

ONE VOICE

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

WORLD WATER DAY: HEALTH AND JOY FOR ROSE

Not long ago, Rose*, from the Central African Republic (CAR), was walking 3km from her village to a river in the forest to collect water. She would spend a couple of hours at the river washing clothes and dishes, and then have to carry everything back, including the water needed at home.

For all her efforts, the river water wasn't safe to drink. Rose has seven children, and, even though she did her best to boil the water before giving it to them, they regularly suffered with diarrhoea and stomach aches.

In the meantime, the village pump stood idle – broken and unable to deliver the water that the community needed so much. This was until Tearfund's staff started working with Rose's village.

Water for life

Access to clean water and adequate sanitation, as well as knowledge of healthy hygiene practices, is a vital part of releasing people from poverty. And so our staff helped repair of the pump, put a solid enclosure around it to keep the area clean, and chlorinated the water to improve its quality.

Frank Greaves leads Tearfund's work in water and sanitation, and explains the impact of this work: 'It is unbelievable how many aspects of life are affected by access to water, sanitation and hygiene – our health and daily sustenance, but also our very productivity, dignified living, education, food security, livelihoods.... The list goes on.'

The big picture

The reasons for and implications of inadequate water supplies are many and complex. For example, in CAR, conflict has played a huge role in setting back development as well as putting a strain on infrastructure and natural resources.

Tearfund has been working in the south-western region of CAR to ensure that people who are displaced by conflict, as well as the communities hosting them, have sufficient supplies of safe water.

'In our programmes, we also focus on issues that intersect with water, such as the environment, gender and vulnerability issues, behavioural change, and conflict,' says Frank. Water is vital to life, and safe water vital to quality of life.

'We are full of joy,' says Rose. 'We don't need to go to the forest anymore [to collect water]. My children are healthy; my family is healthy... because what we are drinking now is good water.'

PLEASE PRAY:

- In this, the week of World Water Day (22 March), lift up the 2.1 billion people around the world who lack safe drinking water, affecting their health, education and livelihoods.
- Praise God that Rose and many others in CAR and around the world have seen their lives changed dramatically by the provision of safe water sources.
- Pray for Tearfund's staff and partners working each day to enable families and whole communities to access the safe water they need to live healthy and fulfilled lives.

A NOTE FROM...

'When I met Rose last August, she was keen to show me the work that had been done on the well in her village. It was great to see it in action and hear how it's helping to protect them from diseases. It brought it home to me how something so simple – clean water – is so essential to life.' **Andrew Horton, Global Fundraising Team**

**Name has been changed to protect identity*

FIFTY YEARS, FIFTY COUNTRIES: CHAD

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 Chad.

At a glance:

- 50 per cent of people can't access safe drinking water
- 9 per cent of people don't live past their 55th birthday
- 603,100 people are refugees from neighbouring countries or internally displaced within their own country
- 74 per cent of people don't have access to health facilities

Chad is one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world, with the majority of the population unable to read or write.

The literacy rate is especially low among women, who struggle to obtain fair access to educational and employment opportunities. They also face extensive inequality and exploitation, including child marriage and gender-based violence.

The country has been producing oil since 2003, and is rich in gold and uranium. However, a combination of poor governance, corruption, conflict and drought mean that Chad has failed to progress at the same level as its neighbours.

Violence has plagued Chad since its independence from France in 1960, with ethnic tensions creating a climate of instability and conflict. An influx of refugees from neighbouring Sudan, Libya, Central African Republic and Nigeria has only added to the civil unrest, driving many from their homes.

As part of Tearfund's overall vision, we aim to transform life for 1 million people in Chad – physically, materially, socially and spiritually – by 2023. We are doing this by empowering and equipping 3,000 local churches and communities, improving literacy skills, teaching improved farming techniques, reducing the stigma associated with HIV, improving access to clean water and promoting safe hygiene practices.

Achievements so far:

- 500+ villages have received training in new farming techniques that will multiply crop yields.
- 13,102 people have been trained to advocate against the stigmatisation of people affected by poverty and HIV.
- 29,000 children have received training in life-saving hygiene practices.
- 434,283 people have attended literacy classes.

Confident and flourishing

Florence*, who lives in southern Chad with her husband and three children, is one person to have benefitted from our literacy training. As a child, Florence didn't attend school and as a result she never learnt to read or write. This meant that Florence often felt ashamed and isolated from others.

In 2012, Tearfund's local partner opened up a literacy class in Florence's village. Excitedly, Florence registered and started attending classes three times a week. After just a few weeks, Florence began to see change – and after four years, Florence can now confidently read and write.

Thanks to the literacy class, Florence has received enough knowledge to follow up on the progress of her children in school. She is also able to encourage other women in the village to attend the literacy classes. Today, Florence serves as treasurer for a group that helps women set up small businesses, and is a secretary at her church.

'The happiest woman in the world'

Another woman, Jamena, gives a powerful testimony about the transformation that the literacy classes brought: 'I have never been to school, but the Lord gave me grace to open my eyes to read and write after five years of literacy training. One day, my pastor chose me to read the Bible passage in the Sunday service!

'I practiced the reading all night and I asked God to speak through me. At the end of the reading, the pastor congratulated me and introduced me as a model for others who are hesitant or ashamed to enroll in literacy classes. That day, I was the happiest woman in the world'.

PLEASE PRAY:

- Pray for the government of Chad, that there will be an end to corruption, and that they will put the needs of the poorest first.
- Thank God for the testimonies of women like Florence and Jamena, and pray that he continues to bless them.
- Lift up the work of our partners in Chad, and pray that we will meet our goal of changing 1 million lives by 2023.

**Names have been changed to protect identities*

WHAT DOES PLASTIC HAVE TO DO WITH POVERTY?

Jesus was not a fan of waste. After he fed the 5,000, Jesus asked his disciples to gather up the pieces so that nothing would be wasted (John 6:12).

This Lent, thousands of people have made pledges to reduce another type of waste – plastics. Many of us have been shocked recently to learn of the amount of plastic in our oceans, and feel called to protect God's gift of creation.

But what is less well known is the devastating impact that plastic waste has on people living in poverty across the world.

A rubbish problem – and a solution

Two billion people living in poverty lack access to waste collection, meaning that much of this waste – including plastics – ends up being burned or dumped in places like rivers and oceans, creating a major health hazard. Uncollected waste increases the likelihood of diarrhoeal and infectious diseases, and toxic fumes from burning waste lead to hundreds of thousands of premature deaths a year.

There are solutions to this problem, though. For example, by increasing the support given to poorer communities to manage their waste, it's possible to improve health, create jobs AND halve the amount of plastic that ends up in our oceans.

A window of opportunity

In just a few weeks, world leaders will be gathering in the UK for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) – it's a great opportunity for them to act together to tackle this global issue.

We would love to see the UK lead the way by putting more of the UK's existing overseas aid budget towards waste management, and by urging Commonwealth countries to agree that tackling waste is a top priority. This would improve the health and lives of people in poverty. And it would be great news for our oceans and our planet.

PLEASE PRAY:

- Give thanks for the recent increase in public awareness and concern about plastic waste.
- Pray that Penny Mordaunt, Secretary of State for International Development, will act to address this issue on behalf of the UK government at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in April.
- Pray that Commonwealth leaders will be encouraged to remember those living in poverty

Thank you for your prayers. If you haven't already, please do sign our email petition on plastics and poverty at tearfund.org/plasticpetition

PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



A World Bank report has warned that 140 million people in Africa, Latin America and South Asia could be forced to leave their homes by 2050 due to climate change. This is unless urgent action is taken to curb global warming and help people adapt. Pray that governments around the world will prioritise this issue.



Please pray for an end to the ongoing violence in the Ituri province of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Many thousands of people have been displaced as they flee horrific massacres, in which scores of women and children have been murdered. Tearfund and our partners are responding with emergency supplies.



The President of Myanmar, Htin Kyaw, resigned this week. Please pray for peace and stability in Myanmar, and pray for wisdom for state counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi as she selects a replacement.