

ONE VOICE

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

WHERE CAN CHILDREN PLAY IN A REFUGEE CAMP?

The Rohingya refugee crisis one year on

When 27-year-old Monjur arrived in the hot and crowded Kutupalong camp of Cox's Bazar his primary concern was the welfare of his children.

As a Rohingya refugee arriving in Bangladesh from Myanmar he and his family had already witnessed unbearable scenes of violence.

The Rohingya crisis, which started one year ago, has led to over 700,000 people fleeing over the border to camps in Bangladesh. Exhausted families such as Monjur's were trying to survive in the most basic of conditions – many without shelter or clean water.

'We were worried about our children's mental health, because of what they faced,' says Monjur.

Constant threats

Jacob Sarker, Bangladesh Country Representative for Tearfund, says 'We are now a whole year on and the threats facing the Rohingya people continue. The situation in the camps is desperate. The Rohingya people face the continued threat and reality of rains, mudslides, poor sanitation, the spread of disease, and are reliant on food distributions.

'We are working through our partners to address some of these needs, yet it's also important we recognise the wounds they are bearing of the trauma they have endured,' says Jacob.

For young children in particular, early experiences of such a crisis have a lasting impact.

Child's play

Child-friendly spaces set up by Tearfund partner COAST Trust allow children in the camps to draw, write poetry, talk to a trained therapist, play, learn and sing songs together.

The spaces are reinforced bamboo shelters, which accommodate 60 children per day, from young children through to adolescents. They are a sanctuary from the harshness of life outside and provide children with a chance to enjoy some lighter, fun times together, as well as an opportunity to process what they have experienced.

Monjur says: 'My son attends the child-friendly space regularly, it's a great relief for me as I was always feeling worried about him.'

'We have been helped by several organisations and individuals here, but I honestly feel that you COAST-Tearfund staff are doing something very different. You don't just help with materials, but the way you show warmth and closeness is incomparable. You people heal our hearts.'

Ongoing support

Since its launch in October 2017 Tearfund's Rohingya appeal has reached over 100,000 people providing them with shelter kits, improved water and sanitation, psychosocial counselling for both adults and children and supplying essential emergency medical care. Our hope is to see this extended to help hundreds more over the next 18 months.

PLEASE PRAY:

- Pray for emotional healing for all the Rohingya people who have fled Myanmar and are now living in Bangladeshi camps.
- Thank God for the work of COAST Trust and the impact it's having on the health and wellbeing of many vulnerable families.
- Pray for world leaders to help bring about peace and resolution amid this refugee crisis.

A NOTE FROM...

'A year on from the Rohingya refugee crisis I am so encouraged to hear Monjur's story of how our partner is helping his family to cope with life in Bangladesh. I would extend his thanks to you too – without your prayers and support we wouldn't be able to help families like Monjur's.'

Anne Murray, Asia Team

Thank you for your support over the last year. Your prayers and gifts are crucial. You can still give to our Rohingya response here: <http://www.tearfund.org/rohingyacrisis>

FIFTY YEARS, FIFTY COUNTRIES: NIGERIA

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 Nigeria.

Despite its immense resources Nigeria suffers from widespread poverty. Years of debilitating military rule have left its people vulnerable to corruption, economic instability and human rights violations. More than 7 million people in the north east of Nigeria are in need of humanitarian assistance.

Tearfund has a long history with Nigeria, having been formed in part as a response to the Biafran crisis in the late 1960s. We are working with local churches in Nigeria to mobilise communities to meet the food production, water supply, sanitation and healthcare needs of their local areas. One community that our local partner Christian Rural and Urban Development Association of Nigeria (CRUDAN) is working with is Ogui New Layout in the city of Enugu, Southeast Nigeria.

Ogui New Layout is a noisy community. Schools, houses and hotels line a long section of dry land littered with waste. Due to rapid urbanisation the local government is unable to cope with the demand for waste management. This leaves the local community in danger of diseases spreading quicker, polluted waterways and dangerous fumes from attempts to burn the rubbish.

Inspiring those in power

To help tackle this problem, CRUDAN trained local unemployed young people in waste management and Eco-Entrepreneurship. The students and young people have teamed up with their local church to form a group called Wonders of Divine Grace Natural Recyclers.

The young people asked the local government for permission to collect used flex banners from the streets and make them into plastic shopping bags. When they showed the officials the bangles they had already created using waste clothing and plastic, and the flower vases from water cans, they were given permission immediately.

‘We thank CRUDAN for the knowledge they imparted in us,’ says group member, Nweke ‘We no longer see waste as it is but as something which can be useful...’.

With the support of the local government the plan is to set up a place where young people can work on environmental issues and products. The government has agreed to give land and 1.5 million naira (approximately US\$ 4,800) to help them set up their ‘Climate Innovation Hub.’

‘After we produced items from waste, we kept on creating a sustainable environment,’ says group member, Gloria. ‘One that God planned for us from the beginning, an environment free from waste.’

PLEASE PRAY:

Make your own recycled bangle to use as a reminder to pray for more innovative ideas and continued success for this innovative group in Nigeria. If you don’t wear bangles then you could always give it away to a friend.

To make your bangle you will need:

- a used plastic bottle
- scissors
- fabric
- glue

1. Cut a ring shape out of the plastic bottle.
2. Cut a thin, long strip of fabric. Either, measure the same fabric by running it twice around the outside of the ring, or cut different fabrics to mix and match, running them once each around the outside of the plastic ring.
3. Fold over one of the long edges of your fabric strip to make a neat edge.
4. Glue the short end of your fabric to the inside of the plastic ring.
5. Wrap the fabric around the plastic ring, making sure you use the folded edge to hide the straight one. Continue until the entire ring is covered.
6. Cut away any excess fabric and tuck in the end, gluing it to the inside of the ring.
7. Once the glue has dried, your bangle is ready to wear.

TEARFUND AND CAP: A COMMON CAUSE

The work of Tearfund and Christians Against Poverty might seem a world apart – literally! Actually, the two charities have got more in common than meets the eye.

There is one thing that we are both passionate about: when we tackle poverty, we don't just think of physical resources, we focus on people and their personal stories. Just as 'man cannot live by bread alone...' poverty means dealing with human beings. And human beings have human, social and spiritual needs – both Tearfund and CAP want to meet all three, and not split them off.

Here are two stories from the two charities that show how we focus on people not just 'poverty'.

TEARFUND

Mary's story: from existing to living

As Mary describes it, she was 'not living but merely existing'. This is the story of how she got her life back.

Mary grew up in a small village in northern Kenya. She recalls her mother and father were constantly fighting. At the age of sixteen, her father forced Mary into an arranged marriage. 'I cried for a long time,' she remembers. 'I was depressed and even thought of committing suicide.'

In 2012, she was introduced by her priest, Rev Enkai, to a process known as Church and Community Transformation (CCT). It helps churches reach out into their communities and make a real difference there. CCT empowers people to support themselves and their communities, opening small business ventures.

'The day I started living'

Mr Enkai spoke on a passage from Genesis. Mary came to learn that she was made in God's image and likeness. She finally came to understand that she was loved and treasured by God – this was revolutionary.

'I decided to start living,' Mary says, 'I forgave my parents and sincerely experienced a healing of my soul.' In another Bible study, of Habakkuk, she was encouraged to write down the vision she had for her life – she began realise that she could plan for the future; big plans.

Gradually, Mary's relationship with her husband improved. At one point, her husband sold a goat and gave Mary the proceeds. She used the money to begin a small business selling tomatoes, cabbages, kales and onions. Her business continued to grow, 'by the grace of God, sacrifice and hard work.'

Paying forward the love

Her new found skills and confidence are good news for her family, who are now able to eat regularly and have a far more secure future. Mary wants to spread her gratitude wider than that, though...

She has started up two women's savings groups allowing people to escape poverty like she has done. And, along with her family, Mary now, looks after three orphaned children, providing them with food and supporting them to go to school.

'My passion is to do ministry like Christ did, with compassion and love,' she declares. Because of the work of Tearfund's partner, Mary's life has been transformed: 'It opened my eyes and the blue sky is the limit.'

CAP

Chris's story: Wolf at the door

'We used to hide in the kitchen to avoid enforcement agents,' remembers Chris. 'In the space of a year I'd lost my wife, my mother, my home, nearly lost my kids, and had to give up my job because I couldn't afford childcare. Life was horrible.' On top of everything, this left Chris struggling with depression. In hiding, Enforcement agents phoning daily, then hourly, Chris hid with his children in the kitchen. One day, they were spotted and the children saw the agents push their way into the house. Chris' heart sank as he realised he hadn't been able to protect his children from the stress and trouble they were in.

'We lived on benefits and food banks,' Chris recalls. 'We were living in a shell of a house, with no heating, no carpet, no wallpaper, nothing. We used to sleep on bin bags. It was very stressful and we were in a lot of trouble. I was even scared to leave the house. Chris heard about CAP through the food bank at his local church. His caseworker came to visit and was very friendly, and so helpful.

Turned around

'Once CAP got involved, life changed for the better. They make you feel so at ease, they come to the house, you can trust them, there's just something about them.'

Chris's Debt Coach Maggie helped find Chris a way forward when he could see none. She drew up a budget plan working out how to gather the money he needed for bankruptcy, which put Chris' mind at ease.

Now able to take the children to school with a little car they provided, and with regular support and prayer from Maggie and Alison (his Debt Coach and case worker), Chris began to trust and relax again, knowing that the burden was being taken care of.

Chris's response is typical and there's a reason he is so glowing about his Debt Managers. When Maggie and Alison get to know someone like Chris, they aren't just looking at his account balance and outgoing – they are trained to focus on the person themselves.

'People often say is that it's such a relief to be able to talk about this with somebody at last,' explains Sam*, one of CAP's Debt Centre Managers. 'For us it's an immense privilege to be invited into someone's home, and for them to make themselves vulnerable and tell us stuff they don't even tell their families. Many find an immediate sense of relief, and you can see it in their body language.'

Chris is now debt free, and the dark spectre of depression has lifted too. There are no more phone calls, no more letters or harassment from enforcement agents.

'To be honest, it's like a miracle,' says Chris. 'CAP took me and my family on a weekend break which was fantastic. The kids and I enjoyed it and I really appreciate them doing that for us. Having CAP on your side is a powerful thing. Go to CAP. The day you go to CAP your life will change, trust me.'

Life changed for the better. Chris shares, 'it's like a miracle. It's unbelievable.' Now debt free, Chris has been given his life back and can concentrate on building a future for himself and his children.

*Names changed for security reasons (Extract from a Debt Centre Manager interview in a forthcoming report on Christians Against Poverty by LSE Housing and Communities)

PLEASE PRAY:

We pray for both CAP and Tearfund that they may be constantly aware that they are serving men, women and children created in your own image, Lord. Help Christ's own presence and compassion shine through them as they interact with the people they are serving.

Amen

PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



Next week Tearfund is hosting a conference in Sierra Leone for our partners working to transform communities through the local church. Please pray for everyone who attends to be encouraged, inspired and motivated to have an even bigger impact in the communities that they serve.



On 18 August Imran Khan was sworn in as Prime Minister of Pakistan. Pray for him to make the best decisions for the Pakistani Nation. Pray that Pakistan will settle quickly and peacefully under a new political leader. Ask God to direct the plans of the government to benefit those in need in Pakistan.



Less than half the world's refugee children are able to access schooling, the UN announced this week. Pray for children affected by many crises around the world, and for the lasting peace and stability that could allow them to return to school and enjoy a fulfilled childhood.