

ONE VOICE

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

TOO HUNGRY NOT TO HIKE

By Amy Church, Tearfund's Copy Team Leader

Violette has come to our Burundian partner's emergency feeding centre with her youngest son, Eduard. I ask how far she has come, and she tells me she has walked between two and three hours to get here. I ask the translator to repeat the question, because Violette is eight months pregnant. Her answer remains the same.

I'm shocked, but Violette's* efforts don't fully hit home until later, when I'm taken to visit a local family. 'It's a ten minute walk,' I'm told, as I'm handed two walking sticks.

The sticks seem strange for a ten minute walk, but they make complete sense 45 minutes later, when we arrive at our destination sweating and out of breath. The landscape in this rural part of Burundi is muddy and steep, and there are no paths. As a mum myself, I can't imagine how difficult it must be for pregnant Violette to trek like this for three hours, and with a hungry five year old in tow.

A desperate situation

Despite the challenge and potential danger ahead, Violette didn't think twice when she set off that morning, because she and her family are desperate for food.

'A neighbour told me about the centre,' she says. 'Now, my children will be able to eat some porridge in the mornings. Before, they could go a whole day with no food.'

Violette herself is also receiving emergency food, as she and her unborn child are especially vulnerable to hunger. 'I'm not sure I would be able to stay alive without this feeding programme,' she says.

An inspiring response

Political turmoil and failing crops have resulted in a widespread hunger crisis. Like Eduard, one in every six children under five faces chronic malnutrition.

Our church partners in Burundi, as well as neighbouring Rwanda, are doing all they can to reach vulnerable families like Violette's, including running repeated eight week emergency

food programmes like the one I visited. To enable them to help more people, Tearfund has launched a crisis appeal.

'Tearfund follows Jesus where the need is greatest. And you are putting that into practice here in Burundi, because the need is vast,' says Ildephonse, from our partner FECABU.

I met so many children battling hunger in Burundi, and determined parents like Violette, and Gordien who I wrote about a few weeks back. But I also saw the passionate, powerful response from our partners – hope and love in action.

LET'S PRAY:

Dear God,

We lift up Violette and Eduard to you today, and all those suffering in Burundi. They are so vulnerable, but you are their loving Father, and they are your precious children. We pray for your church in Burundi, that they will have the wisdom, energy and resources they need to help those who need it most. And we pray for lasting peace and stability in that country, and for a quick end to the hunger crisis.

In Jesus's name we pray, amen.

Thank you for your prayers. If you feel led, you can still donate to our Burundi Crisis Appeal at www.tearfund.org/en/latest/burundi_crisis_appeal

**Names changed to protect identities.*

A NOTE FROM...

'Hunger is a massive injustice, and it feels so unfair that people like Violette have to go to such lengths just for food. But I'm so inspired by our partners' response and their determination to help those in most need. Thank you for your prayers!'

Kerena Sheath, Global Fundraising Team

FIFTY YEARS, FIFTY COUNTRIES: MALI

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 Mali.

Mali is one of the largest nations on earth; it's also one of the poorest – poverty is widespread and persistent.

Its tumultuous recent history has made this poverty much worse. Over the last decade Mali has been hit by a series of crises, including a drought in 2011 and an armed conflict in the north of the country in 2012. Many people have lost their livelihoods after being displaced from their homes. The agricultural land has been badly ravaged by the fighting and the nation is also being hit hard by climate change.

A faction of the army overthrew the government in 2012. The international community responded in 2013 with a military intervention, trying to keep the people of Mali safe. However, armed groups still pose a huge threat.

In the midst of all this, Tearfund continues to work in Mali, as it has done for more than 20 years. Our current vision for the country is for 600,000 people to be released from spiritual and material poverty by 2022, through a network of local churches and partners.

Ending the silence

One of the crucial issues that our local church partners in Mali are dealing with is the long-standing practice of female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM/C). Our partners have been providing support and access to healthcare for women and girls who have experienced FGM/C. Churches are also working to educate their communities, in order to prevent further cases.

Tearfund partner Association Protestante pour la Santé au Mali (APSM) is running workshops so that people know the facts about FGM/C, and inspiring them to join the fight against it. Mariam* attended one of these workshops – this is her story in her own words.

Mariam's story

'God blessed us with a baby girl, and I had my daughter undergo FGM/C as it was the thing that you did with a child.

'One day when our pastor came to visit us, I told him that I had done this and that she was doing well. During this meeting, the pastor took me aside to tell me that this practice is not good. He told me that it can cause problems afterwards. I promised him that this was the first and the last time I would allow it.

'A few years later we had a second daughter and I did not let her have FGM/C her, in spite of pressure from my neighbours and from other women.

'Today, when I see the images on the consequences of FGM/C, I am really comforted in my decision not to allow it anymore as a mother – especially as a Christian mother. Thank you for the teaching and may God help you to sensitise many other women and help them to say "no" too.'

PLEASE PRAY:

- Pray for grace and wisdom as we work with people affected by issues such as female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM/C), as well as HIV which is also a big problem in Mali.
- Ask God to bring peace to Mali, and for an end to the armed conflict.
- Pray that our partners can meet the growing challenges around access to food: ask that the people of Mali will have all they need, even during times of drought or uncertainty.

**Names changed to protect identities*

NEWS UPDATE: ETHIOPIA AND ERITREA AGREE TO END WAR

The leaders of Ethiopia and Eritrea have signed a landmark peace agreement.

Since a 1998-2000 border conflict, war has never been declared over until now. The declaration came at a meeting in Eritrea's capital, Asmara. Trade and diplomatic ties are also to be re-established as part of the agreement.

Ephraim Tsegay, Tearfund's Country Representative for Ethiopia, describes the news as unexpected but wonderful:

'A wall has started to break down, but it needs time, prayer, and wisdom to heal wounds. Both Eritrea and Ethiopia are wounded nations. So let us pray for hope, and sustained peace.'


'Before the war broke out, Tearfund used to work in Eritrea supporting child development programmes. I hope there will now be the opportunity for us to consider working there again.'


'I also hope and pray I will soon be able to visit Asmara. I have family members there that I have not seen for over 24 years.'


PRAYER FOCUS:

- Praise God that this peace agreement has been reached. Praise him for being the 'Lord of peace' (2 Thessalonians 3:16).
- Pray that this peace will last and that both nations can continue to flourish.
- Pray for those people Tearfund works with in Ethiopia and that our team will be strengthened, envisioned and encouraged.

PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

 Please pray for peace and unity to return to Haiti. Following an increase in fuel prices, the country has seen violent protests and looting. At least four people have been killed, while dozens of businesses have been destroyed. Pray for a wise response from the government; and lift up the affected families, as well as our staff and partners.

 Large parts of Afghanistan are still experiencing drought. Over 22,000 people have been forced to migrate to other parts of the country. Many of them are malnourished and lack access to safe drinking water and shelter. Pray for all those who are suffering because of the drought, and pray for rain to come soon.

 Please pray for peace in South Sudan, where rebels have rejected a peace deal. Pray for God's protection over civilians, the ones who have suffered most in this civil war that began in 2013.