

One Voice

Your weekly
prayer resource

tearfund

One year on from the blast that shook the world

Jaime Abraham, who leads Tearfund's work in Lebanon, looks back on the Beirut blast and shares an update on what is happening, as well as an invite to keep praying for the people there – who need our prayers more than ever.

August 4, last year, was a day like any other for Jaime and the other residents of Beirut, until the unthinkable happened: 'I was on the phone to my wife when I felt the ground shake like an earthquake. Then – "BAM!" – there was a massive explosion.' The blast killed around 300 people and left more than 300,000 homeless, bringing the city to a standstill.

Immediate need

After the blast, Tearfund's local partners moved quickly to help those in need. They were able to provide food, hygiene supplies and shelter. The money raised through Tearfund's emergency appeal enabled them to reach even more people affected, as well as adapt their support for the long-run to help the city begin to rebuild. This included supporting local businesses to get back on their feet and offering trauma support.

Angel was pregnant at the time of the blast. A cash grant provided by Tearfund enabled her to pay for healthcare costs, and her daughter was born safely in hospital. 'Even though life is hard, I have great faith in God for sending people like you to take care of me and my children.'

Hanging by a thread

But Jaime shares that life in Lebanon is getting worse with every passing second. The Lebanese pound has fallen in value drastically and families are struggling to pay for food, shelter and healthcare.

'Our partners are also facing challenges in transportation due to scarcity in fuel. There are state power blackouts reaching up to 22 hours a day,' explains Jaime.

'Often, there is no WiFi signal, halting work communications. Generators are rationed, since there is no diesel.

'The situation is incredibly hard for the people of Lebanon right now – they are out protesting in the streets. Please keep them in your prayers and ask God to bring healing to this country.'

Pray with us

- Pray for provision for the people of Lebanon; for food, shelter, healthcare and fuel. Pray for long-term solutions to make these accessible and affordable.
- As protests increase and the situation is deteriorating, pray for people's safety.
- Lift up the trauma support work that Tearfund is doing. Ask God to bring comfort and peace to people who are still recovering from the blast.

A note from...

'As you walk in the streets in Beirut you can still see demolished buildings, closed businesses, and names and photos of the blast victims. The destruction of Beirut on the night of the explosion was the most traumatic event in Lebanon's history. Turmoil, unrest, and poverty are the daily bread of the Lebanese. Lebanon today is stretching its hands asking for comfort. The Lebanese feel abandoned in a desolate city looking for builders.'

Farah Bou Kheir, Lebanon Team

Pray for the world



In Myanmar, the military general who took power in February's coup has named himself prime minister and said emergency rule may now extend until August 2023. Conditions are worsening across the country – with coronavirus cases rising, food shortages, and ongoing violence. Please keep the people we serve and our staff and partners in your prayers. And pray for a return to democratic rule and peace in Myanmar.



In Syria, access to fuel, electricity, food and medicine is becoming even more difficult. Prices are going up, and supplies are limited across the country. Pray for provision of these essentials so that communities do not have to go without. And lift up the work Tearfund's local partners are doing to reach people in need.



Violence has been rising in the Central African Republic (CAR) since December. Hospitals and health centres have been attacked by armed groups. They have also targeted community healthcare workers. Lift up to God patients and healthcare workers and ask God to protect them and comfort them. And pray for peace in CAR.

Stronger together: how community groups are empowering people with disabilities

Leonille, from Rwanda, used to feel lonely and helpless. As a person with disabilities, she struggled to find a job and saw no way to contribute to her family's finances. She felt rejected by her wider community and without purpose in her everyday life. But once she started meeting with other people with disabilities in her neighbourhood, Leonille realised that, together, they could accomplish more than they ever thought possible.

Leonille was equipped by Tearfund's local partner to set up a self-help group in her community. These groups are an effective way to create a supportive environment for people to work towards common goals, transform their lives and lift themselves out of poverty.

Leonille began connecting with other people with disabilities in her community, encouraging them to join the group.

'The convincing part was not easy. Most of the group members believed that they were no use for anything,' says Leonille. 'Once we came together, we were able to discover our abilities. Disabilities don't necessarily mean limitations. We complement each other depending on abilities and disabilities.'

New purpose

Nineteen other people with disabilities joined Leonille's group, and they started meeting every week to encourage each other. They also committed to saving money and pooled their resources and abilities to start making and selling handmade products.

'We hold weekly meetings, save money, organise Bible study and prayer sessions... and this keeps us busy so we do not have more time to think about our disabilities,' says Macienne, one of the group members.

Since joining together, the group members have a new sense of worth and purpose. They have formed new friendships, learned new skills, and are now able to contribute financially to support their families.

Each group member now owns a goat – which provides them with milk – and many have started new small businesses making jewellery, handbags or knitted items.

'This category of people is normally left out and society does not consider them,' says Leonille. 'I encouraged others to come together to value our talents, escape from loneliness, and improve our living conditions. I used to tell them that disability doesn't mean inactivity.'

Lifting each other up

The name that the group chose for themselves translates to 'let's lift each other up as disabled people'. It's a name they live up to: they have helped each other to overcome their challenges and found new hope for the future.

Tearfund partners with local churches and other organisations around the world to set up hundreds of self-help groups like Leonille's. As a result, thousands of people are being empowered to lift themselves out of poverty, and marginalised people are finally finding a place where they are welcomed and accepted.

Please join us in praying for self-help groups, especially as they deal with the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

Pray with us

Dear God,

Thank you for Leonille and all the members of her self-help group in Rwanda. We pray that they and their businesses will continue to thrive, despite the current challenges of the pandemic. We lift up people with disabilities, especially in places where they are facing discrimination and rejection. We ask that you will connect them to self-help groups, and to other people and places of support and encouragement.

In Jesus' name we pray, amen

The pastor and the peanuts

Pastor Feima, from Sierra Leone, left her part-time teaching job to focus on the church. Her husband was earning a decent wage and she was excited about how she could serve her community with this extra time. But then disaster struck – her husband broke his leg and could no longer work, leaving Pastor Feima unable to provide for her family. But God had a plan. And it was nuts.

'I experienced food shortage; I could not afford either my basic needs or my family's,' shares Pastor Feima. 'My life had completely changed unexpectedly.'

With four children to take care of, Pastor Feima knew that she needed to find a job alongside her role at the church. At first she was discouraged and frustrated over her situation, but then she decided to look to God for provision – even though she had no idea where this would come from.

An unexpected answer

Pastor Feima then received a letter from the ministry leadership of her church, inviting her to go on a training course led by Tearfund's partner. The course was all about how churches could help people lift themselves out of poverty. And stay there.

As Pastor Feima took part in the training, she realised her mindset was changing on how she viewed challenges in her life. She was quick to put into practice what she had learned – both in church and at home.

Pastor Feima set up Bible study groups with her congregation to explore how they could find solutions to the problems they faced by using the resources they already had.

‘The process has brought great transformation in my personal life, the church and individual members of the church,’ she says. ‘And the church has embraced it so much that almost everybody has become part of the Bible Studies and activities in the church.’

Coming out of her shell

Pastor Feima didn’t just preach this to others – she tried it herself too. Alongside her role in her church, she has acquired some land and planted peanuts to farm for profit.

‘It is my first time to be engaged in agriculture and my children and I are enjoying it,’ she shares. ‘In addition, since I have been engaged in this small scale farming life has been good to me, I can afford to address my needs and my family needs without depending on any outside support.’

The peanut farm is going so well that Pastor Feima is now able to hire some other people in the community to work on the land. This has created more job opportunities in the area.

‘I am really very grateful to God for the training as it is not just changing my life, but also bringing a lot of transformation in the life of the church and the membership as a whole.

‘In the church, broken relationships are being restored, people are engaged in their individual projects and lives are being transformed. The finances of the church have started increasing speedily as members were engaged in small businesses.’

God can do more than we can ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20). Instead of just providing for Pastor Feima’s own needs, God answered her prayer by equipping her to lift her community out of poverty too.

Pray with us

Spend a few moments in thanksgiving – praising God for how he has helped Pastor Feima and her community overcome poverty.

Reflect on a challenging situation you are facing today and recommit it to God, trusting in God to provide for you.

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100 Church Road, Teddington TW11 8QE

T 020 3906 3906 E info@tearfund.org

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