

# ONE VOICE

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

## **A STORMY START TO LOCKDOWN IN LIBERIA**

**Lockdown was hard for Sarah and her family. Then a deadly storm hit, damaging their house beyond repair. It made a difficult situation even worse.**

Sarah\* lives in Liberia. Her husband passed away in 2003, so she brings up her seven children by herself as well working at the market as a trader to provide for them. The lockdown meant the end of her business. Sarah was forced to dip into the small savings she had to pay for food so the family could eat. But this meant when the storm hit, there was no money to rebuild her house.

'After this storm I am completely lost – I have lost everything, food, the money I had here at home and in my business,' says Sarah. 'I have come back to nothing as you see.'

### **Quick response**

While lockdowns are important to limit the spread of the virus, they can make life much more difficult for vulnerable members of the community.

Our team in Liberia has been going door to door to make sure these households are aware of how they can keep safe and limit the spread. 'I understand better the risks that are outside now,' says Sarah, after she was visited by the Tearfund team.

We're also delivering food parcels in the community. It's a lifeline for people like Sarah who can no longer work to pay for food for her family.

'Your coming is a real relief for me and my family... I won't use the little remaining money on food again but on rebuilding my house, since my children and I will have food to eat as the result of the project,' says Sarah. 'Thanks to you and those who sent you to us today.'

### **PLEASE PRAY**

- Pray that Sarah's home will be rebuilt stronger and that construction will finish soon. Pray that it will be a comforting and safe space for the whole family to enjoy. And pray that when lockdown ends, Sarah will be able to return to work and that her business will thrive.
- Praise God that our team in Liberia were able to respond quickly to help those in need.
- Pray that vulnerable and marginalised people around the world will not be left out of coronavirus planning. Pray that their questions and voices will be heard – especially by those in places of authority – and that they will be prioritised in any government response.

*\*Name changed to protect identity*

## **A NOTE FROM...**

'Sarah's story demonstrates a much ignored part of lockdowns: the negative effects they are having in developing countries. High levels of unemployment in these countries force a lot of people – like Sarah – to work in the informal job sector, meaning there is no support when lockdown hits. I am glad that we have been able to help vulnerable people with the provision of food and other support.'

**Noorie Dudley-Sam, Tearfund Country Director for Liberia**

## **THE WORST THING TO HAPPEN IN THE WORLD'S WORST HUMANITARIAN CRISIS**

**Yemen was one of the last countries worldwide to declare a confirmed case of Covid-19 (10 April). In a nation facing the world's worst humanitarian crisis our partner organisation knew it had to act quickly to prevent the spread of the virus.**

At the time of writing, Yemen now has 233 confirmed cases and 44 deaths. As is the case in many countries the actual figures are likely to be higher because of challenges in carrying out coronavirus tests, particularly in a conflict zone.

If coronavirus takes a stronger grip in Yemen it will be devastating as many hospitals and health facilities have been destroyed in the fighting.

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.

### **On the move**

Our partner staff have been giving out hygiene kits and literature promoting good practices for preventing the spread of the virus. More than 4,000 brochures and 1,000 posters have been produced so far. And they are also sharing prevention messages via text messages.

Despite a lockdown, our partner has been granted special permission by the authorities to travel between cities, meaning it can reach more people.

The life-saving work our partner has been doing before the coronavirus crisis continues, including food distributions and cash-for-work projects. But there are added challenges to face. Physical distancing, increased handwashing and discouraging crowds to gather is now the 'new normal' here.

'Yemen is in the midst of a civil war,' says Karen Soerensen, Tearfund Country Director for Yemen. 'The economy is struggling; food prices are rising and the health service is near breaking point. There have even been deadly floods across southern Yemen too.'

'Please pray that the people of Yemen can be spared any more suffering.'

## PLEASE PRAY

- Lift up the people of Yemen who have faced such challenges in recent years, pray for them to know hope and peace again very soon.
- Pray for our partner in Yemen as they continue to deliver life-saving aid to those in great need.
- Pray that a large scale outbreak doesn't occur and place great strain on the already-stretched health services.

## RESPECT TO RUTH

**When we first met Ruth in a poor community in Nigeria, she spoke of lying awake at night worrying about how she would provide food for her children. Or how she would pay for their education. She did back-breaking manual work but still couldn't seem to make enough money.**

Then Ruth started to notice some people in her village doing things slightly differently. It started with roofs. People were using a new method of roofing to keep their homes dry and their possessions from rotting in the rainy season.

This was the result of things they were learning and sharing in a self-help group run by one of our church partners. Ruth joined up and things began to change...

Self-help groups empower people, like Ruth, to take their own brave steps out of poverty and regain their self-respect. Really though, they are about community-help, church-help, family-help and Christ-the-saviour-help.

Life hasn't suddenly lost all challenges for Ruth – this year her daughter had to be hospitalised three times – but things have got significantly better.

### **Life saving work...**

By saving money, and using the practical information and encouragement of the group members alongside the Bible studies, Ruth and her husband have managed to earn more income by growing and selling potatoes.

This has enabled them to pay for their daughter's medical bills and some necessities for the family. Ruth has also bought fertiliser to increase their crops and has bought a pig to rear.

Even in the difficult months where before they had often experienced hunger gaps – times when food ran out before the next harvest – this year the family had enough to eat.

'I am also thankful to those who stood by me,' says Ruth of all of the people whose prayers and support have made this possible – people like you.

## PLEASE PRAY

- Give thanks for the continued progress in Ruth's life and that her husband has started to help her farm and their relationship has improved.
- Pray for Ruth's daughter to enjoy better health and that she will no longer need hospital treatment.
- Pray for an end to the spread of coronavirus in Nigeria.

## PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

-  Plagues of locusts are becoming an increasing threat to vulnerable communities. In East Africa, Pakistan and now India, giant swarms are destroying crops – leaving farmers without vital income to feed their families. This is likely to raise food prices and push even more people into poverty. Pray for swift solutions to this crisis, and provision for those in need.
-  Thank you for your prayers for Burundi over the election season. Praise God that the election took place largely without violence. And thank God that the faith leaders Tearfund worked with pre-election want us to host another workshop so they can learn more about how they can continue to promote peace in their communities.
-  As we consider what the future might look like after the coronavirus pandemic, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to rebuild in a fair, sustainable way. Pray that world leaders respond to this crisis and rebuild in a way that prioritises the poorest people, tackles the climate emergency and builds a better world for everyone.