

# ONE VOICE

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

## **IT WILL TAKE US ALL**

**In the last 50 years, we've seen extreme poverty halved, with countless lives transformed. And we've seen that it takes the pray-ers. It also takes the givers and the campaigners. It takes the go-ers, the speakers and the dreamers. And it definitely takes the believers. So today, let's celebrate the power of all of us...**

### **It takes the pray-ers**

Prayer binds us together as one global family, united in our Father God. It also puts him right at the centre of what we do and how we do it. Janet and John have been praying for us since our early days. 'We started praying for and donating to Tearfund in the 70s, when we were teenagers!' says Janet. 'We are so glad to know our support is making a difference and feel privileged to be a part of the Tearfund family.'

### **And the givers**

When six-year old Beth heard about a girl her own age from Chad named Yasmin, she decided to do something to help. Changes to the climate in Chad had left the whole of Yasmin's family dangerously short of food, and she was often too weak to play. 'I know I'm really lucky with all I've got, and I feel I really need to help them,' says Beth. She did a sponsored run, and raised more than £1,500, plus a whole load of awareness to support the work of Tearfund's partners.

### **To enable our partners**

Our partners are powered by the prayers of people like Janet and John and the donations of people like Beth. is from Tearfund partner Action Entraide in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), bringing opportunity and restoration to people like Birungi, who you may have heard about through our current 50th year campaign. 'Truly speaking, I don't know how I can thank the supporters of Tearfund,' says Kalongo. 'You have seen with your eyes someone [Birungi] who had no opportunities since childhood, now able to run a business, earn money and help others. Without Tearfund supporters, this miracle could not happen. So I just say thank you. May God bless you.'

### **To change lives**

Through sewing skills learnt at the training centre run by Action Entraide, together with the love and respect she experienced there, Birungi has been able to turn her life around. She

has gained a sustainable livelihood, independence and the power to make her own choices. Her self-worth and her identity in God have been restored, and her hope renewed. It took the pray-ers, the givers, the do-ers, and, in the end, it took Birungi herself.

**We won't stop until poverty stops, and we are closer than ever to ending it. But it will take us all. Please continue to pray.**

*Father God,*

*Thank you for giving us your fatherly love, your guiding spirit, and your son – the gift of life. And thank you for giving us one another, to be one global family. Show us how to use what we have to bless one another, and to join you in your mission to restore every person to fullness of life in you. It will take us all, but we can do nothing without you.*

*In Jesus' name we pray, amen.*

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

'Thank you so much for joining us on this journey. When the people of God unite behind a common cause, amazing things happen. With your prayerful support, we know that an end to extreme poverty is possible.'

**Hannah Wiseman, Global Fundraising Team**

## **FIFTY YEARS, FIFTY COUNTRIES: EGYPT**

*To mark 50 years of Tearfund, we're sharing about 50 countries where we've worked, celebrating God's provision and power to transform, and praying for each of these nations. This week we're in Egypt.*

#### **At a glance:**

- 104 million people live in Egypt
- 53 per cent of people live below the international poverty line of \$1.90 a day
- 90 per cent of the nation's unemployed are young people
- 1.5 million refugees currently live in Egypt

**Egypt is classed as a middle-income country. However, there are still high levels of poverty, made worse by high unemployment rates and a growing population.**

The arrival of large numbers of refugees from neighbouring countries, especially Syria, and the blight of corruption and violence contribute to making Egypt both politically and economically fragile.

Tearfund has operated in Egypt since 1994, working through our local partners to support communities in rural areas, slums and poor urban areas across the country. The work includes improving access to clean water, providing vocational skills and small loans to start income-generating activities.

**‘Even my family don’t know I’m HIV positive.’**

Another challenge is the huge stigma around HIV and AIDS in Egypt. Tearfund recognises the need marginalised members of society, like people living with HIV, have for improved access to basic services.

Mostafa\* had spent years injecting drugs on the streets of Cairo and was trying to kick his drug habit when he discovered the devastating news that he had contracted HIV. Fortunately the rehabilitation centre he was attending, run by Tearfund partner Freedom, has worked with addicts and HIV positive men and women for many years, and the staff were there for him.

‘Thank God that I came here, because the Freedom programme is the only place that can help with these kinds of cases. I was afraid and I had so many questions. My shape was different – I was much thinner.’

He was provided with basic healthcare, information and motivational counselling. He also began to receive antiretroviral drugs to treat the HIV. When Mostafa had to go to prison for six months, members of the Freedom team visited him regularly, ensuring he had access to all the medication he needed to stay healthy.

**Facing the darkness**

‘The Freedom project prepared me to face my personal problems, so that I could stop using drugs,’ says Mostafa. He has been off drugs for ten years now and works for Freedom as a Rehabilitation Provider, helping others in similar situations.

Many struggle to tell their friends and family that they are living with HIV – the stigma is often too great. However, Freedom are working to change this.

Former and current drug users are being trained to advocate against discrimination. They are working with church leaders, legislators and media leaders to help dispel the stigma and speak out against discriminatory laws, policies and practices in Egypt.

In the meantime, Mostafa has found what he was longing for: he is now married. His wife doesn’t have HIV, but accepts Mostafa.

‘I consider myself a very happy person,’ he says. ‘I believe that I’ll be a father soon, that I will have many sons and daughters. I’ve learned that I can be myself and that I can contribute something positive to society. This makes me proud!’

**PLEASE PRAY:**

- Pray for the work of Freedom, that they can help more men and women like Mostafa make a new start with their lives. Also ask that their example and advocacy work will change attitudes to those with HIV in Egypt.
- Pray for the ongoing challenges faced by Egypt; pray for the authorities as they seek solutions and pray for peace and restoration in Jesus' name.
- Lift up the local church, that it would be empowered and equipped to help local communities find solutions to their problems.

*\* Name changed to protect identity*

## **BEFORE THE MONSOON – PREPARING FOR THE WORST IN COX’S BAZAR**

**In August 2017 violence in the Rakhine state of Myanmar instigated a mass exodus of the Rohingya people.**

They came over the border to Bangladesh and set up whatever shelter they could in places like Cox’s Bazar. They are mostly women and children, as many men and older boys lost their lives in the fighting.

Tearfund’s Chris McDonald visited the Kutapalong site at Cox’s Bazar in March. Our Online Film and News Editor, Andrew Horton, recently sat down with him and asked what he saw:

It's massive. Two thirds of a million people have come across the border, and most of those are in one enormous camp. You look out over the camp and you've got little shelter after little shelter. They're really close together on small hillocks in soft sandy soils. It's very cramped – an enormous mass of humanity, if you like. This used to be a forest, but around five to ten square kilometres of it has now gone.

### **How did they manage to set up any sort of shelter for themselves?**

As they fled they didn't have a lot of stuff. They've since been given bamboo and tarpaulin sheets to make their own shelters. They've also been given materials like mats, blankets, cooking pots, stoves, and they're being fed. There are weekly distributions of rice and lentils to make daal, which is what the people usually eat. There are also medical clinics which have been set up.

### **In this environment disease must spread quite rapidly?**

Yes. There was the beginnings of an outbreak of diphtheria recently, but because of the international response it was very quickly contained and hasn't escalated any further. There are still big risks but at the moment the humanitarian system has coped quite well. There's a lot more we can do though. Generally speaking, people are surviving but they're not flourishing.

### **How have Tearfund and our partners responded to this crisis?**

We were one of the first international NGOs to be able to assist, through our partners COAST Trust and CCDB. At first it was as simple as providing hot food for people who in most cases hadn't eaten for a long time. Now they've been able to install latrines for people, a water supply and also help with hygiene messaging, to prevent the spread of disease.

They're also creating safe spaces for people to recover from the trauma of fleeing across the border. Many say they've been physically and sexually abused and they're arriving in a foreign country, not really sure what's going to happen to them next.

### **How much of a threat are the monsoons?**

Well, even before the monsoon, we're now entering cyclone season. Cox's Bazar hasn't seen one for two or three years, but it does get hit every now and again. So, that's the first threat – the first hazard if you like.

But the monsoon is the one we know is definitely going to happen. Every year, they get the big monsoon rains. It starts to build in May and then in June and July it really hits. It's nothing like we see in the UK!

There's a big potential for flooding. Some of the areas where people are living will become streams of water. We're aware of around 100,000-150,000 people who will need to be moved before the monsoon. There are plans to allocate additional land to try and move them to a safer place.

Then there's the threat of landslides. People are living on very sandy soils, and because of the deforestation there's nothing holding the soil together anymore. When the rains come, you can imagine if your little hut is built on top of a hill, very quickly the sandy soil can be washed away and your shelter with it.

**What's the likelihood of this being an even greater crisis for the Rohingya people than it already is?**

The Monsoon's going to hit. It's coming. We're not going to stop it. So the focus is on working to prepare for it. There are some people that might have some physical or mental impairments, or they're elderly, or children. So it's thinking about the whole community and not just the ones who can easily run and get away, and trying to make sure that they're also safe.

But as well as working on preparing for the monsoon and possible cyclone, the other real area of threat is disease. We know we're in a cholera endemic area. We know we're in a diphtheria endemic area. And there's a whole host of other potential things, which might come.

**Can you give me a picture of what people were feeling about all this when you met them?**

I think people are just relieved to be out of the situation that they had before. They're not really thinking very far ahead into what's going to happen next. Even if it rains, they say 'what's water going to do to us compared to what we faced at home?'

So despite threats of monsoons and landslides they're not keen to go home now?

No, that's not going to move them. That's just the weather... compared to what they've faced already.

**What's being done to alert people of these threats and what's being done to mitigate the effects?**

There's a plan – and our partners are a part of it. It's called the Shelter and Non-food Item Sector Coordination. What they're trying to do is to map where the risks are most likely to be felt by people. We know where flood risk areas are, but it's harder to know where the landslides will be. But where slopes are 35 degrees or greater, there's a likelihood of landslides.

The other major thing is people's own shelters. Our partners are trying to give people more materials to make their structures more substantial. Some of that involves distributing thicker

and stronger bamboos. Some of it is more rope and ways to connect and secure the ropes into the ground. Other areas include improving drainage by trying to put in some brick or cemented drainage tunnels.

### **How can Tearfund supporters respond to this?**

I think the Rohingya people are crying out for hope. It can't just be this. There must be more.

Pray that we are able to get good processes in place when the monsoons and a potential cyclone come. People are going to lose shelters in the monsoons, but if they can lose them in such a way that they don't physically get hurt themselves, and we're able to help them rebuild afterwards, I think it's going to be the key.

Pray for our partners and for Tearfund staff. The coordination of all of this is hugely complex, with the UN structure, the NGO structures, the government structures. Pray for good communication between them.

## **PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD**

✓ Violence has broken out between UN forces and armed groups in the Central African Republic. Please pray for an end to the conflict that has blighted the country for many years. Pray for God's protection over civilians and for Tearfund staff and partners in the area.

✓ On Thursday, Penny Mordaunt, the UK's International Development Secretary, made a speech in which she defended UK aid. Please pray that the government continues its spending commitments on aid, and that this money will go towards helping people in the greatest need.

✓ Tearfund will be featured in Songs of Praise on BBC 1 this Sunday (15 April) at 4.10pm. Praise God for this wonderful opportunity and please pray that people will be encouraged to reach out to those living in poverty in whatever way they can.