

ONE VOICE

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

HUNGER STOLE... YOU GAVE

Last year, in our *Hunger Steals* campaign, we shared the stories of two amazing women from Malawi. Polly and Sylvia live just 70km from each other, but their lives were very different.

Sylvia endured a daily struggle to provide for her four children and elderly mother – her husband abandoned the family. ‘All my life I have struggled to feed my children,’ said Sylvia. ‘I am desperate for change.’

In contrast, Polly – farming the same soil in the same weather conditions – was harvesting enough to feed her husband, three children and disabled grandmother, with two bags left over to sell.

The difference was the training and support she received from Tearfund partner Assemblies of God Care (AG Care). They offered Polly and her community expert advice about how to farm abundantly even in drought conditions – an innovative technique known as Foundations for Farming.

Thanks to Tearfund supporters like you, AG Care set to work in Sylvia’s community last year. She joined the church-based self-help group and started using the new farming techniques. Her first harvest with Foundations for Farming provided enough food to feed her whole family for a year.

Sylvia’s abundance

Despite drought conditions last year, Sylvia has cultivated 1.5 acres of maize and another acre of groundnuts. She is expecting to harvest three times more than she did the previous year. Alongside this, she has branched out into poultry farming, with 15 chickens.

‘I would like to thank AG Care for teaching me new farming skills and knowledge,’ says Sylvia. ‘My life has changed so much. Thanks to using organic fertiliser, I have enough maize to feed my family. This year I plan to sell my harvest of groundnuts and build a better house – just like Polly.’

Thanks to the many good harvests she has enjoyed over the last three years, along with income from her pig-rearing business, Polly has now built two brick houses. One she lives in with her family, the other she is using as a nursery school for local children. Polly's kindergarten welcomes 12 pupils, and is a vital service for local children, many of whom cannot read or write.

Hunger-free

This year Malawi is expected to have a reasonable harvest, but the impacts of prolonged dry spells and pest infestations are likely to lead to a lower than average yield. So, please keep praying for timely rain so that families like Polly's and Sylvia's produce enough food to last the year.

Your prayerful support has enabled thousands of families like Sylvia's to secure a hunger-free future. All around the world, local churches are leading their communities out of lives devastated by hunger and into lives filled with dignity, opportunity and strength. Thank you for joining us.

PRAYER FOCUS:

- Thank God that thousands of people like Polly and Sylvia have been freed from hunger. Pray that they will continue to flourish.
- Please pray for an end to the droughts that have been affecting Malawi. Pray for the right amount of rain at the right time so that families can enjoy an abundant harvest.
- One in seven people around the world still go to bed hungry every night. Ask God to continue raising up local churches who are empowered and equipped to lead their communities out of hunger.

A NOTE FROM...

'It's so encouraging to see the amazing progress that Sylvia has made. Prayer is powerful, and we know that with your continued support we can help free many more lives from hunger.' **Kristie Winsen, Brand and Communications Team**

FIFTY YEARS, FIFTY COUNTRIES: ETHIOPIA

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 Ethiopia.

'There is no lack of food in my home now, rather I can help others who are in need.' This is the experience of Regatu and many others like her whose lives have been transformed through savings groups in Ethiopia.

Home to over 100 million people, almost 40 per cent of whom live below the poverty line, Ethiopia faces great challenges in overcoming poverty. The 1970s and 1980s saw drought, famine, war and ill-formed policies bringing many to the brink of starvation.

And while the country is now much more stable, erratic rains have contributed to the worst drought in over 50 years. This has left 8.5 million people needing food assistance.

Tearfund has been there through it all, initially focussing on drilling wells, but expanding to a range of other projects and emergency responses. Much of this has been done with the Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church (EKHC), the largest evangelical denomination in Ethiopia.

Saving families

It was in partnership with EKHC in 2002 that a pilot project of five self-help groups (SHGs) comprised of 100 women was launched in Nazaret.

The SHG approach is built on the belief that people living in poverty can be agents of change – that they have the potential, no matter how challenging their personal situation may be, to solve their own problems with support within the group.

Through regular savings, members of the groups are able to mobilise their (often very limited) resources and take out small loans for micro-enterprises and urgent consumption needs. Weekly meetings allow the members to discuss issues, find solutions to common problems and build trusting and close relationships that support members through personal crises.

‘I am not an educated woman,’ says Regatu. ‘But the training about saving and making businesses changed my entire life and my family as well. I thank EKHC and God for making our family’s poverty history. It was not only the money that I got from my group but the support and frequent visits by the members, which made me very strong and confident in bad and good times.’

A growing movement

There are now 20,000 SHGs impacting about 1.5 million people throughout Ethiopia.

Research undertaken in 2017 has shown that this approach is an effective means of creating sustainable livelihoods, increasing resilience to shocks and stresses and alleviating poverty in urban and rural situations.

Thanks to the amazing growth of SHGs, Tearfund has piloted a microfinance linkage scheme and trained farmers in better agricultural practices. Also, in response to the drought, we’ve distributed emergency food and ensured access to clean water, as well as provided proper sanitation and hygiene training for thousands of people. Please pray with us for this work.

PLEASE PRAY:

- Praise God for the powerful tool of SHGs and for their growth in Ethiopia. Pray that we can grow the work in the next six years to half a million members in 30,000 groups.
- Pray for communities struggling with the ongoing drought. Pray that help can reach the millions of people in need of assistance.
- Pray for Tearfund’s ongoing work to strengthen communities so that they are better able to withstand the challenges of a changing climate.

WEIGHING IN ON WASTE

Have you heard the news? All over the world, communities living in poverty are rising up against a tide of plastic waste.

And it's not just overseas. Here in the UK, over 5,000 of you signed our petition asking the UK Government to help clean up the rubbish problem.

Excitingly, on 15 April, in the lead up to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, Prime Minister Theresa May announced financial support totalling £61.4 million to help developing countries tackle the issue of waste. So we'd like to say a huge **thank you** for putting your faith into action by praying and signing our petition. **When we speak out together we can make a real difference!**

This announcement is a significant step forward in tackling plastics and poverty. These issues are intimately linked, as uncollected waste has a devastating impact on people in poverty. It's a shocking reality that 2 billion people around the world don't have any waste collection. This forces them to dispose of their waste in rivers or by burning it – creating health hazards as well as polluting the environment.

Rashid and his family of five live in Islamabad, Pakistan, in a slum on a bank of a stream. Nobody comes to collect their rubbish, so they have no choice but to discard it in the stream or burn it. Neither is a good option. Waste left in rivers or drains causes blockages and flooding, leading to the spread of waterborne diseases such as diarrhoea, while burning rubbish gives off toxic fumes and creates breathing difficulties.

Very little of the global aid budget – just 0.3 per cent per year – is currently spent on tackling this problem. Yet Tearfund is hearing from communities around the world, from Latin America to Asia, who are coming up with creative, cost-effective solutions. In Pakistan, for example, our partner PMS is keen to scale up a community-based recycling project which will clean up the slums, improve health and create jobs for local people. People are taking the initiative and getting stuck in, but they need support from their own government and richer countries.

The UK Government has shown it intends to do more in this area, and the money they have committed is a good start. However, if three per cent of all aid globally was spent on waste management, the 2 billion people currently without waste collection could be reached and the amount of plastics entering the ocean could be halved.

We will keep working with our partners to call on governments to go further and faster with local communities to solve the waste crisis together. We won't stop until we see a win-win for people in poverty and our oceans.

PLEASE PRAY:

- Thank God for the Prime Minister's announcement, and pray that the UK Government will follow through on its pledge for greater financial support.
- Pray for people like Rashid, whose lives are blighted by toxic waste. Pray that governments around the world will have their eyes opened to this issue.
- Pray that the target of 3 per cent of global aid to be used on waste management will be reached.

PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

- ✔ Please continue to pray for peace in Syria. Pray for a swift de-escalation in tensions, and for God's protection over civilians caught up in the violence. Ask for God's strength and healing for those suffering from the effects of the conflict. *(Please do not share this prayer online.)*
- ✔ Violence in Colombia has caused at least 1,000 families to flee their homes. Disputes between crime gangs and rebel groups have erupted over drugs trafficking and territorial control along the border with Venezuela. Please pray that the violence will cease, and that the vulnerable will be kept safe.
- ✔ The fighting in South Sudan has continued into its fifth year. The third round of peace talks, initially scheduled for end of April, have been postponed. Please pray for warring parties to find ways to end hostilities. Pray also for the church and NGOs promoting peace.