

ONE VOICE

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

INDONESIA: BUILDING BACK STRONGER

Six months ago a massive earthquake and tsunami hit Indonesia. Over 4,000 people died and whole communities were forced from their homes.

Tearfund's Humanitarian Support Officer, Serena Suen, headed to the island of Sulawesi. She saw how the money raised by Tearfund supporters is helping islanders rebuild their lives.

'It was a devastating sight when I first arrived in Sulawesi. The island had effectively been hit by three disasters.

'First there was the earthquake, then a major tsunami. Finally there was liquefaction: the ground no longer supports buildings or people.

'We visited a community in Petobo and there wasn't a house left standing because of liquefaction. People who weren't able to run away in time were sucked into the ground. I could see wooden crosses marking their locations.

Rebuilding

'In spite of the damage to infrastructure, Tearfund, with our partners, has been able to do a great deal.

'Along with emergency food and fresh water, we have provided communal latrines and bathing units, along with special kits to help families put together their own temporary shelters.

'After the emergency phase, I'm glad to say we are moving onto the longer-term work of rebuilding.

'We are helping people to find new livelihoods, which will keep them more secure. And we are offering training in Disaster Risk Reduction: simple ways that prepare communities better for future disasters.

'This isn't just about rebuilding what has been destroyed, it's all about helping the people of Sulawesi build back stronger – the buildings and the people!'

PLEASE PRAY

- Pray for Indonesia's upcoming elections in April. Ask for a peaceful process and for compassionate leaders to be voted in.
- Lift up people who are eager to rebuild their lives, and pray for peace and hope for those who have been traumatised.
- Pray for our partner organisations and churches as they work to help communities rebuild.

A NOTE FROM...

'As we approach the end of the emergency relief phase of Tearfund's response, we thank God that our partners have been able to meet the essential needs of so many affected communities. Please continue to pray for effective co-ordination across responding agencies and that people can continue to rebuild their lives and communities.' **Vicky Stocks, Asia Team**

SAVING LIVES AND PREVENTING FURTHER TRAGEDY AFTER CYCLONE IDAI

On 15 March Cyclone Idai made landfall in Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malawi. Thought to be the worst tropical cyclone on record in southern Africa, it left behind a trail of destruction.

At least 750 people were killed, and hundreds of thousands have been left homeless. A total of 3 million people were affected.

Malawian farmer McClean lost his home and crops after flooding caused by the cyclone. His family of seven woke to a living nightmare: 'It was night time when we saw water entering our house,' he told a Tearfund partner.

'We woke up and tried climbing on top of the house, but it then collapsed. I was very scared as we did not know what to do. We climbed a mango tree waiting for the rescue team which came with canoes taking us to safety, leaving everything behind.'

Chikwawa district in southern Malawi is one of the most prone districts to hazards such as floods and strong winds. Since the cyclone, close to 8,000 families have been forced from their homes, including McClean's.

Immediate response

The full scale of the disaster is still unfolding as search and rescue operations continue and more heavy rain is predicted. Tearfund and our church partners responded immediately and are continuing to help those whose lives were devastated.

Together with the Disasters Emergency Committee, we have launched an appeal. We're delivering emergency shelter kits, food such as pulses and maize flour, water purification tablets and providing urgent health assistance. As the cyclone has destroyed many crops, we are distributing seeds to help with the expected food shortages.

The main focus of the relief effort is to save lives, but the effect of this disaster will be felt for a long time. With a lack of clean, accessible water there is now a high risk of cholera and malaria spreading.

PLEASE PRAY

Father God,

We lift up to you the people of Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malawi as they face up to the destruction left by Cyclone Idai. Please bring healing and comfort to those who've lost loved ones, homes and livelihoods. Help those involved in the relief efforts to be able to bring provisions and support where it is needed most. And please help these nations in the long-term to restore what was lost and to flourish once again.

In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen.

If you feel led, please give to our Cyclone Idai Appeal at www.tearfund.org/cyclone, and please continue to join us in prayer for the people of Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malawi.

A MOTHER'S LOVE

Mother's Day can be hard for Tearfund Go volunteer Emma*, who lost her mother when she was 20. However, while she was on her placement in Bangladesh, she rediscovered the joy of feeling a mother's love...

'I still miss my mother incredibly. She would blast R.E.M, Alison Moyet and Depeche Mode at full volume throughout the house – my love for 80's music is definitely down to her!

'She rocked at being herself: always willing to be silly, totally unashamed. I feel so blessed to have had her as my mum. After she died, I never thought anything could come close to the love I received from her.

A new home

'Last year, something changed. In a small town in southern Bangladesh, I met Saba*. After bumping along dusty roads lined with bright green rice fields for several hours, we arrived in the small community that would be our home.

'Ushered into a simple, airy building, our team were introduced to the families we would be living with. Saba* introduced herself to me as "ma", and told me I was now her daughter. Instantly I felt unconditionally loved and welcomed into her family home.

'Over the next 12 weeks I was amazed by Saba's authenticity. I learnt that she had moved to the community with her daughter to escape an abusive and controlling marriage. Single motherhood carries a huge stigma in Bangladesh, and Saba explained to me how she had struggled to make friends in her new community.

'Despite the exclusion from those around her, she taught me to love people without judgement, leaning on God every day. Being a part of her family was never about impressing anyone, but about being yourself and being accepted no matter what.

Lost in translation

'I think back to one particular evening, as we sat together at the dinner table. I had already eaten far more than I could handle and, after being served what felt like my hundredth plate of food, I asked her how to say "I am full" in Bengali.

'She replied with a puzzled look on her face. I repeated the phrase back to her and she burst into uncontrollable laughter. Saba had misunderstood my question, thinking I had asked her how to say "I am a fool". We were laughing about it for days afterwards.

'Despite the language barrier, we had so many special moments and at times we were able to understand each other without any words. We shared what mattered to us and our hopes and dreams for the future.

'Saba told me about the joy she found in supporting vulnerable children and their families in her community, through working at the local school. As part of the placement, our team visited the school and I saw at first hand her desire to help improve the lives of those around her.

New beginnings

'Living with Saba was a beautiful and unique experience for me. She was an amazing mother. Her gentleness, courage, humility and honesty made a huge impact on my life.

'On returning to the UK I resigned from my office job, and I am now a support worker with a local housing association. Seeing her love in action has helped me to realise and pursue my own passion to care for the most vulnerable.'

PLEASE PRAY

Dear God,

Thank you for the friends and strangers you bring into our lives. For men and women who are able to remind us of unconditional love and acceptance. We ask that we will be able to give that love and acceptance ourselves, imitating the love and hospitality you modelled for us in Jesus.

Amen.

Have your own life-changing encounter. Find out more at www.tearfund.org/go

**Names changed to protect identities.*

PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

 Pray for communities in central Mali, where conflict between different groups and communities has been escalating. Last weekend alone, more than 134 people were killed. Pray for peace, and wisdom for those working towards it.

 Praise God that our work among women affected by violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo is bearing fruit. In one location, our staff and partner HEAL have seen levels of violence drop by nearly 60 per cent in the last two years. Please continue to pray for this much-needed work.

 The World Bank is due to announce its new president any day now. We've been campaigning for the bank to keep its promises on climate change, and especially to invest more in local, renewable energy. Please pray for the new president, asking God to equip them with fairness, wisdom and compassion.