

ONE VOICE

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

MUM'S THE WORD

Being a new mum can be scary, especially if you don't have the right support. Meet Grace*, who's making sure that vulnerable new mums in South Sudan don't have to go through this difficult time alone.

Grace lost her first child to malnutrition. Her second was critically ill when he was admitted to one of Tearfund's feeding centres. The baby was extremely malnourished and suffering from severe diarrhoea. He needed treatment for infections too.

Sadly, this is not an uncommon scenario in South Sudan, where malnutrition contributes to more than one third of children's deaths. It also has a devastatingly high infant mortality rate.

From help to hope

To combat this, Tearfund is running feeding centres to help new mothers and their babies. The programmes focus on improving nutrition during pregnancy and infancy, treating pregnant and breastfeeding mothers as well as children under the age of five. Parents are also taught vital hygiene practices to prevent disease and infection.

The centre was able to treat Grace's baby. Our staff members describe him now as being the picture of perfect health – with chubby cheeks and legs to match.

A mother's work is never done

While at the centre Grace joined a support group for mothers. It wasn't long before she became the group leader. Grace then began training to become one of the counsellors at the centre.

The support groups have helped more than 2,000 women so far, and Grace is determined to help even more. She leads activities that help the centre engage with the local community in new ways, and is known in the community as a role model who is changing the lives of many women and children.

PLEASE PRAY

Heavenly Father, our hearts break as we stand with parents across the world, like Grace, who are mourning the loss of a child. We know your heart grieves with them too. We pray they will know your peace and comfort during this time, and they won't feel alone. Draw near to them and hold them close. And we pray for feeding centres like these working to help vulnerable mothers and children survive hunger and other crises. Amen.

**Name has been changed to protect identity.*

A NOTE FROM...

'I am proud of South Sudanese women, like Grace, who are liberating themselves from poverty and hunger. They are the builders of South Sudanese society, yet they struggle to make ends meet. Let us remember them in our daily prayers.'

Florence Luttay, South Sudan Team

TAXI FOR EVERYONE

Jilbert used to live on the streets in a small town in eastern Rwanda. He fled home because his parents were beating him – it was too much. He was just eight years old.

'I didn't have anywhere to sleep. I spent seven years in that life. I had to steal food to survive,' recalls Jilbert.

One night, he had a dream. 'I saw a man clothed in white. He greeted me and said, "How are you?" I said, "I'm fine." He had something in his hand to give me. I didn't know what it was. I woke up – the man had gone. I got up and carried on with my life, stealing food and trying to survive.'

A few days later, Jilbert had the same dream again. He decided to find a 'man of God' at the church nearby to help him explain what it meant.

'I started telling him about the dreams, and he told me "God came to visit you to give you salvation, but you refused."'

Sunday best

Jilbert decided he wanted to come to church, and was particularly interested in joining the choir. He got chatting with some young choir members and they invited him to the next Sunday service.

'I was wearing dirty clothes but I came to the church and was welcomed.'

One of the congregation offered to buy him a new shirt and another got him new trousers. Before he could join the choir, he spent a year being mentored and disciplined. 'Because they knew my behaviour, they wanted to see if I'm really changing or not,' Jilbert explains.

There was a woman in the choir who Jilbert got to know and began to date. They got engaged.

'I didn't have money and didn't know how I would prepare for a wedding as it's so expensive. So I approached the church and shared the problem I had. The church leaders told Jilbert: "We are like a family. We are going to support you. We have hands to help. We have the resources. We are going to support you."'

Standing in the gap

Jilbert was asked to prepare a budget for the wedding and then the church's self-help groups raised money for him. The church has had training from Tearfund partner the Anglican Church Kigali Diocese to help set up and facilitate these savings groups.

'My wedding was very miraculous. The church was like a family,' proclaims Jilbert. 'They were standing in the gap of the family I could have had.'

Life was on the up for Jilbert. Someone from the church gave him a bicycle, which he committed to repaying the cost of within six months. This was what he needed to start a small business – a taxi cooperative.

There are now 71 members (including 18 from his church and 53 from the community) who can take one passenger at a time on the back of their bikes.

'We are really thankful to the church and its small groups because they are always supporting us and training us.

'We have a dream to one day buy a motorcycle,' says Jilbert.

PLEASE PRAY

Father God,

We give you praise for bringing new life and purpose to Jilbert, and for the faithful members of his church. Thank you that you are more than able to turn lives of despair into lives of joy. We ask that you would help other people in Rwanda who don't yet have this hope and opportunity. May our church partners be able to carry on serving you, being your hands and feet in this nation. In Jesus' name, amen.

[Find out about a new way to give regularly with Tearfund, and help us make a World of Difference.](#)

PEOPLE POWER VERSUS PLASTIC POLLUTION

Manufacturing giant Unilever has agreed to halve the amount of new plastics they use by 2025. The announcement follows Tearfund's 2019 Rubbish Campaign, which targeted four major companies, including Unilever, to halve the number of single-use plastic products they sell.

The company, who own such household brands as Surf, Dove, Marmite and Ben & Jerry's, have also promised to collect and process at least as much discarded plastic as they sell, in the same time frame.

'This is a great start and a huge encouragement for everyone that has signed our petition and supported us in their prayers and actions,' says Dr Ruth Valerio, Director of Global Influencing and Advocacy at Tearfund.

'Although it does not go as far as we would like, Unilever's pledge to cut new plastic use by 50 per cent by 2025 is the most ambitious we have seen so far from a major consumer goods company.'

The big four... pledges

Tearfund's Rubbish Campaign targets Unilever, Coca-Cola, PepsiCo and Nestlé. It asks them to make four pledges:

- Report on the number of units of single-use plastic products they sell worldwide in each country by 2020.
- Commit to halve the number of these products by 2025.
- Ensure that one single-use plastic item is collected for every one sold by 2022.

- Work with waste pickers around the world to provide employment with dignity, helping to clean their environments.

Over 34,000 people have signed the petition so far, while a further 7,000 people have also taken Tearfund's Plastic Pledge to give up a single-use plastic item for 40 days.

Plastic waste is an issue that's closely tied in with Tearfund's work to end extreme poverty. Tearfund works with many of the world's poorest people, who because of inadequate waste collection have no choice but to burn or dump any single-use plastic they use. This leads to severe health problems like cholera and cancer. Burning plastic also contributes to climate change by releasing greenhouse gases.

The world wakes up

The environmental impact of plastic waste was brought to the public's attention by Sir David Attenborough's Blue Planet series. Unilever currently produces 610,000 metric tonnes of new plastic, compared to 1.7 million tonnes for Nestlé, 2.2 million tonnes for PepsiCo and 3 million tonnes for Coca-Cola.

'Although this is cause for celebration, there's so much more that needs doing,' says Ruth Valerio. 'We would love to see Coca-Cola, PepsiCo and Nestlé go beyond Unilever's pledge.'

'It shows that companies like these do listen to public opinion and public pressure. With so much discussion about our environment, there's never been a better time to make our voices heard.'

Have you signed the Rubbish Campaign petition or taken the Plastic Pledge yet? It's not too late to get involved.

PLEASE PRAY

- Praise God for this major pledge from Unilever, and for the fact that trans-national companies are beginning to take public concern about plastics seriously.
- Pray that Unilever, along with PepsiCo, Coca-Cola and Nestlé, will be spurred on to make major changes to their working models in the next five years.
- Thank God for the rubbish pickers and recycling hubs that are springing up in the world's poorest nations. Pray for them to spread and grow.

PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

 Please join us in praying for Syria, after Turkish forces entered north-east Syria. Tens of thousands of people have fled the fighting. Please pray for peace, and for protection over the civilians caught up in the violence.

 Tensions are high and there have been outbreaks of violence ahead of the election in Mozambique this week (October 15). Pray for peace and protection for communities, Tearfund staff and partners at this time. And pray for a fair and transparent election.

 Protests and violence across Iraq have led to more than 100 deaths and 6,000 people being injured in the month of October. Pray for the safety of civilians, and that a peaceful solution to the unrest can be found. Pray for Iraq as the country seeks to rebuild after years of conflict.