

ONE VOICE

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

LOVE CAN BUILD A BRIDGE

For Rowan Smith – a finance graduate with an emerging career at a large accounting firm – early morning meetings often involve a conference room, a little too much PowerPoint and sweeping views of London. But in January this year, Rowan attended a breakfast meeting that broke all the rules.

It had taken Rowan and his four travelling companions two days of trekking through the dense jungles of northern Myanmar to reach their destination. Yet in this remote village they were welcomed as friends. Sitting among pastors and village leaders, Rowan was about to have one of the most profound experiences of his life.

The team of five were in Myanmar as part of Tearfund's IMPACT:LIFE, which encourages Christian professionals to form a group and support a project through prayer, and by collectively committing to raise £10,000 in a year.

The group meets regularly to receive updates on the transformational impact of their support. They share in both the successes and the challenges, which equips them to pray. Eventually, members of the group travel to visit the project in person and see the project for themselves.

Sitting in the early morning light in a traditional Kachin house, Rowan listened as people described the ways that their prayer and financial support had helped. The IMPACT:LIFE funding had allowed them to construct a much-needed bridge across a nearby river – improving access to other villages.

'We stood together on the mountain, talked about how the trip had gone and prayed together. We sang Amazing Grace – us in English and the local Tearfund partner staff in their language. You could tell, from the emotion in their voices, how much it meant to them, really. It was mind blowing.'

PLEASE PRAY:

- Thank God for IMPACT:LIFE and ask that God will inspire more young Christians to get involved.

- Pray for Rowan and the many others who are part of IMPACT:LIFE, that they will continue to be challenged.
- Pray for the village in Myanmar where this IMPACT:LIFE team's support has enabled a bridge to be built, that people will use the opportunity to trade with neighbouring villagers.

Find out more about IMPACT:LIFE and how you, or someone you know, can get involved at www.tearfund.org/impactlife

*Written by Craig Borlase for the next edition of **Tear Times**.*

A NOTE FROM...

'Impact:Life is a journey of connection, generosity and transformation. It has been incredible to see the blessings for everyone involved in this initiative; from Tearfund's partner staff, to the communities we visited in Myanmar and the group members themselves. Lives have been enriched, transformed and restored.'

Amy Ford, Partnerships Team

FIFTY YEARS, FIFTY COUNTRIES: NICARAGUA

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 Nicaragua.

Nicaragua is a multicultural, multi-ethnic country of more than six million inhabitants, of whom 15 per cent are from indigenous people groups. Tearfund has been working there since 1972, following a massive earthquake that hit the country's capital, Managua.

Although it is one of the poorest countries in Central America, the economy had been growing. However, the last few months have been ruinous for the economy and have left many in the country living in fear. Hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets, protesting initially against President Ortega and his controversial tax reforms, then broadening out to other issues as opposition built.

Hundreds of protesters have been killed and thousands more injured. Paramilitary groups supporting President Ortega have been killing and 'disappearing' the young people that were protesting. And with the President planning to remain in office until 2021, there seems to be no likelihood of an early end to the crisis.

Standing firm

We and our partners are still at work in Nicaragua despite this unrest. In response to the current crisis, we are promoting the SOS Nicaragua campaign, which is asking other Latin America and Caribbean nations for prayer and action. This includes encouraging the church to condemn violence and human rights violations. More than 26,000 Nicaraguans have asked for refugee or political asylum in Costa Rica, and hundreds are leaving the country every day.

Apart from the current crisis, there are other major long-term issues that we are addressing: 30 percent of the population live in extreme poverty (earning less than £1.45 per day) – most of these living in rural areas. Access to basic services, including healthcare and education, remains severely limited.

We are working through church networks and local partner organisations to transform communities in a number of ways including: promoting sustainable development; helping communities recover as quickly as possible from natural disasters, and training churches and their leaders to advocate for community needs in remote and marginalised areas. Santa Elena's story demonstrates this last area of work...

Distant hope

Imagine if your nearest healthcare facility was 27 miles away, with only two ways to reach it: trekking through dense jungle, or braving the waters of Central America's Río Coco.

These were the choices available to grandmother Santa Elena and her indigenous community in San Jerónimo village, north-eastern Nicaragua. In fact, the entire Caribbean region of the country, which covers 55 per cent of the territory, only has three public hospitals. Year after year she saw people die unnecessarily from illness or injury.

But then Santa Elena met Tearfund's partner in the country Acción Médica Cristiana (AMC). AMC is working with indigenous communities, training community leaders like her to become health promoters.

She was determined to make the most of this and help her community. Now she and others in the village have been trained. Santa Elena says, 'They have taught us how to deal with malaria, clean wounds, deal with snake bites. We know how to inject, have had midwife training...'

Lifesaving knowledge

Thanks to her new-found knowledge, Santa Elena is already making a huge difference to her community. 'People don't die as frequently as before,' she says. 'Children have better nutrition, maternal and childbirth mortality rates have decreased, and we have better knowledge to prevent new diseases.'

Thanks to your generosity and prayers, and the determination of people like Santa Elena, this remote community has made a huge leap forward in improving health and securing a brighter future.

PLEASE PRAY:

- Pray for an end to the current crisis in Nicaragua. Ask that SOS Nicaragua will be successful in mobilising believers all around the region to pray and speak out.
- Give thanks for the work of our partner, AMC. Pray for protection over staff as they travel to remote parts of the country to give this vital training.
- Pray for Nicaragua, that there will be a boost to infrastructure and that public health provision will improve.

If you'd like to know more please visit our Nicaragua page at www.tearfund.org/nicaragua And if you've missed any other articles in this series you can find them at www.tearfund.org/pray

PARTNERS IN SLIME

Think Donald Trump has mastered 'The Art of The Deal'? That's nothing... meet the canniest salesgirls (and boy) this side of Shepton Mallet.

People have bought and sold all manner of goods to raise money for Tearfund over the years; cakes, greetings cards, paintings and much more. However if you want to encourage giving among the under 13s, it seems that the current must-have item is... slime. Evie (10), Willow (8) and Noah (7) made their own. And they sold it, with a number of other rather more wholesome items to attendees at this year's New Wine festival.

'It's fun for playing with,' explains Evie. '... It can get into the carpet at home,' she warns. We won't reveal the formula, other than to say that contact lens solution and food colouring are involved*. Two batches were cooked up: pink and green. However these didn't sell along the traditional gender lines. 'The boys bought lots of the pink batch; I told them it was "brain slime"', adds Evie, showing a canny insight into the young male psyche. 'The green slime was "snot",' she adds helpfully.

Going upmarket

The 'slugs and snails' end of the market suitably sewn up, the trio also dabbled in some more upmarket keepsakes. 'I showed them how to make fancy decorative jars,' volunteers Lynn, the Children and Families Worker at St Matthew's Church, Reading, who lent a hand with the kids' fundraising exercise. 'We put out an appeal for jam jars at church and found a bundle of old fabric, so it was 100 per cent profit for Tearfund!'

The fabric was also used for a series of pin cushions too – perhaps the crowning glory of the enterprise, creatively speaking. Who bought the jars and cushions, I wondered? 'They're called "yummy mummies" I think,' said Evie confidently.

The three had dabbled with origami sales at the previous year's festival and were keen to take their itinerant sales work to the next level this year. Along with the craft items and slime, were handmade origami items, including snakes, hearts and penguins.

The children also prepared 'mystery' bags of sweets – New Wine is currently without its own sweet stall, possibly due to the health concerns of yummy mummies and daddies. The bags contained old favourites such as fruit chews and sherbet filled flying saucers – some features of childhood don't change, it seems.

All in a (very) good cause

They clearly did something very right as they came out of the week with over £60 for Tearfund. Why had they chosen Tearfund?

'I like that they do things differently,' says Evie with considerable insight. 'They ask people in poor places what they need and then they help them get those things.'

However, sales had been slow to start with. Willow turned the whole enterprise around after the first day: 'I told them, we needed to smile sweetly, as grown ups love it when we do that.' So, the team criss-crossed the New Wine campsite, with Evie displaying the items and the two younger children love-bombing the unsuspecting customers with their winsomeness.

'I was best at that because I've just lost a tooth and that looks cuter,' boasts Noah.

LET'S PRAY:

Praise God for the passion, creativity and ingenuity of children like Willow, Evie and Noah. Pray that many thousands of children around the world will develop a similar, lasting passion, to offer hope to people living in poverty.

**Tearfund takes no responsibility for any slime-related carpet mishaps and does not condone etc etc*

PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



Please pray for the Democratic Republic of Congo, where there has been a new outbreak of Ebola. There have been around 46 cases to date, and 16 people are believed to have died. Pray that the outbreak will be contained, that those who have contracted the disease will make a full recovery, and for protection over our staff and partners.



The conflict in South Sudan has led to over 7.1 million people in need of humanitarian aid; yet the country continues to have the highest number of attacks against humanitarian workers in the world. Please pray for protection and safety for all delivering vital aid, and for those they are trying to reach.



Please lift up the people in Ghazni City, south of Kabul. An estimated 270,000 residents were caught up in the city that turned into a battlefield between the Afghan authorities and the Taliban last weekend. Please also pray for our partners working in other parts of the country, often in insecure areas. Pray for peace to return to Afghanistan.