEMEN CRISIS

Across Yemen 24 million people are in need of humanitarian aid and 9.9 million are at risk of starvation. The nation is also facing one of the biggest cholera outbreaks on record, with more than one million cases reported.

Tearfund's News Editor, Andrew Horton, spoke with a Tearfund partner to get unique insights about the Yemen crisis, and find out more about the challenges the Yemeni people face.

Andrew:

Yemen has been called the world's worst humanitarian crisis. But from your experience of living there, how bad is it?

Partner:

When you look at the statistics, it's clearly bad. But what makes it really bad is when you have friends, you have relatives, when you have people that you work and live with, and they don't know where they can go with the pain they have. So, I think it becomes even worse when you start to connect it to real life and to real people.

Andrew:

How much of a factor is Yemen's geographic location in the crisis?

Partner:

Yemen is isolated. There's water around part of it and there's desert around the rest. And so that makes it, of course, more challenging. People feel they don't have a voice. If you consider the media coverage with other countries that have crises, Yemen just doesn't get as much attention. It's much worse than it's being portrayed – it's heartbreaking. It's devastating.

Andrew:

How hard is it for Tearfund partners and other humanitarians to work in Yemen?

Partner:

At first you will always face challenges. So, you have to prove over time that you are neutral, that you're impartial and that you apply those principles from the beginning, and don't change them – to demonstrate integrity from the start. But at the same time, respecting cultural factors and values to somehow create that acceptance by the communities where you work. But it can be quite a rollercoaster: some days you're accepted, the next you're viewed badly.

I think the advantage in us working with Tearfund is that we are able to engage in areas where maybe other humanitarian groups won't go because they are considered to be insignificant or not known. And I think this is the advantage. Tearfund is known.

Andrew:

How are the Yemeni people coping with this crisis?

Partner:

There is a huge sense of fatigue. The biggest challenge is anything from depression to burn out. I think in the beginning of the crisis people were looking for hope in their family and their social groups, which is very important in Yemen. But now families are breaking up and so social and family support is being destroyed. That is unusual for this society as community accountability and social support is typical for Yemenis.

Andrew:

How are the younger generations coping with the crisis in Yemen?

Partner:

For many young people in Yemen they have always known war and conflict. What they are not familiar with is that this crisis is taking everything away that they could dream of.

They feel robbed of purpose and identity, and that is the biggest crisis. The war is also making them vulnerable and exposed to people who come with harmful ideologies and radicalism. So even though young people are open-minded and questioning, we're also seeing some of them being radicalised and recruited into armed groups.

Andrew:

What could bring peace?

Partner:

I think the key is to help Yemenis restore their sense of identity and community. It's strong communities that can foster peace and reconciliation. People now feel disconnected from their

communities.

Andrew:

What is your hope for the country?

Partner:

I believe the Yemeni people are open to receive help from people that they know and trust, who are not coming with an agenda, but with love, hope, understanding and help.

I really hope that we demonstrate to the Yemeni people that they're worthy of our help because of who they are, not because they are victims or 'a project'.

And I think this is an opportunity for Tearfund because you are driven by your values more than by anything else. And our partnership is driven by values. I think the younger generations will recognise and embrace that mentality. This is my hope.

PLEASE PRAY

Father God,

We weep with those who are weeping in Yemen. Bring peace to this nation and restore hope to its people. Comfort the broken hearted and heal the sick. Thank you for the courage and commitment of our partners, who work in such challenging circumstances. Be a lamp to their feet, and a light to their path.

In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

As the Yemen crisis grows worse by the moment, please also consider giving to our Yemen Appeal at https://www.tearfund.org/en/latest/yemen_appeal/

PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



Pray for safety for civilians caught up in conflict in the Northern Shan and Rakhine States of Myanmar. Many thousands of people have been displaced from their homes and are in need of urgent help; please pray that aid will reach those who need it most.



Clashes between security forces and protestors led to over 200 deaths in Iraq last month (October). Please pray for voices to be heard and solutions to be found so that peace can prosper. Pray that Iraq will continue to rebuild after years of conflict and violence.



South Sudan is working towards forming a transitional government on 12 November. Pray for fruitful negotiations and the peaceful establishment of a new government. Pray for forgiveness, reconciliation and justice.