

# ONE VOICE

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

## **Pandemic or poverty?**

**The answer is both. Millions of people living in poverty around the world were struggling to survive before the pandemic began. Now, they are not only facing the risk of the virus, but of hunger too.**

Lockdowns have put people under unimaginable strain. For the millions of people who depend on a daily wage, losing work for just one day leaves them unable to put food on the table. With no savings or safety net to fall back on, hunger can be a bigger threat to some than coronavirus. And as the pandemic continues, this threat continues to grow.

### **Mercy**

Mina\*, from Mali, has nine children to feed. Her husband died eighteen months ago. She was already struggling to provide for her family on the little money she makes from selling items on the streets. During lockdown, she was no longer able to go out and make money, and her children soon started to go hungry.

Mina didn't know where to turn for help: 'We were really in need of all basics to survive... We did not know how we would eat that evening.'

In Mali, Tearfund's local partners have been providing emergency relief to families like Mina's. This included food and cleaning supplies, as well as information about how they could protect themselves against coronavirus. 'We can only thank you and may God reward you a hundredfold,' says Mina. 'You have had mercy on widows and orphans.'

### **A worldwide response**

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Tearfund has been working with local partners in 36 countries to respond to the urgent needs of the most vulnerable.

So far, we have been able to distribute more than 10,000 food packages to those at risk of hunger. Ten thousand boxes of hope shared with families who now know they don't have to face this crisis alone.

### **Please pray**

Father God,  
We lift up all people around the world who are unable to work or who have lost jobs due to the pandemic. We pray that you will provide for them in their time of need.

Thank you for our local partners and churches around the world who have been able to reach so many people with vital support. Please continue to guide them to those who are most in need. Amen.

*\*Name changed to protect identity*

### **A note from...**

'We are thankful for the prayers and generosity of our supporters which enables us to respond quickly and provide long-term support to vulnerable communities. It is so encouraging to know that our supporters are praying for us, as we navigate new challenges.'

**Pranaya Chhetri, Country Director for Nepal**

## **Living in fear: Ethiopia and the climate crisis**

*Jane Boswell, from Tearfund's Campaigns Team, shares her experience of seeing first-hand the impact of the climate crisis in Ethiopia.*

**I sat, hot and exhausted, on a tree stump in the stifling Ethiopian sunshine. I was aware of a worsening, dehydration-induced headache and eyeing the dwindling water supplies in our vehicle with concern.**

The irony wasn't lost on me.

I was visiting a community of livestock farmers in the punishingly hot region of Afar, Ethiopia. Opposite me sat 35-year-old Orbisa. She's a mother, like me, and just a few years younger than I am. But that's where the similarities end. While I could look forward to heading to the nearest town for a nice, cold drink at the end of the day, Orbisa faced a ten-hour walk that night to collect water for her family. And not just that particular night: every night.

A few years ago, Orbisa and her community could rely on two rainy seasons every year but now, because of the changing climate, the rains don't last as long and are less predictable. Orbisa and her children don't have enough water to survive. So she walks up to ten hours a day to find water for her family to drink. On the way she faces the dangers of wild animals.

Orbisa depends on selling livestock to feed her family – but extensive droughts have killed nine of her ten cows. She's lost nearly half her goats too. This means less income, less food and poor health for the whole family.

'We used to get rain every four to five months,' Orbisa told me. 'And the area was very fertile and green. But it hasn't rained for six months and I don't know when it will rain next.'

'I worry about my children and my family. I worry about the small livestock which are remaining. I feel worried whenever I think about the future.'

### **This is an emergency**

At Tearfund, our partners and teams on the ground see first hand the devastating impact of the climate crisis on people like Orbisa every day. In many countries around the world, climate change isn't just a future threat. It's a reality that is endangering lives and pushing millions of people back into poverty. It affects their health, security and access to food. For people who are already vulnerable, it is a life-threatening emergency.

I asked Orbisa if she knew why the rains didn't come anymore. Her answer was that it's only God who knows. She also told me that when the rains don't come, she looks to God for hope. I was struck by her faith and courage.

I was moved to repent too, knowing that Orbisa and her community are paying the price for carbon emissions that have mostly been generated by developed nations like ours. We have pumped more and more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere through transport – including using cars and flying by airplane, the power we use, and food production.

The stark reality is that the poorest 3.5 billion people are responsible for just 10 per cent of these emissions. But it's these people who are the most vulnerable to the physical impacts of climate change because their homes are less secure, they rely on agriculture, and they lack many of the protections that we in developed nations take for granted.

### **A chance for change**

Over the last few months, the coronavirus pandemic has changed the way we see the world, reminding us of the fragility of life and exposing how unjust our world is. But it's also given us the chance to pause and reimagine what life could be like. Right now, we are at a turning point in history, and the decisions we make now will affect our economy, society and climate for decades.

There's never been a better time to build a world that prioritises the poor, tackles the climate emergency and works for everyone.

That's why Tearfund has launched the *Reboot campaign*, and why we're currently focusing on the urgent need to tackle the climate crisis as part of the coronavirus recovery. Together, with The Climate Coalition, we're calling on the UK government to lead the world in delivering a recovery that is greener and fairer and which limits warming to 1.5°C – the highest degree of warming that scientists believe will protect millions of people from the worst impacts of climate change including water scarcity and food insecurity.

Every fraction of a degree matters and, for millions of people, could make the difference that protects them from hunger or losing their homes.

As Christians, we have a crucial role in calling for, working towards and praying for a world that allows everyone, and all of creation, to flourish. Please join me in interceding for a breakthrough in the climate crisis.

### **Please pray**

- Lift up Orbisa and her community and pray for protection and provision for them as they face prolonged droughts and reduced rainfall. Pray for the work Tearfund and our local partners are doing to help communities like Orbisa's adapt to the changing weather patterns so they can feed their families.
- Pray that the UK government, and those in positions of power across the world, will make decisions that protect the most vulnerable people and creation.
- Pray that the church will continue to speak out on the climate crisis and be a strong voice calling for justice for people in poverty around the world who are affected by it.

Find out more information on the *Reboot campaign* and how you and your church can get involved at [www.tearfund.org/OVRebootCampaign](http://www.tearfund.org/OVRebootCampaign)

## **Going further than food: how Tearfund is tackling malnutrition in South Sudan**

**In a world of plenty, no one should be going hungry. And yet, many people still don't have enough food to feed their families.**

The World Health Organization (WHO) says almost 690 million people are going to bed hungry every night.

Tearfund believes hunger is not God's plan. That's why we're working in some of the world's most vulnerable countries to help them overcome malnutrition.

### **Life-saving work**

In South Sudan we provide life-saving nutrition services to help children and pregnant and breastfeeding women who are suffering from malnutrition.

Across the country, half of all South Sudanese people don't have enough food to eat. Ongoing conflict and recent flooding means many are being forced to flee their homes, and can't grow food to eat or keep their businesses going.

Feleke Asamo is Tearfund's Nutrition Adviser in South Sudan. He told us that because of the ongoing insecurity and the difficulty of accessing roads in some of the areas where we work, his work is challenging.

The threat of attacks makes it harder for supplies to be transported to the nutrition centres. It's also harder for those who are in need to access these services.

Added to this, there has been severe flooding in many parts of the country and the ongoing coronavirus crisis has been challenging too.

'Working closely with UN agencies, the local authorities, and with other partners who are working on the ground, we are able to do this work, but it's not easy,' says Feleke.

### **Coronavirus considerations**

Feleke and his team are following the South Sudan authorities' guidance for coronavirus, and this means they've changed some of the ways they work.

Depending on the needs of the patients one or two month's supply of medicinal food is now given out, instead of the usual weekly or fortnightly supply. This helps people avoid having to regularly mix closely, and reduces the risk of the virus spreading.

Tearfund currently runs 27 nutrition centres in three counties of South Sudan. In most cases, with the right treatment, people make a full recovery.

'I'm very happy when I see that those who have gone through our programme, are cured, discharged, and able to take up their normal activities. That is satisfying for me,' says Feleke.

But there is more work to be done. As long as factors like conflict, flooding, and diseases like coronavirus and malaria are present, new cases of severe malnutrition will no doubt continue.

### **A vicious cycle**

'Malnutrition affects people in so many ways – and it starts in the womb,' says Anthony Rama, who leads Tearfund's work in South Sudan. 'A child who is conceived and not fed properly already is set up for a lifetime of difficulties.

'They are not able to grow and reach their full potential. It affects their productivity – they are not able to do manual work, such as farming, when they become adults. And it affects their ability to engage in economic activities where you also need to be strong mentally.

'So the likelihood of them being poor as adults is high, and it means there'll likely be another generation who are conceived in malnutrition, being born and growing up with its effects. Some say the effects of malnutrition are cyclical, they go from generation to generation.'

### **So, what can be done to break that cycle?**

As well as our work at nutrition clinics tackling the effects of severe malnutrition, Tearfund also works alongside communities informing them about the dangers of malnutrition and what can be done to avoid it.

We provide access to clean drinking water and share best hygiene and sanitation practices for good. We also run peacebuilding workshops, to address conflict, one of the major causes of malnutrition.

'We're helping communities to reconcile, so people can rebuild their lives,' says Anthony Rama.

By working together and addressing the different root causes of hunger we can begin to see long-term change to this devastating cycle that keeps people in poverty's grip.

### **Please pray**

'For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.' (Matthew 25:35)

Lord God,

We lift up to you all our brothers and sisters across the world who are hungry. Heal those who are sick from malnutrition. Thank you for your goodness and provision to us, and show us how best we can respond to your call on our lives to help those who are caught in cycles of hunger.

Amen.

## Pray for the world



Extreme violence has intensified in northern Mozambique over the last few weeks. Many people have abandoned their homes to seek refuge. Tearfund is working with local partners to help those most affected and provide shelter and clean water, and other essential items. Pray for women and children, who are particularly vulnerable. And pray for peace.



The World Bank says 43 million more Africans are at risk of extreme poverty as a result of the pandemic. The International Monetary Fund has called for more financial support to be given to Africa. One of the best ways to help Africa recover from the pandemic is to cancel their debt repayments this year and next. Pray for world leaders to unite and take this crucial next step.



Recently, the UK government resumed giving licenses to companies in the UK that will allow them to sell weapons to Saudi Arabia. These weapons could be used in the Yemen conflict. Hundreds of you have written to your MPs, asking them to reverse this decision, and Tearfund has also raised this with MPs. Pray that the government will stop granting these licenses. Pray for peace for Yemen.