

# ONE VOICE

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

## **TWO STRONG HANDS**

**When Guilain was 14 years old, his life was shattered. 'The militia came to my village,' he says. 'I tried to run. They were shooting people dead. I tripped over a landmine.'**

Ituri province in northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has experienced conflict for decades. Violence flared up in 1999 – that's when Guilain's life changed forever.

### **A life torn apart**

'My legs were shattered in the explosion,' he says. 'The doctors later amputated what was left.' Now aged 23, Guilain moves himself along the ground using his arms and hands.

Even before the attack, Guilain's life had been tough. His father died of malaria and he was forced to leave school aged 13 because his family didn't have enough money, so he set to work as a farm labourer. Guilain was digging in the fields when the militia came.

It's hard enough to find work in the remote part of the DRC where Guilain lives. Violence means there's little employment and people live in fear of further attacks. His injuries mean that Guilain is not able to dig and farm – the only skills he had.

### **Profitable partnership**

Guilain was thrown a lifeline by Tearfund's partner, Action Entraide. The team had started a skills training centre in the village, to empower people with the skills needed to build better lives.

Dieuvain, one of the teachers at the centre, is also unable to use his legs after contracting polio as a child. He took Guilain under his wing and taught him to weld and repair metal. This is a good livelihood in rural DRC, where most people travel by bicycle or motorbike, and the rough terrain often damages vehicles. Farming tools also need regular repairs.

Now, Dieuvain and Guilain have a thriving business together. 'I used to just be idle in the village,' says Guilain. 'When I came to the skills centre I soon got a job. Working with my hands makes me very happy.'

Life is tough for everyone in the DRC, but it can be near impossible for people living with a disability. Guilain has been able to rise above his circumstances, and see that he can do great things.

PLEASE PRAY:

- Thank God that Guilain was able to get the help he needed, and pray that his new business will continue to thrive. Pray for all disabled people in the DRC, that through organisations such as Action Entraide they will be able to thrive
- Please pray that the current Ebola outbreak, located mainly in North Kivu Province, will be contained. Please pray for those who have already lost loved ones, and pray for healing for those who have contracted the disease.
- Pray for an end to the violence in the DRC, which continues to take lives and keep people in poverty.

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

'When I met Guilain he had just got married and was looking forward to building a home, delighted that he was able to provide for his wife and future family. This training completely turned things around for him. Thank you for praying with us so that others can also receive a lifeline.'

**Cheryl Bannatyne, Communications Team**

## **FIFTY YEARS, FIFTY COUNTRIES: NIGER**

*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 Niger.*

Niger is a landlocked country in West Africa, named after the River Niger. It's the largest country in this part of Africa, and one of the world's poorest. Of its 19 million population, 46 per cent of people suffer from chronic malnutrition, and access to basics such as safe sanitation and education is shockingly low.

Tearfund has been working in Niger since 1994. It's a challenging place to work, due to instability in the country itself as well as neighbours such as Libya, and other factors including the climate and landscape. But, together with our partners, we are committed to empowering people in Niger, seeing them become able to overcome poverty.

We're focusing on water and sanitation, access to food and more. And with 50,000 people in Niger living with the HIV virus, HIV and AIDS is another focus for our staff and partners, transforming lives like Hadjara, a widowed mother of five...

### **Hope in the face of HIV**

Hadjara found out she was living with HIV in 2010. She fell ill, and her mother took her to the hospital run by Tearfund's local partner, SIM, where she was diagnosed with the virus.

'People would say that people die straight away [from HIV],' says Hadjara. 'But here I am, I have made it this far,' she says.

Tens of thousands of people have benefited from our partners' work with people living with HIV in Niger. Not only are people like Hadjara diagnosed, they are supported to access the medication they need to lead full lives, as well as emotional and social support.

We are also working to reduce the spread of HIV, and break down stigma and misunderstanding surrounding it. Much of this work is done through local churches.

'I am so pleased,' says Hadjara. 'I have found healing here, praise God.'

**PLEASE PRAY:**

- Praise God for the lives transformed in Niger in the 26 years we've worked there, and pray that many more people will experience hope and healing through our partners in the years to come. Pray that Hadjara and her children will continue to experience the goodness of God in their lives.
- Pray for an end to extreme poverty in Niger, and for a lasting solution to the conflict and instability fuelling it.
- Many in Niger are suffering as a result of torrential rain this August, destroying homes and livelihoods. Pray for those affected, and for our partners responding.

If you'd like to know more please visit our Niger page at [www.tearfund.org/niger](http://www.tearfund.org/niger) And if you've missed any other articles in this series you can find them at [www.tearfund.org/pray](http://www.tearfund.org/pray)

## **UNITY IN THE WAKE OF DISASTER**

It's not the wind or rain that causes the worst damage during a natural disaster. It's not even the flying debris or swollen rivers that leave the biggest mark. It's the realisation that life is never going to be the same again that causes the long-lasting damage.

After Hurricane Matthew smashed its way through southwest Haiti in October 2016, some church pastors felt disappointed not to receive funds to rebuild church buildings destroyed in the quake. Other people were receiving help, why shouldn't they?

But with input from Tearfund partner World Relief, these church leaders were able to re-orientate their priorities.

### **Shifting from individual focus to community priorities**

World Relief's training on Integral Mission enabled church leaders to look beyond the immediate destruction in front of them, to the wider-spread problems in their communities. They began to see themselves as part of God's response to the needs of their community. They already had everything they needed and more. They received a new understanding and gained a new solidarity with other regional congregations.

The benefits of World Relief's training spread further than a few local communities. Following the training, this group of church leaders mobilised a movement of people who identified needs, recruited volunteers and helped reach those families in most urgent need.

Perhaps the best part of all this is that, after the initial hurricane response was over and the media had stopped reporting on the devastation, the churches are still working together.

The churches aren't just helping to rebuild and meet the practical needs of the people around them, they are investing in relationships and bringing congregations together. Once a month, a single worship service is organised for all of the churches in the region. The offering taken during the united service is given to one of the churches still in need of construction. The priority isn't to rebuild their 'own church', the focus now is supporting 'our church'.

### **There's no community without unity**

The benefits of this newfound unity and sense of community mission go further still, with churches across the south of Haiti blessing their communities with home visits and repairs, distributions of hygiene kits in hospitals, family strengthening, training and education. Their actions are crossing denominational barriers and creating bridges to the wider community.

Church leaders continually testify to this transformation; crediting the process that World Relief initiated for the change. 'We were wanderers before these trainings. Never before did we pastors gather to eat or rejoice together. I feel our lack of unity did more harm than Hurricane Matthew ever could.'

It's true that since hurricane Matthew ripped through Haiti, life hasn't been the same. But life has been met with a church returning to God's mission. And when the church aligns with God's plan, he works powerfully through it. Perhaps, life after hurricane Matthew could even be better than it was before.

### **LET'S PRAY:**

We thank you God for choosing us to be part of your family, for using your church to change the world. We praise you for the commitment from the pastors in Haiti to fulfilling your mandate to go out into the world and show it your love. And we ask you to strengthen and grow the church, for congregations to have an even bigger impact for your glory in their communities. Amen.

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



Lift up the growing number of Venezuelan refugees stranded in Colombia due to new policies preventing them from entering Peru and Ecuador. Pray also for host communities in Colombia, and for good relationships between refugees and local people. Pray especially for children, who are always most vulnerable in situations like this, and for an end to the instability forcing Venezuelans from their homes.



More than 1 million people have been displaced following recent conflict in the Somali and Oromia regions of Ethiopia. Many are living in temporary shelters, including churches. Please pray for those affected, and for Tearfund's staff and partners working in Ethiopia.



Please pray for all those affected by severe flooding in Kerala, India, especially for those who have lost loved ones, homes and livelihoods. Pray for the authorities as they respond.