

ONE VOICE

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

WHEN BACK TO SCHOOL IS COOL

What a privilege. To laugh at a string of tweets from parents jokingly relieved to send their children back to school. To smile at the comments of children who would prefer to stay out of uniforms and lessons.

@DadandBuried tweeted: My son tried to avoid going back to school by running away from me at the bus stop, so I ran in the other direction and now we're both free!

This made me giggle. No, my kids don't really hate school and I don't hate my kids, but there's a funny solidarity in mums and dads counting down the last days of holiday – and for the children to moan with their friends at returning to homework and Maths.

What a privilege to have these jokes and groans.

No joking matter

For Amir* in Yemen, all he wanted was to go back to school. To have the life a 13-year-old boy should.

Amir's mother passed away and his father is bedridden after an accident left him crippled. As the eldest child in the family, it fell to Amir to care for his father, his brother and three sisters.

At 13, someone should have been taking care of him.

But if Amir didn't provide for his family, who would?

All the hope he had was a wheelbarrow, which he filled every morning with a crate of eggs and a pot of potatoes and wheeled around the village, trying to sell the contents.

Hey, teachers, (don't) leave them kids alone

Then Amir met our partner who runs a food security project in his area. They provided food, freeing up his days. A local community initiative, supported by Tearfund, also gave Amir a backpack filled with school supplies.

Now Amir is doing what a 13-year-old boy should be. Spending his days with other 13-year-olds. Learning. Being given a future. Free from the heavy burden of providing for a whole family.

Maybe he's even groaning with his friends about homework and Maths... I hope so.

PLEASE PRAY

- Praise God for Amir's new hope – for the freedom to build a better future.

- Pray for strength and courage for children who are carers. Pray that God will provide people to see their needs and step in to help.
- Pray for our partners in Yemen and for the communities they are empowering. Pray that they will be blessed, protected and refreshed.

**Name has been changed to protect identity*

A NOTE FROM...

'Imagine how awful it would be to have to send your child to work instead of school. No father in Yemen wants to do that, but for many it is their only means of survival. The situation in Yemen is getting worse, and Tearfund's partners are working hard to reach out to those, like Amir's family, who are most vulnerable.' **Karen Soerenson, Middle East Team**

LETTING IN THE LIGHT

If you ever journey to the remote Tanzanian district of Manyoni you will see hundreds of Fireflies.

Families use Fireflies to read by, to work with and to light their way home after dark. Who knew?

Firefly is a solar-powered kit. It contains a small solar panel, five lamps, and a rechargeable battery pack.

Households are saving together to buy the Firefly packs. It is made possible by small community self-help groups, promoted by Tearfund.

The packs may not generate enough electricity to power a family home in cloudy Preston. However, for the hundreds of families in Manyoni, the Firefly is a life-saver – sometimes literally.

Mama Sam – watch your step

Mama Sam was stepping out of the house on a dark night. On her path was a venomous snake.

It's a growing problem in the region. Thanks to climate change, animals' natural habitats are shrinking. People and snakes are more and more likely to encounter one another these days. Stories of fatal snake bites are quite common in this area.

'I was going to step on it and it would probably have bitten me,' remembers Mama Sam. 'Thankfully I now have a solar light outside our door. I screamed and my husband came and killed it.'

It's not just snakes either: Amos Ebuz, the village chairman, says that solar lamps outside have reduced attacks from other wild animals. People would be attacked at night when they stepped out to use the latrines.

Maria – solar powered dynamo

Maria sits under the tree next to her kiosk on a hot Saturday afternoon. Her shop is now truly open all hours (almost).

Night draws in relatively early in Makutopora and when it's dark, it's really dark. In the past, Maria had no alternative but to close her shop.

Laurent, her husband, explains how their shop now opens before dawn and closes after 10 pm – all thanks to their solar light. 'This has doubled our income from the shop,' he boasts excitedly.

Laurent operates a motorbike taxi for a living. Now though, he takes care of business at the shop first, from 5.30am until his wife sees the kids off to school – then his taxiing begins.

Meanwhile their daughter Janet can finally keep all her customers happy. She's the only tailor in the village with a sewing machine, and at certain times of the year, demand for new clothes outstripped her ability to meet client deadlines. Customers got angry as special occasions loomed closer and their clothes were not ready.

Now she's got a solar-powered light and can make five sets of clothing every day. You need good light to sew and now she has it whenever she needs it.

Paulina – non-stop chapati people

They say the early bird catches the worm. And if you want to offer the people of Makutopora their breakfast, you need to be up bright and early.

Paulina missed most of the business from early risers, hungry for their chapatis and mandazis (a kind of African doughnut) due to the lack of light.

'Now, I can start as early as 4am so that by 6am, breakfast is ready for all my clients,' she says.

Her productivity has shot up too. 'I now make 150 chapatis per day and over 65 mandazis, up from 60 and 25 before I got solar,' she excitedly explains.

Her eldest daughter, meanwhile, has just completed her exams. She performed much better because she had access to reading light.

Now she's making more money than ever and she's got her eyes on some larger solar panels. Her wish list is long: she wants to power a TV and a fridge (ice cold Cokes would do a roaring trade in sweltering Makutopora). Finally, she says she wants to generate enough power to light up the whole street. With a little extra solar power, the sky's the limit.

PLEASE PRAY

Take a moment to thank God for the small, simple things that can make a big difference in people's lives. For the simple pieces of technology like the Firefly. And for the simple savings scheme that lifts men and women out of poverty in the poorest communities. Pray that many more will be lifted out of poverty and debt with the simplest of things.

HEALED FROM EBOLA, I'M NOW TELLING OTHERS HOW TO AVOID IT

The Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) continues to spread – with 2,000 deaths and more than 3,000 cases reported. But Tearfund is hearing remarkable stories of recovery and restoration. Kasereka's is one such story:

Living in Mambasa, eastern DRC, Kasereka is a 31-year-old father of two. One day, he heard that his father had contracted Ebola.

'I was furious because I didn't believe Ebola exists,' recalled Kasereka. 'I went immediately to visit my dad, but he died a few days later. After that, I also tested positive for Ebola.'

Change of heart

Mwaka Deogratias, who leads Tearfund's Ebola Response Team in the DRC, says: 'Some people don't believe Ebola exists because it's a new disease they have never experienced. The first symptoms of Ebola are similar to those of other common diseases such as malaria and typhoid fever.'

Following the death of his father, Kasereka put aside his doubts about Ebola, and agreed to be admitted to the Ebola treatment centre.

'I was cared for very well and got healed because I sought treatment early,' he tells us. 'I was discharged and now I attend the centre every month for a check up. I also receive food assistance. I am strong enough to carry out my daily work as I used to in the past.'

Kasereka knows that the community's scepticism towards Ebola can contribute towards the spread of the virus: 'Because of the resistance, 14 people in my family died. I know this deadly disease exists', he says.

Now he raises awareness of the real and dangerous threat of Ebola. His message to people is that they should seek medical treatment early enough to have a chance of surviving, like he did.

Hearing is believing

After receiving a grant from the US government*, Tearfund has been able to build latrines, washing facilities, and ensure health facilities are better prepared to deal with Ebola cases.

We're also engaging with communities, thanks to good relationships with faith leaders. Today, important messages about how to prevent, identify and respond to Ebola are being shared more widely.

Since November 2018, Tearfund and our local partner ECC have reached 351,908 people with information about Ebola. This has been primarily through door-to-door visits and in church meetings.

Mwaka adds, 'Hearing testimonies from those who have been healed from Ebola is a very effective way of convincing the rest of the community of the reality and dangers of the disease.'

Kasereka told Tearfund staff he is grateful to God because he saved his life, and to the Ebola response team for their dedication to this work. Now he won't stop sharing the important news he has with his community.

PLEASE PRAY

Father God,

Thank you for the testimonies of people like Kasereka, and the positive impact they are having. Please be with those who are sick and their families at this time – bring them healing and restoration. And protect all those who are working to tackle the Ebola crisis.

In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

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PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



Please lift up the nation of Burundi, where violence is escalating ahead of elections in early 2020. Pray for God's hand of peace to rest over the country; pray for fair, democratic elections; and pray for wise and just leadership.



Please pray for the 2.5 million Kenyans at risk of starvation following prolonged drought conditions in parts of the country. Pray for rain to fall where it is needed, and that emergency food supplies will be able to reach those who are vulnerable.



Last week marked the last ever Soul Survivor – a Christian youth conference that has been running for over two decades. Praise God for all the young people who have been inspired and equipped through attending Soul Survivor. And pray that God will continue to raise up youths who are passionate about justice and serving the poor.