

ONE VOICE

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

CAUSE FOR THANKS: ONE YEAR ON FROM THE INDONESIA TSUNAMI

It's a year this September since Indonesia was struck by the first of two tsunamis in the space of just four months. More than 2,000 people were killed, and 200,000 more lost their homes. Our response was immediate, and we are still working alongside affected communities to help them recover and rebuild. We've helped more than 21,600 people so far, including Mrs Sinta from Sulawesi island.

Mrs Sinta lost her home and farm when the tsunami struck Sulawesi, but feels fortunate to have escaped with her life. She remembers how the ground seemed to turn to liquid. She fled to a camp following the disaster, along with thousands of others.

During what has been a traumatic time, Mrs Sinta is thankful for many things. She says God has been at work even in the midst of the suffering. 'People did not care as much for each other before, as they do now,' she says.

Hope for the future

Mrs Sinta is also deeply thankful for the help she's received through Tearfund's emergency response. She was given food to help her through the hardest times, and was also given a cash grant to help her get back on her feet. She started a small business, which she hopes to expand in the future.

'I pray God will continue to bless and give good health to those supporting this work, and to [Tearfund's partner] staff,' she says.

As well as distributing emergency food supplies and cash grants, our partners have also enabled children to return to school, helped clear debris and restore infrastructure such as roads, and supported people to find new ways to earn a living. Please keep this work and the people of Indonesia in your prayers.

PLEASE PRAY

- Pray for Mrs Sinta and all those still recovering from last year's tsunamis in Indonesia. Pray that God will strengthen and encourage them.
- Praise God that our teams and partners have been able to reach more than 20,000 people so far affected by this disaster, and pray this work will benefit many more.
- The current phase of the response is focusing on helping people to rebuild lost homes and livelihoods. We are also training communities in how to best prepare for natural disasters. Pray that God will be with those leading this important work.

A NOTE FROM...

'Thank you for joining me in praising God that many benefits have been received by communities here through this response to the tsunamis. I am personally thankful for this chance to be the Lord's witness for his wonderful work. Please keep Indonesia in your prayers!'

Theresa Sinaga, from Tearfund partner YFH Relief

SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW: MONA'S STORY

A young girl with a special pair of shoes. Collapsing houses. A journey to follow a dream... Courage. Heart. Wisdom. The deep belief that there's no place like home... Sound familiar? A well-loved fiction? No. This story is true.

Why would a girl come to tea without shoes?

Mona was four. At four, you already start to understand the rules. And Mona understood that, in Indonesia, when you visit someone's house, you wear shoes. So why did this girl, visiting Mona's home, not? It didn't seem right.

She asked her mum.

'Her parents probably can't afford them,' came the answer.

No. It didn't seem right to Mona at all.

The following Sunday, they were getting ready for church. 'Where are your new shoes?', Mona's mum asked. 'I don't have them any more,' said little Mona. 'I gave them to the girl.'

Sure enough, the next time the girl came to visit, there on her feet were the lovely new shoes Mona's mum had bought for her.

The dreams that you dare to dream...

But shoes weren't enough to give away for Mona. As she grew up, she and her cousins shared their hopes for the future with each other. They dreamed of financial stability and travel – perfectly wonderful, respectable dreams – but Mona dreamt of building houses for those who didn't have them.

God had placed a calling on her heart. A step up from footwear for the barefoot, she envisioned homes for the homeless. How she was going to manage it, though, she didn't really know.

Fast forward to 2004. The devastating Boxing Day Tsunami. Mona ended up involved in the response. 'Look,' her cousins pointed out. 'You've achieved your goal.' It hadn't even occurred to Mona, but she had. The project she worked for had built houses for people who lost theirs in the disaster. She may not have physically dug the foundations, but she had played an integral part in building them. Without even realising it, she had done what God had placed on her heart to do.

'Since I was small,' she says 'I learnt that God has given his only Son to help the world, including me, so I feel like it is one of my obligations to always help others.'

Now, at 61, Mona is managing the Sulawesi earthquake response in Indonesia for an organisation Tearfund supports called Yayasan Bumi Tangguh. In fact, the project she's working on will build no fewer than 270 houses – 48 of which will be funded by Tearfund – for people who lost their homes in the earthquake.

Making skies blue

Mona's story is a beautiful picture of the heart and compassion of so many of our partner staff. Everything we do relies on people like Mona who are willing to be the hands and feet of Jesus. They are helping people to stand up and build brighter futures, even in the aftermath of the most terrible disasters.

'I feel that I am blessed by God,' she says, 'so I'd like others to have God's blessings too.'

Shoes. Houses. Hope. Mona is sharing these things. Her slippers are possibly not ruby, and perhaps it's not an emerald city she's approaching... but how sweet the feet of those who carry the good news of a compassionate Father. How precious the kingdom of a God who is not a charlatan wizard, but the Most High. A kingdom brought straight to earth in acts of such love as these.

PLEASE PRAY

- Thank God for the servant hearts of people like Mona – for their willingness to respond to his call. Pray that they will be blessed in their work.
- Pray for the ongoing response in Indonesia – that those who have lost homes and livelihoods will have hope and provision.
- Praise God for his great compassion. Pray that he will continue to teach us to love and serve one another in the different ways he gives to each of us.

ENOUGH RUBBISH – MALAWI BANS PLASTIC BAGS

Plastic bags have been banned in Malawi, despite a long legal battle.

The ban was first imposed in 2015, but some plastic manufacturers sought an injunction claiming it was an 'infringement of business rights'.

Judges in the nation's highest court have now overturned the challenge. It's a victory Tearfund's Country Director for Malawi, Vincent Moyo, says couldn't have come sooner:

'Plastic bags are a major menace in Malawi. Lately we have seen goats, cows, and other livestock dying after eating the thin plastic bags which are poorly disposed of.'

'Local farmers and those who fish now have hope they can protect their animals, fish and the environment itself.'

Good company

Malawi joins several African countries that have passed single-use plastic bans or who operate them including Tanzania, Kenya and Rwanda.

According to the Lilongwe Wildlife Trust, Malawi produces 75,000 tons of plastic each year, of which 80% cannot be recycled. Much of it ends up in rivers and lakes, killing fish and hampering the fishing industry.

Vincent recently visited the Dowa district and heard firsthand accounts of the problem of plastic waste: 'Local partner Ministry of Hope introduced me to Mr Chitekwele, who complained of losing four of his ten goats because they had eaten grass contaminated with thin plastics.'

Advocates for change

Tearfund in Malawi is part of the Malawi Creation Care Network. 'Together we are a voice that will influence policies that are environmentally friendly and lessen the long-term effects of climate change,' says Vincent.

Could you support Tearfund's Rubbish Campaign calling on multinational companies to take responsibility for their plastic waste in poorer countries? Sign up at www.tearfund.org/action

PLEASE PRAY

- Thank God that the legal challenge to halt the ban of plastic bags in Malawi was rejected.
- Pray for the farmers and those in the fishing industry whose livelihoods have been affected by plastic pollution. May they begin to recover their businesses and be successful.
- Thank God for the terrific response we've had so far to our Rubbish Campaign, and pray that it continues to have a big impact on multinational companies.

PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

-  A long rainy season has resulted in more mosquitoes than usual in countries including Burundi and the Central African Republic, leading to many new cases of malaria across communities, as well as among Tearfund's staff and partners. Pray for recovery for all those affected, and that crucial work with people living in poverty won't be set back.
-  In Zimbabwe, more and more people are protesting over a worsening lack of food, health and other essential services. Clashes between protesters and police are increasingly violent. Please pray for those suffering, and for a breakthrough of God's peace and stability.
-  Please continue to pray for the people of Yemen, where millions are still affected by conflict, and for Tearfund's staff and others responding to this crisis. Pray especially for communities affected by the recent floods in the country.