

The logo for Tearfund, featuring the word "tearfund" in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The letters are white and are set against a teal rectangular background.

Correspondent

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A photograph of a woman with blonde hair, wearing a bright pink button-down shirt and dark trousers, sitting in a lush green field. She is smiling broadly. Around her are several children of African descent. One boy to her left is looking through binoculars. A girl next to him wears a red headscarf. To her right, another girl is smiling, and a young girl in a patterned dress is leaning towards her. In the background, there are traditional mud-brick huts with thatched roofs and a large tree under a blue sky with white clouds.

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Uncovering Ethiopia's Silent Struggle

STORY GRACE ELLIS

📷 A mother takes her child to be assessed for undernourishment at a local clinic.
Photo: Himali McInnes.

Warning: This article discusses topics related to suicide.

Ethiopia, a landlocked country located in East Africa, is the continent's oldest independent nation. With its remarkable historical heritage, captivating landscapes and rich cultural tapestry, its beauty collides with a horrific reality that millions face. Three years of failed rains have pushed the country and the region to the edge of famine.

The famine of 1983 – 85, which affected 7.75 million people, shocked the world. Today, more than 20 million people in Ethiopia already need emergency food. With much-needed aid and attention diverted to Ukraine and Gaza, the world has turned a blind eye to the unfolding catastrophe in the East African nation.

But one journalist determined to shine a light on this forgotten crisis is Newshub's Europe Correspondent, Lisette Reymer. Recently, Lisette and Newshub cameraman Alex Parsons travelled to Ethiopia with Tearfund's CEO, Ian McInnes, and International

Programmes Director Tim Manson. Lisette covered stories for The AM Show, digital, and 6pm news.

Tearfund's Communications Specialist, Grace Ellis, sat with Lisette to learn about the people she met, hear her heart-breaking interviews and powerful moments. She also shared about the extraordinary work and resilience of Tearfund's local partner, working to meet the needs of the hungry.

"I didn't know the immense scale of it before I went. It's just enormous. Probably my biggest moment of shock was hearing from aid workers they consider what is happening in Ethiopia to be the biggest humanitarian issue in the world right now. It hits you in the face when you have experts in the field saying the scale of it dwarfs anything else the world is talking about right now," says Lisette.

The scale and the immense need became evident when Lisette interviewed 100-year-old Abdul.



📷 Lisette interviews 100-year-old Abdul who has lost all his livestock during this extended drought. While the surrounding countryside is deceptively green due to recent light rains, it is not expected to last long enough to harvest crops.
Photo: Ian McInnes

Before the interview, he was waiting with a group of people, hoping food was going to arrive. We asked him who was delivering the food and where was it coming from. No one really knew, and eventually, someone said, 'We are waiting for God to deliver the food'.

Lisette told me the people in his village would do this every day. They were reliant on God because they had nothing.

"I started crying when I interviewed Abdul. He spoke to us essentially about wanting to kill himself. He didn't know why he was alive, and he didn't want to be alive. It was misery, but he told us his faith was keeping him from doing that," says Lisette.

Abdul has lost his ten children and all his livestock. His story is sadly too familiar in this region.

"I thought, how has this man survived so long? But not long ago, he had a successful business, he had an incredible

reputation and satisfaction. His dignity had been stripped away by the drought. It's hard meeting someone whose life is incredibly difficult to fathom."

Lisette was also impacted by a malnourished seven-year-old girl.

"She looked way smaller than my three-year-old nieces—she couldn't stand up, she wasn't moving and was so pale. I realised this crisis is indiscriminate, it affected everyone."

Lisette spoke about the misconceptions people have about extreme hunger in Africa: That these countries are always hungry. But she learnt in southern Ethiopia, the area she visited, those communities' outcomes didn't always look bleak. It used to be a thriving agricultural hub with rich farmland—it was a profitable and successful area. Farmers owned cattle and goats, could provide protein for their families, and sold butter to earn their livelihoods.

📷 Cover page: The village children slowly warm-up to Newshub journalist, Lisette Reymer.
Photo: Alex Parsons

“They were really proud farmers; they knew what they were doing, ran good, strong businesses, and supported their families,” says Lisette.

Because of the drought, these people have lost their livelihoods. I think there’s a sense of lost dignity and self-worth. What I loved was that many were so determined to get it back.

Lisette was struck by the beaming smiles and warm hearts despite their difficult circumstances. One moment that stood out for Lisette while filming a story for Newshub was when the children from one of the villages gathered to sing a song.

“The children were so scared at first. They’d never seen a TV camera before. We’d turn and show them the footage and they squealed and ran away. By the end, they had warmed up so much they started singing for us. It took them so long to convince themselves to do it. They started when we weren’t watching. It was so sweet, such a special moment.”

Lisette spent three days with Tearfund’s partner, Terepeza Development Association (TDA) and says she cannot speak highly enough of them.

“They’re remarkable. There’s always so much said about aid organisations and concerns about where the donations end up. But I love that with TDA, the money is going directly into the communities. Tearfund works as that intermediary channel to get the money to locals who know what they’re doing. The partnership is remarkably effective.”

Lisette told me she saw the tangible impact donations can have on communities.

“We met a medical health worker who said when TDA was delivering food [bought] with Tearfund donations, malnutrition numbers were down. Now the donations have stopped, they have run out of food to deliver, and in the last six months, the number of new patients coming into her clinic has doubled.

That is direct confirmation from someone who works in the local medical centre of the impact New Zealand dollars have had on that community,” says Lisette.

Lisette has been Newshub’s Europe Correspondent for three years and says she has wanted to tell this story.

Telling this story is genuinely one of my greatest achievements, not personally, but for journalism. Tearfund has made telling those stories and delivering them to Kiwis possible. Now there are a bunch of New Zealanders that understand what is happening in Ethiopia, that didn’t a week earlier. That’s really important.



If you’d like to act against hunger today, visit tearfund.org.nz



Inside Out

STORY IAN MCINNES

Next year, Tearfund turns 50 years old. There is plenty to celebrate, and we will. But now, I feel like I have been transported back 40 years. I’ve just returned from Ethiopia, where 20 million people are on the brink of famine.

I’m old enough to remember Live Aid in 1985, when 8 million Ethiopians were in desperate need; 1.2 million died. An uncouth Irishman, the impassioned Bob Geldof led the music world in the most extraordinary benefit concert.

Famine was declared again thirteen years ago when I was in Ethiopia, watching children on the Somali border fight for life and mothers plead for assistance. It can be tempting to think

nothing has changed. Yet, as I shared in a recent blog, that’s simply not true.

With help from Tearfund, the development wings of the large evangelical church networks in Ethiopia have been at the forefront of a step change in development. Their toolkit has included village-level savings and loans schemes, and smallholder farmer cooperatives. They teach biblical principles: gender equality, inclusion, the use of talents, money handling, and care for the poor among us. They are a force for good and have brought economic order and joy to Christians and Muslims alike and seen degrees of prosperity reach large swathes of Ethiopia’s countryside.

But these communities cannot control the rain and do not start the conflicts that often accompany resource scarcity and regional power struggles. However, during my recent visit earlier this year, I witnessed incredibly tenacious local leadership from our church partners determined to avoid a famine. They have the capability to feed tens of thousands and run emergency nutrition programmes for the most malnourished. They know how to restart the cooperatives and help farms produce once more—as soon as the rains come.

Tearfund will respond to this emergency, and we hope that many of you will support this work as our partner distributes emergency food and a high-nutrient supplement for those malnourished. We also hope to train farmers in climate-smart techniques to enable them to grow crops in low rainfall situations so they can feed people in the region, and they will also distribute drought-tolerant seeds and goats to help rebuild their herds.

People ask me how I stay positive in my line of work—in the face of such daunting challenges and seemingly unrelenting hardship. The answer is simple. God is at work in our world despite the severity of the crisis. You and I, through Tearfund and its partners, have the remarkable opportunity to act in the face of impending famine. To save a life. To walk with the people of Ethiopia on the road back from the brink. The world may waver and look away, but God is faithful.

Psalm 9:18 says: “But God will never forget the needy; the hope of the afflicted will never perish.”

For 50 years, Tearfund has faithfully searched for and found God at work in the world among the poor—whatever the situation. That’s worth celebrating.

Prayers and medical help making a difference in the Middle East

STORY IAN MCINNES

As conditions in the Middle East continue to deteriorate, you’ve been an important part of equipping our partners to provide vital medical support for individuals and families.

We’re so grateful for your support in these tough times. Thank you to all who generously donated to our Middle East Emergency Appeal.

One of our partners is Al Ahli Hospital. It is the only functioning medical facility in North Gaza, despite being hit twice by rockets. The small number of staff continue to work around the clock receiving patients, performing surgeries and looking after inpatients. We stand in awe of this team as they exhibit remarkable courage, working tirelessly to save lives.

Shipments of desperately needed medical supplies for Gaza have been organised by our other partner. The first delivery, containing 68,000 treatments, arrived a few months ago. With the deaths of humanitarian staff that were tragically killed, we are praying that Gaza will be opened up more for aid to get through. This will allow our partners to get more medical help in Gaza. In the meantime, other shipments have been sent to medical teams in Lebanon.

As we continue to support our partner organisations’ work in these vulnerable communities, Tearfund is deeply grateful to supporters for their compassionate response to this crisis.

Scan the QR code to watch an update on our response.



Typhoon Haiyan-devastated communities now thriving

STORY KEITH RAMSAY



Category 5 Typhoon Haiyan caused widespread devastation in the Philippines in 2013. Photo: Integral Alliance

Ten years on from one of the world's most ferocious cyclones, communities in the Philippines are thriving thanks to a long-term recovery project.

During one of the most powerful typhoons in recorded history, winds from the Category 5 "Super Typhoon" Haiyan struck the Philippines in November 2013. With wind speeds up to 314km per hour, trees were shredded, and homes were blown apart. One of the most devastating forces was the unexpected storm surges.

Some were estimated to be more than seven metres high, they claimed hundreds of lives as they swept away everything in their path. An estimated 16 million people were affected by Haiyan, and 6,300 people lost their lives.

Many of Tearfund's supporters generously gave to provide emergency relief and create safe spaces for children in the coastal communities of Marabut and Basay in Samar. Such was the destruction from Haiyan, that staff working for our partner had to walk into these communities as roads were washed out or strewn with trees and debris.

Emergency responses for events such as cyclones help meet immediate needs and generally last three to six months. However, when this funding ends, many aid agencies pull out, and communities are left to recover on their own. As many responding agencies began pulling out of Samar after the emergency phase ended, the people in these communities faced enormous challenges. With the destruction of an estimated 33 million coconut palms, the coconut industry—the main cash crop for these communities—was in tatters. This meant communities faced a seven-year wait until new trees came into production.

Following the cyclone, many farmers relied on unsustainable fishing for their incomes. Fish stocks were rapidly becoming depleted, and many people became vulnerable to exploited labour and human trafficking.

But thanks to the vision of Tearfund, our partners, and supporters, help for the recovery of disaster-affected communities was on its way.

It was in this challenging situation that Tearfund, our partner, and supporters began a **transformational journey which ended in November 2023**—10 years after Haiyan.

While assessing the initial emergency response, Tearfund Programmes Specialist Kevin Ridell strongly felt we couldn't leave the people in this predicament as they had no real sources of sustainable livelihoods to recover well from this tragedy.

Tearfund and our partner identified the potential for a long-term project to help families achieve economic self-sufficiency and develop resilience to all types of disasters, and donors joined the journey. This was called the Western Samar Coastal Agriculture Project.

Farmers formed groups to learn sustainable farming techniques and collectively supply markets across the Philippines. They were no longer farming just to feed their families and earn a little on the local market. Members also saved a little each week to create a pool of funds from which members could borrow at low interest rates to buy equipment and farming inputs such as seeds and fertilisers to improve their crop yields.

To support farmers' efforts, the programme provided the necessary infrastructure, such as irrigation systems and post-harvest facilities. These facilities enable farmers to ensure their produce is stored, processed and kept fresh to markets in cities such as Manila. Communities now have facilities to process their rice and are adding value to the products they grow, such as cassava chips, peanut butter, banana chips and more.

The Western Samar Coastal Agricultural project has effectively increased the self-sufficiency and resilience of poor rural households and innovatively improved economic returns through multiple activities that build on each other.

Dyan Rodriguez, the New Zealand Embassy Development Officer, Manila

As the Philippines experiences up to 20 cyclones a year, another focus has been preparing communities for disasters. Being coastal, these communities are particularly vulnerable. Today, they work together when disaster strikes. While no two storms are the same, this resilience was evident when Typhoon Rai hit in 2021, resulting in no homes destroyed and no crops lost.

The programme and facilities were handed back to the community in November 2023. While this project can never erase the loss and devastation experienced by these communities, they are now thriving, and their lives and well-being have improved thanks to this long-term recovery programme. We want to thank all our supporters who have helped our partner walk alongside these communities, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade for catching the vision to help "build back better".



100% SUCCESS RATE FROM THE SAVINGS GROUP

118 groups with a total of 3,723 members (944 men and 2,779 women).



Rice PRODUCTION MORE THAN DOUBLES

At the start of programme, rice production was **less than 2 tonnes/hectare** of low-quality white rice. Today, it is **up to 8 tonnes/hectare** of high-quality rice. Rice farmers have increased their income from **\$2 NZD/kg to \$6 NZD/kg**.



39% THE TOTAL RETURN OF INVESTMENT (ROI)

From entrepreneurial activities and cumulative savings.

Farmers learnt new techniques to improve their yields, such as placing rather than scattering rice seeds. Photo: Tearfund NZ

Seven powerful images from Nepal

STORY AND PICTURES HELEN MANSON

The opportunity to photograph Tearfund's work around the world is a privilege that's never lost on me. What a joy it is to bring to life stories of how God is at work on our planet. I've seen him moving in powerful ways through many remarkable organisations as they reach out to their local communities and put their faith into action.



Recently, I returned from one of Tearfund's longstanding partners in Nepal. Share and Care come alongside families living in extremely remote villages high in the Nepalese mountains. These communities are often vulnerable to traffickers who offer them empty promises of a better life.

Share and Care provides education and awareness workshops to help prevent human trafficking and child marriage in these communities. They also support families to improve their incomes with training in new methods of animal-raising or helping start a micro-business through savings and loan group initiatives. These approaches boost financial stability, significantly reducing the risk of people being susceptible to trafficking.

← [LEFT] A group of young girls gather in an alleyway, playing and laughing as the sun begins to set on their village high up in the Nepalese mountains. Photographing children has got to be one of the greatest honours for any photographer. What a gift it is to be invited into their imaginary worlds, if only for a moment.

→ [RIGHT] One of the first people I interviewed was 15-year-old Phulmaya*. She got up at 4am and drove three hours on a motorbike to meet me. Phulmaya shared how her mama died of cancer when she was five and how her dad's low-income job and sudden illness meant she had to leave school when she became a teenager. She was scared to drop out of school because she knew of three children in her class who were married off when they left. And then, with a huge smile, she told me Tearfund's partner came alongside her family.

They provided her with stationery, school fees and a uniform so she could continue at school for 15 months until her dad was able to work. They also provided 34 chickens and chicken feed to help them start a poultry business. This business now covers her school expenses. Phulmaya was as proud as punch. With yellow ribbons in her hair and an immaculate school uniform, she stood with empowerment running through her veins. Her mother never had the opportunity to go to school; her beautiful girl is going further than she could have ever imagined.



→ [RIGHT] Bidya* holds a precious photo of her father who has passed away. As a child, she lost her mother, and her father worked overseas. For many years, she was taken care of by an extended family member. Sadly, he ended up selling her into slavery, and she spent many years in brothels in India. After almost a decade, she was released and returned home to Nepal, where she reunited with her father. She cared for him until his death. Share and Care helped Bidya earn an income with some goats that she is lovingly raising. They also taught her in gardening techniques so she can grow and sell vegetables to add to her income.





[ABOVE] Laxmi* sits with her four daughters outside their home. Because she birthed a fourth daughter and not a son, her husband promptly left her and hasn't returned. Share and Care has provided wrap-around support for this vulnerable mum, providing animals to help her earn an income. Share and Care provided Laxmi education and awareness training around trafficking and the dangers of child marriage and provided a scholarship for her children to go to school. The look of pride and joy on her face as she sat beside her children (all in school) was a privilege to witness.



[LEFT] An elderly woman clasps her hands with joy as I join a workshop in her village on human trafficking and forced labour. Her soft, kind eyes were a joy to behold. The brightness of the green wall behind her makes her more striking.



[LEFT] I always look for moments of kinship when travelling. These moments need no explanation because we can all relate. Here, a young boy and his classmates walk home from school in Nepal, throwing a handmade ball high in the air and laughing with delight all the way home.



[BELOW] Renuka* and her husband sit with their beautiful daughter in their home. They fell in love through Facebook, and when they finally met, Renuka realised her husband was unable to walk. She decided to marry him and provide for him no matter what—a big sacrifice in her culture. Share and Care helped Renuka set up a small shop that they both run from their one-room home. This shop provides for their family and sustains their living expenses, and that's no small thing.

*Names have been changed to protect identities.



Unwrapping the bitter truth about chocolate

STORY TEARFUND

An investigative journalist asked a boy on a West African cocoa farm in 2019 how old he was. The boy answered “19”, but the moment the farm overseer looked away, he crouched down and wrote “15” in the sand. He’d been out of school, working to harvest cocoa beans since he was 10.

Did you know that New Zealanders consume the most chocolate in the world, at a rate of 4.8 kg per capita annually? Though it may taste heavenly, the truth is that a lot of the chocolate we consume in New Zealand carries a story of child labour and exploitation. It's a bad taste that no amount of sugar can mask. Tearfund has been part of an initiative called The Chocolate Scorecard that will help Kiwis use their purchasing power to help bring about change in the chocolate industry. The Chocolate Scorecard is an advocacy initiative that assesses the world's largest chocolate companies across a range of human rights and sustainability issues. This year's results reveal progress is being made in the cocoa industry, but there's still a long way to go. The good news is that consumers can help make a difference!

Let's unwrap some of the dark truths behind our favourite treat

Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire are the world's biggest cocoa-supplying nations. An estimated 1.56 million children, some as young as five, are child labourers on cocoa farms in these two countries. While children worldwide often assist their families or have after-school jobs, it becomes 'child labour' when it hinders their education or damages their development. And of these child labourers, an estimated 16,000 are in forced labour; working without pay or unable to leave.

Reports describe children working from dawn until dusk in the jungle, cutting down cocoa pods with sharp machetes. Sometimes children suffer machete wounds or hernias from hauling sacks weighing up to 50kgs long distances.

Yet, there's hope. Over 20 years ago, the world's largest chocolate companies collectively promised to end child labour in the cocoa industry by 2005 through the Harkin-Engel protocol. When that didn't happen, they promised to reduce it by 70% by 2020. The good news is that we are seeing improvement in the industry over time, but there's still a long way to go until we see this 20-year promise fulfilled.

This year, Tearfund partnered with another non-profit, Be Slavery Free, to bring you The Chocolate Scorecard. The world's 38 largest chocolate companies were assessed on a range of human rights and sustainability issues to find out where progress is being made in the cocoa industry.

This year, for the first time, these chocolate companies all have a policy in place that describes their commitment to monitor or reduce child labour in their cocoa supply chains. This is a great initial achievement, but the cocoa industry still desperately needs more action.

One impacting action companies can take is setting up a programme to track child labour. This could involve training and employing trusted members of local communities to collaborate with farmers and families, identifying potential cases sensitively. We can see some of the fruits of these programmes, as so far these chocolate companies have collectively identified 26% of the estimated worst forms of child labour cases in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire. The worst forms of child labour are those that cause harm or hinder development. This is an encouraging result, but only 55% of those companies' cocoa supply chains are covered by a programme that addresses child labour. Just think of what could be achieved and the children's lives changed if these efforts expand.

Having dived into the realities of exploitation, you're probably wondering how you can make more informed chocolate choices and wield your power as a consumer. The chocolate industry is messy, and exploitation is complex, but here's some suggestions:

- The Chocolate Scorecard focuses on the largest companies that are producing 90% of the chocolate in the industry. If you're thinking of buying from one of the big chocolate companies, we believe it's best to support industry leaders when it comes to their policies and practices.

You can find out about some of your favourite companies in the list below.

- There are many small chocolate companies the Scorecard doesn't cover. Some are working to address child labour and slavery, while others are still at the start of their journey. If they're not included, look at their social and environmental information on their website. If they're not talking about what they're doing, they're likely just beginning their journey. You can ask them what their plan is.

Products available in NZ

Company	Popular products	Traceability + Transparency	Living Income	Child & Forced Labour	Deforestation & Climate	Agroforestry	Pesticides	Overall
		1	1	1	1	1	2	1
		2	2	1	2	2	2	2
		1	2	1	2	2	2	2
		2	2	1	2	2	3	2
		2	2	1	2	4	4	2
		2	3	2	2	2	3	2
		2	3	3	2	3	3	3
		3	3	3	2	3	4	3
		3	4	3	3	4	4	4

1 Leading in policy and practice 2 Progressing in policy and practice 3 Needs improvement in policy and practice 4 Trailing in policy and practice 5 Lacks transparency did not respond or complete



Tearfund's partner fights surge in online trafficking

STORY CAITLAN JOHNSTON

The Covid pandemic saw the world change in many ways and people and industries had to adapt quickly. On a surface level, we saw the medical, transportation and hospitality industries reorganise overnight. What was not so apparent was the dynamic pivot that criminal industries took.

According to LIFT International, online sexual exploitation is now Thailand's biggest human trafficking issue. Photo: Nikki Denholm

Tearfund's partner organisation, LIFT International, is a Kiwi-founded not-for-profit combatting human trafficking in Thailand in partnership with local law enforcement.

LIFT saw a major increase in forms of the online sex industry and human trafficking during the pandemic. This spike was echoed across the world, including New Zealand, with the consumption of online pornography.

The organisation's country director, Tipnaree Setphisut, says online sexual exploitation is now Thailand's biggest human trafficking issue.

But the modern slavery that LIFT combats is not limited to the sex industry. Tipnaree explains that vulnerable people living in poverty are tricked into taking fake jobs with the false promise of great pay and working locations. After being trafficked to a different region or country, they are forced to work in jobs such as call centre jobs run by organised criminal groups to scam money from people. They are beaten to achieve their scam targets and prevented from leaving.

"The scams can be fake jobs, grooming for fake romance relationships, or sexual exploitation. They think they will be working in Thailand, but could end up in Myanmar or Cambodia," she says.

Pornography and cyber-crime

By helping to prosecute offenders and strengthening justice systems, LIFT is fighting to prevent human trafficking and advocating for a world where modern slavery is not tolerated.

Online grooming and sexual exploitation were at the centre of LIFT's biggest justice case so far. In 2017, New Zealand authorities were involved in Operation Blackwrist, an investigation initiated by Interpol, which made global news. The operation uncovered a Thai man who was grooming boys online, aged between 6 and 14. He offered them sweets, internet access and games to gain their trust and

lure them to his home. Once there, he would sexually abuse them and take explicit photos and videos of them, which he sold online. He made thousands of dollars from the abuse each week. More than 600 people in over 60 countries bought and downloaded the material.

LIFT was asked by local law enforcement to apply their skills and expertise to identify the survivors and gather evidence for the man's conviction.

Finally, 50 children who had been trafficked were rescued and cared for. Nine offenders across Thailand, Australia and the United States were prosecuted.

Tipnaree says part of LIFT's focus for 2024 will be adapting their knowledge, skills and training where necessary, so they can continue to respond effectively to cases like Operation Blackwrist in an industry that is changing and adapting.

"We want to increase the skills and techniques of frontline staff, law enforcement officials, and also organisations we work with, so they can respond to online human trafficking," she says.

Hope for survivors

Before Tipnaree joined LIFT in 2022, Tearfund's partner organisation worked on a human trafficking case which led to the rescue of more than five girls, some as young as 13. Some were locked in tiny rooms and not allowed to use the bathroom.

A major cause of this type of human trafficking is poverty. Children are forced to help support their families financially, making them vulnerable to human trafficking, says Tipnaree.

The girls were removed from harm and supported with counselling and education— all a part of LIFT's

casework process to ensure survivors do not fall back into the human trafficking cycle.

"I look at them now, and they are ready to go to university," reflects Tipnaree as she considers the dramatically different future of those rescued children.



LIFT International's country director, Tipnaree Setphisut.

This case really inspires me. It gives me hope. If these girls can make it, other people we support will be able to recover one day, like those girls.

Tipnaree believes it is important to have quality support and education available for human trafficking survivors to empower them to build a new future. She adds that raising awareness in communities is also vital so that people can identify when a child is at risk of being trafficked.

People are not always aware of how people are trafficked, and once it has happened to them, they don't know what to do, or how to seek help—that is where LIFT offers a bridge of justice and mercy, says Tipnaree.

If you would like to combat Modern Slavery and support partners like LIFT, sign up and give monthly. tearfund.org.nz/Modern-Slavery



The moment I realised the power of sponsorship

STORY AND PICTURES GRACE ELLIS

A couple of months ago, my husband Rhys and I had the opportunity to visit a *Compassion Child Sponsorship Centre for the first time in Puerto Princesa, in Palawan, the Philippines.

When we arrived, every staff member who wasn't teaching greeted us at the front gate with a handmade welcome sign—it was the warmest welcome I'd ever received.

As we sat down to talk with the project's director, they brought out a cold drink and offered us Filipino empanadas.

We soon found out that the project director, Hermyne, had served at the project for 16 years. She shared stories about the children by name, and it brought her great joy to tell us about many who'd graduated to become police officers, pastors, teachers and engineers.

We learnt that the children in the programme receive a school uniform, shoes, stationery, and regular medical and dental check-ups, as well as meals at the centre.

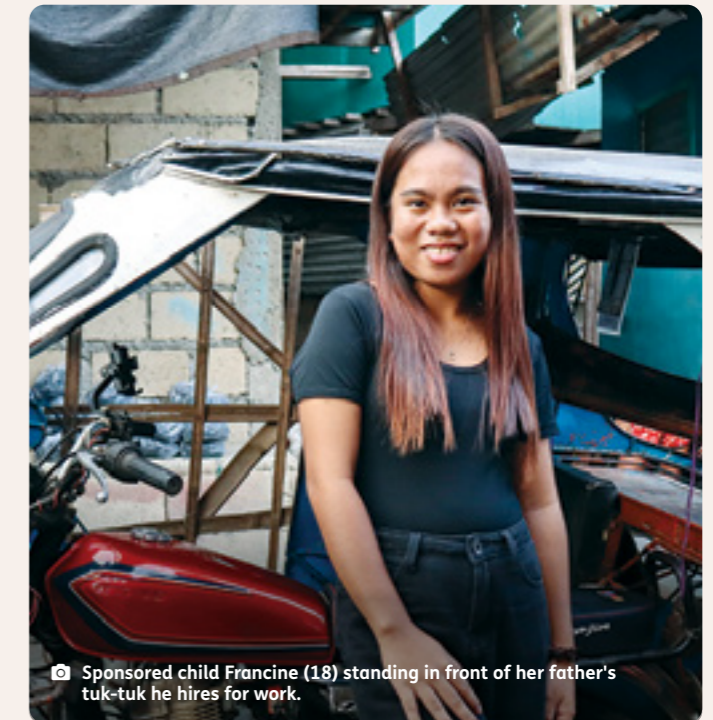
But the support from the sponsorship programme run by the local church doesn't stop there. When disasters strike their community, Compassion is the first to respond.

During two typhoons, the church became an evacuation centre. Compassion also assisted families with repairs to their homes and handed out food parcels. For three years during Covid, the local church provided hygiene kits and food packs to families.

It's not only physical needs that are being met. Hermyne's heart has always been to see children and families grow in their faith journey. She told us not only are the children



📍 Puerto Princesa Compassion Project Director, Hermyne Acupido.



📍 Sponsored child Francine (18) standing in front of her father's tuk-tuk he hires for work.

coming to know Jesus, but the families are too and are making better choices.

After learning about the programme, the Compassion team took us into the classrooms to meet the children. In unison, they said a polite hello with giggles of excitement.

After seeing the programme in action, we visited the homes of three sponsored children. But it was the very last home I came to that I truly realised the power of sponsorship.

Francine is enrolled in the programme. Her father, Francisco, works day and night driving a tuk-tuk to transport people around Puerto Princesa. After overhearing a passenger talking about Compassion, he was determined to get his daughter registered in the programme.

"Before sponsorship, our house was very small. We were seen as the poorest of the poor. Life was hard. Every day, every night I would look for a job or a passenger, just to earn money for our daily needs," he told us.

Before, all the children would sleep together in one space. After sponsorship, we were able to expand and repair our house. With the financial gift from Francine's sponsor, we were able to create new rooms and buy new beds for them. Now we are also eating better food that we could not afford on our own because it was expensive.

Francine, now 18, is grateful for the opportunities the programme has given her.

"Sponsorship means my parents don't have to think about providing for me. My school needs, my bags and my school supplies are all provided for. The programme has also helped me to become confident, especially with dental hygiene. Now I can confidently smile," says Francine.

"The impact is very deep. In this community, some of the kids my age have already wasted their lives, by marrying young. Because of the support that I receive mentally, spiritually and physically, I feel like I have purpose in my life."

Francine is now studying financial management at university. She's also involved in the local government for youth and is a secretary for the youth council. She wants to become a bank manager and provide a better life for her family.

My biggest dream is to travel the world. With my birthday money this year, I bought luggage. It's hidden away, but someday I will use it.

Francine's life was changed forever, all because of a conversation in the back of a tuk-tuk.

Do you know why this stuck with me? Because of that one conversation, Francine's dreams are no longer limited. Her family are being released from poverty, they have come to know Jesus, and she can reach others with her testimony.

Hope is rising. That's the power of sponsorship.

* Compassion is Tearfund's child sponsorship partner.



📍 Grace and Rhys Ellis with the Compassion staff.



📷 Louise meets Mary Joy's family at their house.

Meeting Mary Joy

STORY AND PICTURES LOUISE HAINES



📷 Mary Joy and her mum pose for a photo with Louise at a local mall.

There's something special (and slightly surreal) about meeting the girl who has only been a photo on your fridge, and with whom you've exchanged words and prayers only through letters.

I recently had the privilege of meeting Mary Joy, who lives in a remote part of the Philippines. Driving along the windy, rural Filipino roads, I was filled with excitement and nerves at the day ahead—how would she react to seeing me? How would I react to seeing her? How would we go with the language and cultural barriers?

After a couple of hours, I arrived at the local church and was warmly welcomed by the Project Director, Pastor and many

curious children. The Director let me know I was only the second sponsor who'd come out to meet their sponsored child at this project. I was ushered inside the busy church office (as it was medical checkup day at the project for the children) and then introduced to Mary Joy and her mum. They were both incredibly shy—I think I was one of the first non-Filipinos they ever met! They tentatively shook my hand and started telling me about their life and what Mary Joy likes to do at the Compassion project. Her dad also met us at the church, and they gave me a tour of their home and community. They live rurally so many, including Mary Joy's dad, are farmers doing their best to live off the land in a climate which is often

affected by storms and cyclones. Their resilience was evident. It was pure joy to meet Mary Joy, her family, her Pastor and her local Compassion teachers and caseworkers. Their hearts for God and their community really inspired me to think deeply about the impact I could make in my own everyday life as well.

Mary Joy was incredibly shy for most of our time together, but the day impacted us both deeply. We did a lot of what I would consider “normal New Zealand

things”—had takeaways for lunch, drove an hour to the nearest town, went to the mall and did some grocery shopping. Yet this wasn't normal for Mary Joy and her mum. They'd never been able to travel that far from home or been to a mall (the escalator gave them quite a fright!) and had never put things in a trolley without worrying about what it'd cost.

One of the gifts I gave Mary Joy was a soft toy kiwi; she didn't let it go the whole day we were together!

The Compassion staff kept telling me this was a once-in-a-lifetime day she'd remember forever. I know I will too. I was deeply moved as I thought about this day.

Yes, sponsorship and visiting Mary Joy was a sacrifice, however, in the big scheme of my life, it's a relatively small thing. The teaching of Jesus when he said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35) came alive to me in a new way that day.

After my visit, I am even more convinced that sponsorship is about the one— getting to know and encourage one child who is made in the image of God and loved so deeply by him. In turn, I've been encouraged in my faith and feel so blessed that our stories are connected in this way.

Visit brings sponsored child's 'world to life' for Kiwi family

Becky Kemps and her daughters, Mia and Maci, share about their life-changing visit to meet the children they sponsor in Kenya.

We've connected each of our three children with a sponsored child their age. We've been writing to the kids for the past six years and have seen their photos as they grow. Meeting our sponsored children for the first time was so amazing... it brings their world to life.

Watch this 90-second video to hear about their experience and the moment Becky will never forget.

Feeling inspired to visit your sponsored child? For more information, visit tearfund.org.nz or call us on 0800 800 777.



📷 Maci (left) and Mia from Auckland, visit with children their family sponsor in Kenya.

Auckland church leaders impressed by Indonesian Mums and Bubs programme

STORY DONOVAN WEBER*

📷 A baby falls asleep in its mother's arms at a Mums and Bubs programme in Indonesia. Photo: Compassion

In March, leaders from Shore Community Church had the privilege of travelling to Denpasar, Indonesia, with Tearfund NZ. Our church started sponsoring the Mums and Bubs programme in 2023, which offers lifesaving care to mothers and babies in the first year of life when they are most vulnerable. We wanted to understand the work of Compassion, Tearfund's partner, so we could share it with our congregation. What we discovered was a ministry that was even more Gospel-centred, holistic, and locally driven than we could have imagined.

We began our trip with a quiet day in the hotel as this bustling city of more than one million people shut down and fell completely silent! It was the Day of Silence, known as Nyepi, a regional Hindu holiday in Bali. The holiday requires people to remain indoors and reflect and purify themselves. This gave us space to think about the spiritual climate of the city where the Mums and Bubs programme operates and be receptive to whatever God had in store for us.

Willy, our Indonesian host and translator, took us to the Child Development Centre the next day to meet Pastor Eko, who is the heartbeat of Compassion's ministry at the centre. We listened to a beautiful story of the ministry taking place in Denpasar through indigenous Indonesian churches and pastors like Pastor Eko. We also heard how Compassion is supporting the work these churches are doing. We witnessed a dynamic, locally directed relationship that is "releasing people from poverty in Jesus' name."

While we experienced the beauty of the people and culture of Denpasar and held some adorable babies at the centre, we were also introduced to the extreme poverty in the city. Our hosts invited us to the homes of three families in the Mums and Bubs programme. In these homes, we experienced devastating poverty that saw families living in one room with a bathroom shared by seven other families. We visited a family living in a rubbish dump, where they make their living collecting rubbish to resell and food waste to feed their pigs that live in an adjacent room. We visited a family of three daughters who lost their mother to illness and are being

raised by their father. After a quick calculation, we figured out that these families were living on NZ \$1 a day.

Back at the Child Development Centre, we witnessed first-hand what Tearfund, Compassion and the church are doing to help these families thrive despite the harsh conditions of urban poverty. The Mums and Bubs programme gathered mothers and their newborn babies for a time of worship and teaching—it was incredible to experience! They taught about God's love, parenting skills, nutrition, and even family planning. The babies receive health screenings by medical professionals every three months to ensure they are developing well. At the end of the class, we helped to distribute large bags of healthy food to the families

to sustain them throughout the week. It truly is a holistic approach to ministry—deeply rooted in God's love through his church.

Our team was humbled by the hospitality of our hosts and encouraged by the scope of the ministry in Denpasar. Our partnership has begun with the Mums and Bubs programme. However, Tearfund and Compassion's philosophy is to walk alongside children in this community until they are ready for adult life. On our trip, we had the pleasure of spending time with Willy, our thoughtful

tour leader who also happened to be a sponsored child in a Compassion programme in Indonesia.

He shared about growing up in poverty and the unimaginable decisions families are forced to make when they cannot afford to support their children. But Willy's future changed when someone sponsored him through Compassion's ministry in Indonesia. We thought about the young babies we met throughout the week and how their lives can be changed when God's people live out his Kingdom values in Denpasar.

We left the centre with our hearts and stomachs full (did I mention the hospitality?) and excited about the partnership God has called our church into with Tearfund.

* Donovan Weber is the Associate Pastor at Shore Community Church.



It was encouraging to see what happens when God's people are attuned to what He is doing in the world and join in bringing the Kingdom on earth.

Keewani shares her sponsorship journey with Kiwis

STORY CAITLAN JOHNSTON

Keewani Cook grew up in poverty in the Philippines. She is in New Zealand to share how being sponsored as a child transformed her life.

Keewani Cook used to sit on the bamboo floor and under the coconut leaf roof of her home in the Philippines eating rice with salt. She lived life just like the other children in her community.

Her parents did their best with limited resources but couldn't afford her schooling. Some days Keewani would go to bed hungry. She lost three of her siblings to treatable medical conditions because her family could not pay for healthcare.

"When you grow up in poverty, you don't really think about it, because all your friends are poor. All of the community is poor. I thought it was just normal. Sometimes you get hungry—but everybody gets hungry."

"My sister and I would beg our parents to buy us an apple, even a rotten one, but my parents couldn't afford it," she says.

This was Keewani's reality for seven years until she began attending a Compassion Project at a local church and was sponsored by an Australian man. Suddenly, a world of opportunity opened up for her— she ate regularly, had access to medical care, went to church, and was finally able to go to school.

Keewani says her family's life was still hard, even after sponsorship, but most importantly, they had found a way to send her to school and found "their roots in faith".



Two years later, difficulty in their province led her family to move to Manila, the capital city. They hoped this would help them break free from poverty.

"My parents were adamant they needed good-paying jobs to support us," she says.

Rents in the city were so high that they moved frequently, but all the while, Keewani was still able to attend school thanks to her sponsor.

Keewani was sponsored from 1986 until she graduated from the programme as a 21-year-old in 2001.

She feared university would not be possible after sponsorship because her family did not have enough to pay the fees. Compassion launched its Leadership Development Programme about the time Keewani graduated. She was selected for the programme, which covered her university fees. Five years later, Keewani was invited to Australia by Compassion to speak about the sponsorship programme. Before the trip, she prayed that she would meet her sponsor, but her attempts to track him down failed. It seemed so impossible. It wasn't until the day of

the event that Keewani's prayers were answered.

The president of Compassion Australia asked her onto the stage, saying, "Hey Keewani, what can you remember about your sponsors?" She replied, "I can remember how unconditionally they've given to me, they just kept giving and praying for me. They didn't have to, but they did." At that moment she was told her sponsors were there in the crowd.

"I just ran to them and hugged them over and over again. I told them thank you, thank you so much. You changed my life and my family, and I know that one day my community will change because of what you did," she says.

Today, Keewani is a physical therapist in Texas where she lives with her husband. She often travels with Compassion to share her testimony.

Keewani sponsors four children through Compassion. She believes she is a living, breathing testament to the fact that child sponsorship works. Keewani says she lives by a Bible verse she first heard at the Compassion Project in the Philippines.

Jeremiah 29:11 is my favourite verse because God has a plan. He has a purpose for my life.

Scan the QR code to see Keewani's tour details.



Mrs Brown, a former teacher and Tearfund supporter, has always had a deep passion for the wellbeing of children. After her retirement, she came across Tearfund's child sponsorship programme and was immediately inspired to make a difference in the lives of children challenged by poverty.

I sponsor two children through Tearfund, and I write to them regularly. It brings me immense joy to witness them grow up and flourish in their adult years. Out of all the children I have sponsored over the years, a couple of them stand out. One is a girl who came from an extremely poor background, but she went on to become a theatre nurse. The other was a boy I sponsored—he became a civil engineer. I encouraged him by sharing stories about my father, who was also a civil engineer.

Mrs Brown believes that child sponsorship can help children overcome their circumstances and achieve their full potential. As an educator, she is passionate about empowering young women to pursue their dreams and become leaders and advocates for others. Her goal is to equip and enable them to have a future filled with promise and possibilities.

Mrs Brown recognises that the need for help will continue in the future. Her Will includes a future gift which will be used to reach vulnerable children, especially girls, where the need is greatest.

If you share Mrs Brown's heart for sponsorship, you can now include the children you sponsor in your will. This will enable them to complete the sponsorship programme with the same hopes and dreams for their future that you would have for your own family members.



If you would like to include a gift in your Will to help the child your sponsored child complete the programme, we can make the process simple.

Contact Lee at bequests@tearfund.org.nz call 021 587 665 or visit tearfund.org.nz/Gifts-in-Wills

Yes! I would like to make a donation to where it's most needed.

Amount:

\$35 \$50 \$100

Other \$

Sponsor a child from \$56 a month.

Call our team on 0800 800 777, or scan the QR code and find a child to sponsor online.



Or visit tearfund.org.nz/sponsor

Your details

Please complete your details if you are returning this form to Tearfund

Supporter No. (If known)

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Tick to receive our monthly e-news

Have you considered leaving a Gift in your Will to Tearfund?

- I'm considering including Tearfund
- I intend to include a gift to Tearfund
- I have already included Tearfund in my Will
- I would like more information on including a gift in my Will

Payment details

Donate online at tearfund.org.nz

Card Details: Visa Mastercard

Expiry: /

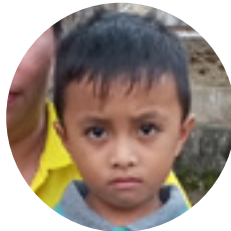
Cardholder:

Signature:

Sponsor a child today!

There is something special about sponsoring a child with Tearfund and Compassion. Sponsorship is much more than just providing financial assistance to help children free themselves from the barriers that poverty creates. It's also about building relationships. Through letters, sponsors can help children overcome poverty of spirit and give them hope for the future. Compassion sponsorship also gives children the opportunity to find the greatest relationship of all—the one that can be found in Jesus. As relationships are a significant part of our sponsorship journey, most of these children awaiting sponsorship are reasonably close to New Zealand, making it possible for sponsors to meet the child they choose to sponsor.

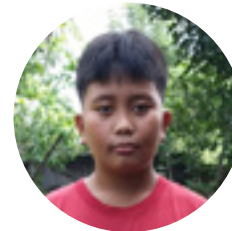
For \$56 a month, you can sponsor one of these children and help them realise their God-given potential. Visit tearfund.org.nz for more info and find other children awaiting sponsorship, or call 0800 800 777.



Azrel

Indonesia
DOB 12/8/19

Azrel lives in Indonesia with his parents and brother. He is 4 years old and speaks Sanger.



Josh

Philippines
DOB 19/09/10

Josh lives in the Philippines with his parents. He is 13 and in the equivalent of Year 8 in school, where his favourite subject is Music.



Merlin

Indonesia
DOB 13/5/13

Merlin lives in Indonesia with her parents, and 4 siblings. She is 10 and in the equivalent of Year 5 at school, where her favourite subject is Reading.



Chanchan

Philippines
DOB 22/10/21

Chanchan lives in the Philippines with his parents, and 5 siblings. He is 2 years old and likes to dance, sing and play with toy cars.



Yathushi

Sri Lanka
DOB 10/11/18

Yathushi lives in Sri Lanka with her parents. She is 5 years old and likes to play with dolls and do arts & crafts.



Zoey

Philippines
DOB 18/4/2019

Zoey lives in the Philippines with her mother, brother and sister. She is 4 years old and enjoys drawing, dancing and playing hide and seek.



Princess Kyllie

Philippines
DOB 27/11/19

Princess Kyllie lives in the Philippines with her parents and sister. She is 4 years old and likes to draw and dance.



Kelvin

Tanzania
DOB 9/6/15

Kelvin lives in Tanzania with his parents and sister. He is 8 years old and in the equivalent of Year 3 at school, where his favourite subject is Reading.

Our purpose

Motivated by Jesus, we encourage Kiwis to act for justice and relieve poverty among the world's most vulnerable people.

0800 800 777 info@tearfund.org.nz tearfund.org.nz

Tearfund is a registered charity. Charities Act 2005 registration CC21725. Donations \$5 and over are tax-deductible.

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