

ONE VOICE

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

RELEARNING FATHERHOOD

Samir did everything he could to protect his young children when conflict reached their Syrian village. But years of fleeing violence and living as a refugee took a significant toll on him and his family.

In 2011, Samir* was living a happy and simple life with his wife and four young children. But that was the year everything changed. That was the year their village in Syria became a battleground.

The sound of bombs, killings in the streets, and four young children to protect. Fearing for their lives, Samir and his wife fled and left everything behind. They finally found safety at a refugee camp in Jordan.

Years passed and Samir saw little hope for the future. He had no job and no way to provide for his children. Samir felt increasingly frustrated, and it began to impact the whole family. 'I was not a gentle man around my wife and children,' he admits.

Inspired by joy

Things changed when Samir started attending a men's exercise group run by Tearfund's local partner. In each session, the coach would lead a discussion about overcoming personal problems. Samir started to open up and found that his new group of friends encouraged and supported him.

The group helped Samir to understand that even if he cannot provide for his family in the ways he used to, he can still be a good father by caring for his children and spending quality time with them.

Samir reconnected with his family, making them healthy meals with recipes he learned to cook at his men's group. He started offering his children what he can give freely – attention and affection.

Joy has returned to Samir and his household. 'I may not make much money, but I have become a provider of love and empathy for my family,' Samir says.

PLEASE PRAY

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank you for being the perfect example of a father to all of us. We lift up fathers like Samir who may be facing overwhelming challenges and feeling unsure where to turn. We pray that all fathers will find strength and hope in you, whatever they are facing. We also pray for those without an earthly father. Please comfort them and help them know your unconditional love for them.

In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

**Name changed to protect identity*

A NOTE FROM...

'Being a father is a wonderful gift and I love my daughter more than anything. But in hard times, fatherhood is a lot of responsibility to handle. Seeing these men overcoming their challenges has inspired me to overcome my challenges too and become a better father.'

Ramzi Remon, Jordan and Lebanon Team

THE UK GOVERNMENT IS SCRAPPING ITS INTERNATIONAL AID DEPARTMENT – HERE'S WHY THAT MATTERS

Plans to abolish the UK's international aid department were revealed this week. This is a move that could spell disaster for people living in poverty. Here's a breakdown of what's happening, why it matters, and how you can pray about it.

What's going on?

On Tuesday 15 June, Boris Johnson announced that the Department for International Development (DFID) will be merged with the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO). The new department, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, will be set up in early September and will be led by the Foreign Secretary.

What exactly do DFID and the FCO do?

For more than 20 years, DFID has managed the UK's aid budget, which is used to tackle global extreme poverty and provide life-saving assistance following disasters – such as earthquakes and tsunamis, and during public health crises like Ebola and coronavirus. It has a positive reputation globally for delivering value for money and impact with transparency.

The FCO plays a key role in promoting the UK's national interests on a global level. It does this in several ways; by supporting UK citizens and businesses around the world, promoting and investing in opportunities for UK exports, and safeguarding the UK's national security through countering terrorism and reducing conflict.

While both DFID and FCO play international roles, their goals are very different.

Is DFID not a waste of taxpayers' money?

Currently UK Aid represents a very small proportion of our national income – just 7p out of every £10 the nation earns. It is possible to tackle both the need in the UK and around the world.

DFID has played a vital role in transforming communities and saving lives in some of the poorest and hardest to reach places in the world.

UK aid has provided vaccinations to more than 67 million children in the last five years, protecting them against preventable diseases. It has given 11.3 million children access to education, enabling them the chance to build a better life for themselves. It has helped 12 million people gain access to clean energy. And it has also provided life-saving support and assistance to communities devastated by natural disasters – such as the Nepal earthquakes in 2015.

DFID is kept accountable through regular reporting, evaluation, and scrutiny through independent bodies. In an independent assessment by Publish What You Fund, DFID was found to be the most effective, transparent and accountable department for every pound of UK taxpayer money.

What effect will merging the two departments have?

The UK government has a long-standing commitment to spend 0.7 per cent of its national income on international aid. This positions the UK as world leaders in development. As an independent department, DFID can make sure this budget is spent in tackling extreme poverty, report transparently on where this money is spent, and openly evaluate the effectiveness of its work.

This merger risks that UK Aid may be put towards other purposes, such as UK foreign policy, and commercial and political objectives. There is a lack of clarity currently around what new accountability measures – and how transparent they will be – on how UK aid money is spent and reported on.

Globally, this move suggests that we are turning our backs on the world's poorest people. For people struggling to survive extreme poverty, climate change and coronavirus, this is terrible timing.

What has been Tearfund's response?

Tearfund has expressed publicly the deep concerns we have over this planned merger. We have also joined with other leading UK charities in asking the prime minister to protect UK Aid and stop this merger.

As part of a statement released to the press, Tearfund CEO Nigel Harris said the following:

'With its dedicated focus on poverty alleviation, DFID has helped to transform the lives of millions living in extreme poverty. It is vital that future aid spending on behalf of the people of the UK continues to deliver with the same level of transparency, accountability and impact for those living in poverty as DFID has consistently done. Now is not the time for the UK to lower its standards on aid.

'Tearfund remains committed to working with the UK government to help lift people out of economic, environmental and spiritual poverty. It is my heartfelt prayer that we will continue to see the UK Aid budget focused on fighting poverty and providing life-saving assistance to those in desperate need.'

How can I pray for this?

Please will you join us in praying for the merger to be stopped and for the world's poorest people to be protected. Feel free to share this prayer in your church small groups and with your family, friends and colleagues.

PLEASE PRAY

Lord God,

We pray for this planned merger between DFID and the FCO to be stopped. We lift up to you the prime minister, and other leaders who are making this decision, and we pray that you will grant them wisdom. Remind them of your love for the poor.

Lord, we ask that the UK's aid budget will be protected, and will always be used to help people in extreme poverty. We pray that the world's poorest people will not be forgotten.

We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

CLEANING UP AND TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES IN HAITI

Millions of people in Haiti, especially those in the poorest communities, are currently living among huge piles of waste. Their health is suffering in unsafe and unsanitary conditions. But a new project is helping to reverse these negative effects and empower communities.

In Haiti's urban communities, it's common for as many people as possible try to squeeze into limited living spaces. This comes with certain challenges – a particularly unpleasant problem is having to live and work among other people's waste.

But with limited services in place for waste collection and disposal, people are often left with no choice but to let their waste pile up around their homes and businesses, dump it in rivers, or burn it in the streets. None of these options are safe or sustainable.

The problem is literally growing bigger by the day.

Living among large piles of rotting waste is not only unsightly and unpleasant, it's also a serious health hazard. Residential areas become breeding grounds for insects and rodents, and disease spreads easily.

A threat to public health and the environment

The burning of waste on open fires is a common last resort when people have no other options to dispose of their rubbish. This has serious health implications: regularly breathing in the toxic fumes causes respiratory problems, which can be fatal.

But it's not just burning that's the problem. Piles of waste emit methane – a greenhouse gas which is damaging to humans and the environment. In the short-term it can cause vomiting, diarrhoea and headaches. In the long-term it can lead to respiratory and heart problems, as well as contributing towards the climate crisis.

Climate change is already having a noticeable effect in Haiti – extreme weather events such as hurricanes and tropical storms are becoming increasingly common – and communities overrun with solid waste are left significantly more vulnerable to destruction.

When drains and roads are blocked by waste, the area is much more susceptible to flooding and landslides. People are at risk of getting trapped and hurt, and their homes and businesses are often destroyed.

Loving our neighbour means caring for creation

It's the poorest communities that are suffering the most, struggling with health issues on a daily basis and often experiencing the most destruction in the wake of extreme weather events.

Failing to create sustainable systems for managing waste and looking after the environment is having a direct impact on people's health and wellbeing.

If we want to love our neighbour, we have to care for creation too.

Marc Antoine, who leads Tearfund's work in Haiti, sums up the problem: 'In Haiti, the lack of waste management infrastructure, vulnerability to weather-related disasters such as hurricanes and floods, and high rates of unemployment work together to keep communities disempowered.'

Cleaning up and empowering communities

To address this complex problem, Tearfund has partnered with a local business to pilot a new waste management project in the urban area of Carrefour.

The project trains community members to care for creation and how to sort and manage their waste without resorting to dumping it in rivers or burning it in the streets.

Tearfund's local partner collects waste from homes in the community on a weekly basis. This is providing jobs for young people who were previously unemployed, giving them new opportunities and a way to earn income to support their families.

Rather than adding the waste to landfill, the business is doing something innovative and exciting. They transform plastic waste into paving tiles and organic waste into compost.

Positive impact and hope for the future

In the first year of the project, over 23 tonnes of waste from around 45 families have been collected and transformed.

'The project curbs the amount of waste going into our rivers and oceans, decreases the health effects of open burning of waste, and restores our environment,' says Marc.

Dina, a young nurse whose household has been enrolled in the waste collection service says: 'They are doing a great job... it is for our good in the community. I hope they expand the service.' The project is playing an important role in protecting the community's health and the environment.

And this is just the beginning – after the success of the pilot project, Tearfund is looking forward to launching a three-year Solid Waste Management project. This will provide waste management education and waste collection service to up to 3,000 households in Haiti.

PLEASE PRAY

- Thank God for lives transformed through the positive impact of the project so far. Pray that it will be successfully scaled up to help even more people escape the negative effects of poor waste management.
- Lift up Tearfund's partners and all those working on the waste management project in Haiti, as they seek to continue to provide waste collection services during the coronavirus pandemic. Pray for their protection and safety as they serve others.
- Pray that more organisations across Haiti, including the government, will prioritise caring for creation and communities. Pray that they will work together and that sustainable solutions for waste management will be created and implemented.

PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

 Latin America is now referred to as the new epicentre of the coronavirus pandemic. The virus has spread to every country in the region. Pray for protection over communities – especially those in poverty who are already facing hunger and other hardships due to the lockdowns imposed. Pray for our teams as they share preventative resources with local leaders and serve those in need. And please continue to pray for an end to the pandemic.

 Zimbabwe is recovering from the worst drought it's seen in years. Reserves of water are very low in some urban areas, forcing families to collect water from unsafe sources. With limited clean water for handwashing, it increases the chance of coronavirus spreading among vulnerable communities. Pray protection for people from illness and disease, and for increased rainfall where there is need.

 Saturday 20 June is World Refugee Day. Almost 80 million people around the world are currently living as refugees. They have fled their homes because of conflict, persecution or extreme poverty and cannot safely return. Ask God to bring comfort, hope, peace and restoration to their lives, and their lands.