



tearfund
Ireland

Autumn 2017

teartimes

LOVE, LOSS AND NEW LIFE

Syrian refugees find fresh hope in Lebanon

ON THE BRINK

Lifelines to disaster zones

MEET MULUGETA

Our new colleague in Ethiopia

Be part of a miracle

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For many, these are dark days indeed. But is it time to wring our hands? No way. Although the work ahead is hard and the road is long, we know we are co-labouring with Christ and with one another.

In this edition, you'll read about Cedra from Syria who's one of almost 2 million refugees in Lebanon. She's one of the 65.6 million people worldwide today who have been forced from their homes. And crucially Cedra is one of the thousands being shown love and care by our local partner, MERATH.

You'll read about floods in Nepal, drought and hunger in South Sudan, and a cholera epidemic in Yemen. These countries were still reeling from earlier onslaughts when the latest disaster hit. Yet, thanks to your generosity, we've been able to respond in each of these contexts, bringing practical support and hope where it was in short supply.

We're delighted to introduce you to Mulugeta Dejenu on pages 10–11, the latest addition to our team. We hope many of you will have the chance to meet him when he visits Ireland later this year but generally Mulugeta will be based in Ethiopia, overseeing our projects in that nation and beyond.

Through Mulugeta, and through all the different projects we're involved with, God is strengthening ties within communities and across nations, between Christians and across religious divides.

God has not abandoned his world: he has a plan for restoration and redemption. And, amazingly, it involves us. And, wonderfully, it sometimes involves dancing and glitter balls, as our Strictly with Tearfund Ireland show will prove (see pages 12–13)!

Thank you for standing firm and staying the course with us.

Sharan Kelly

Sharan Kelly
 Chief Executive Officer
 Chair of Dóchas, the association of Irish Non-Governmental Development Organisations
 Vice Chair of EU-CORD Administrative Council, a network of European Christian Relief and Development NGOs

TEARFUND IRELAND

We are bringing hope and demonstrating love to the most vulnerable and marginalised people – through the local church.



Cover photo: Our local partner MERATH (Middle East Revive and Thrive) in Lebanon is giving children in Lebanon access to non-formal education and safe spaces to play. Image Credit – Helen Manson.

GET IN TOUCH WITH US!

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LOVE, LOSS AND NEW LIFE IN LEBANON

Cedra is one of the 2 million refugees who make up almost a third of Lebanon's population today.* She's also one of thousands of people being helped by our partner, MERATH. Cedra's situation threatens to reduce her to a statistic, but her painful story is a strong shout of protest against anonymity...

Story told to Niamh Daly Tearfund Ireland through Integral.
 Photos: Helen Manson



Pastor Marcel of Middle East Revive & Thrive (MERATH) is Tearfund Ireland's partner in Lebanon. His work with refugees includes distributing food and other essentials including medical supplies and winter kits, and helping Syrian children access education.

*MERATH Quarterly Update, June 2017



Before the war, my life in Syria was very stable. I was married with three children, two girls and a boy. I felt like I owned the whole world.

We had a large piece of land and big trucks. We worked hard for our house and fixed everything in it.

Then the war came. I felt very scared for my children. We used to have to run from house to house.

One day, at 6am, we heard that ISIS were coming to our neighbourhood. I took my three children and my cousin's daughter and left the house. Snipers started shooting at me as we ran. I was holding my son across my chest and my daughters by the hand. I was eight months' pregnant at the time.

'IN 30 MINUTES I LOST MY SON, MY FATHER AND MY COUSIN'S DAUGHTER'

The bullet went through my son's shoulder to his heart. There is nothing I could ever say to explain that moment. My cousin's daughter was also killed. My father came to get us and rushed us to the hospital. But, by the time we got there, my son was dead. My father went back to our home and we've never heard from him again. He is probably dead too. In 30 minutes I lost my son, my father and my cousin's daughter.

I heard later that ISIS took our land. They stole or burnt everything; they've also taken our trucks and tractors. They put a notice on our property saying, 'This land belongs to ISIS.' They bombed our house too. There's only rubble left. Even the pickles I had made for the winter... all of it is gone.

When I came to Lebanon three-and-a-half years ago, I felt very lost. We came in winter when it was snowing. My husband helped us find a tent to share with other families and he's now working in Syria so we can afford the rent. Now, I have five daughters.

When I first met the local pastor, I was very depressed. I just wanted to feel good inside and thought that was more important than anything else – even our finances. I started attending the church and felt loved. My personality began to change and the depression went away. If I could come every day, I would. One day, I believe I will see my son in heaven: that's what keeps me going. The church gave me this hope.

It's really difficult here. I wish I had my own tent. We are living with relatives and friends, and I find it hard to raise the kids with all those other people. My kids often ask me if they can go to a park or somewhere to play. In Syria, I could let them play on our land: here, we live near a road.

I've suffered a lot but the church has made things easier. They've provided for our basic needs and given me fuel for the winter and food when we need it. They've also helped get my girls back in school. That's when things really changed for the better. They are learning again, more aware of everything around them, and they're better emotionally too.

My dream is to go back to Syria, to live a stable life with my husband and our daughters in one home. And I want my girls to learn how to love and respect others.

OFFER A HAND OF HOPE

War, violence, persecution and climate change are forcing record numbers of people to abandon everything and run.

65.6 million people are far from home. An unprecedented number of people have lost their houses, their land, all they own. Many have lost loved ones too. We are committed to going the extra mile to reach those in greatest need, wherever they are.

Will you help us reach out and restore hope?

€37 could pay for hygiene kits for two refugee families, providing essentials such as soap, shampoo, toothpaste, sanitary towels and nappies.

€146 could provide three families with a heater to survive the biting cold in their makeshift shelters.

Please give what you can.

Visit www.tearfund.ie/donate
or call 01 878 3200

Photo: mayamit/AdobeStock

Disasters



Photo: Nepal think4photop/adobestock

Conflict and natural disasters have brought a fresh wave of misery to countries already facing severe challenges. Yemen was already on the brink of famine after years of insecurity: now, it's facing a cholera outbreak on an unprecedented scale. Nepal has been hit hard by floods even as it recovers from devastating earthquakes in 2015, while a poor harvest and drought in South Sudan have made life even more precarious for families caught up in the fighting. We have been able to throw a lifeline to desperate communities, thanks to your generosity.

HUNGER IN SOUTH SUDAN

South Sudan plunged deeper into food insecurity as the conflict made the country's economic crisis worse. To add to the country's woes, the harvest was poor and food supplies dried up quickly. By June, half the population were in desperate need of food – the greatest number of South Sudanese ever to be in that position.*

Thanks to the generosity of the Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal, we were able to fund our local partner ACROSS to set up nutrition programmes in the Equatoria regions of Lainya and Wonduruba in June and July. These two areas are increasingly insecure and local people have been forced to hide in the bush in fear of

their lives. So, they have been unable to get to their farmland to harvest crops or cultivate the land, so they were becoming increasingly malnourished and vulnerable to disease.

*ReliefWeb, 2017



Angelika Agun and her family in Northern Bahr el Ghazal in South Sudan received food vouchers as part of Tearfund Ireland's emergency food relief programme, supported by Irish Aid. Photo: Markus Köker/Tearfund Ireland.

FLOODING IN NEPAL

The rains that began on 11 August were the worst Nepal had experienced in 15 years. The floods that followed caused widespread devastation across 35 of the country's 75 districts. This emergency came at a time when Nepal was still struggling to recover from the 2015 earthquakes: there is still much reconstruction and recovery work to be done. Five of the districts hit hard by the floods were also badly affected by the earthquake, while four of the districts affected by flooding this August had not yet fully recovered from serious flooding three years ago.*

Estimates suggest that 1.7 million people are affected and 100,000 homes have been washed away. Many people have lost important documents such as birth certificates, identity papers and title deeds for their land, which will make it difficult for them to access vital services and compensation.

Tearfund Ireland is responding through trusted local partners who have set up emergency health camps and are distributing essential items such as tents, blankets and clothes. Medical support has been given to those suffering from waterborne diseases, such as skin diseases, diarrhoea, cholera and dysentery.

*ReliefWeb, 2017



Photo: AFP/Getty Images



Photo: A young boy plays in the street near his school in Aden, Yemen. Credit: Panos Pictures.

CHOLERA EPIDEMIC IN YEMEN

In August, Yemen's cholera outbreak took a turn for the worse. The number of those affected was revised from 300,000 to 500,000 and 5,000 new cases were being reported daily.* About 2,000 are reported to have died of the disease since April. More than 40 per cent of those infected are children. Yemen's cholera epidemic is now the largest in the world.

More than two years of conflict between pro-government forces and Houthi rebels has left the country's health service on its knees. More than half of all medical facilities have

had to close due to damage sustained during the fighting.

Tearfund Ireland's partner on the ground responded promptly to an urgent request from Yemen's Ministry of Public Health and Population (MoPHP) for support and for essential medicines and medical supplies. At least 3,000 people infected with cholera will receive free treatment at local health centres in the worst-affected areas through this partnership. Tearfund Ireland is grateful to the Church of Ireland's Bishops' Appeal for making this possible.

*World Health Organisation

BRIDGING THE GAP

Introducing Mulugeta Dejenu – the newest member of the Tearfund Ireland team. He’s passionate about helping people cross cultural and geographic divides in the fight against poverty. So, the fact he’s based in Ethiopia is all the more exciting...



Mengistie Rebsso Research Assistant, Mekelle University Ethiopia and Professor Sam Cromie, Trinity College Dublin.

Words: Niamh Daly

It was late-August, around the time the children went back to school, that I had my first chat with Mulugeta in Addis Ababa over the phone.

He had just sent his eldest son, off to study in the US. Mulugeta and the rest of the family were already missing him badly. We connected immediately.

We talked excitedly about how Mulugeta would be helping to oversee our work in Ethiopia and other countries in East Africa, projects that we support directly and want to scale up. But there was one project in particular which was clearly close to his heart: Self Help Groups.

When asked what so inspired him about Self Help Groups, he was direct: in his entire career, he had never seen another model that had such a strong impact on the lives of poor people, he said.

He had seen Muslims and Christians working together in these groups and being oblivious to their differences. He had spoken to one Muslim woman who had thought she would never have any Christian friends, only to find that she now had many through her Self Help Group.

Mulugeta is passionate about the way the Groups are not only lifting people out of poverty but also building social bonds and networks of support, with far-reaching consequences for entire communities.

So, it is very fitting that, on his first visit to Ireland later this year, one of the things Mulugeta will be involved in is launching a new report documenting some of these ‘other benefits’.

Dr Sam Cromie, Professor of Psychology at Trinity College Dublin, set about investigating these benefits in a research project in Ethiopia last year. His



aim was to evaluate the impact of Self Help Groups on the psycho-social well-being of their members and identify key factors that promote and hinder that positive impact.

His report, Psycho-social outcomes and mechanisms of self-help groups in Ethiopia, will be hugely helpful to Tearfund Ireland as we seek to expand the work of SHGs into other countries in the region.

So, it’s clear that Self Help Groups have the potential to cross cultural divides and to be replicated in other contexts. They’re also proving to be a powerful expression of international collaboration as our generous supporters in



Mulugeta Dejenu Haile With Self Help Group members in Gunono

Ireland help kickstart a movement that promises to spread across East Africa.

But, as Mulugeta points out, God’s been building these links for decades. Mulugeta became a committed Christian through his friendship with Timothy, the son of a missionary couple working at a local SIM school. Timothy’s mother, Margaret, was very kind to him and gave him special ‘coaching classes’ which helped him through his own government school.

Our friends, the Tuttlebee family from Grosvenor Baptist church in Dublin, have recently gone out to Addis Ababa to teach at a SIM school. It’s a small world, we agreed.



Members of Ethiopian Self Help Group Betesfa Eniguaz, which means ‘Walking together by hope’, are learning how to break free of generational poverty. Photo: Gavin Leane / Tearfund Ireland

GOING THE EXTRA MILE



From glamour and glitters balls, to hard toil in trainers, your fundraising is making a world of difference to those whose world has been turned upside down.

THE COUNTDOWN TO STRICTLY HAS BEGUN!

Dust off those dancing shoes and get out the glitter... it's not long now to Strictly with Tearfund Ireland!

We're excited that our celebrity judge on Sunday 29 October will be World Champion Ballroom Dancer Loraine Barry from RTE's 'Dancing with the Stars'. And we are thrilled that the Irish National Youth Ballet will be giving a special performance in the intermission.

The contest will take place at Crowne Plaza Hotel, Northwood Park, Santry Demesne, Dublin 9.

And our special thanks to Kay Dockery, a keen Tearfund Ireland supporter, who helped Strictly contestants with their fundraising by making up hampers of treats for them to raffle.

CHRISTMAS IN LONGFORD

A huge thanks to Sinead Mcweeney and her TY class at Mean Scoil Mhuire St Mary's School in Longford for their generosity and for raising a smile.

They set aside part of their classroom as a Santa's Grotto photobooth last Christmas and invited pupils to have their photo taken in the wintry wonderland in return for a €2 donation. All profits went to Tearfund Ireland.



NO STOPPING OUR GIRLS!

Tearfund Ireland Marketing and Fundraising Manager Niamh Daly joined forces with members of Open Arms Church Newbridge to take part in the VHI Women's Mini-Marathon in Dublin in June.

The wonderful Gladys Euth and Bianca Oberholster joined Niamh in pounding the pavements and raising support for the church's missions ministry which includes supporting Haitian restavek children to receive an education.



STRICTLY 2018

Why not join us for our next Strictly with Tearfund Ireland event early next year!



Let us pray

NOVEMBER 2017 – ETHIOPIA

Local churches in Ethiopia are currently helping their communities by setting up Self Help Groups (SHGs). SHGs address issues such as learning how to save money, caring for their environment, combating illiteracy and support for people experiencing food insecurity.

Give thanks for Self Help Groups across Ethiopia – for the transformation of lives and the close friendships and support that have been formed.

Pray that the church will glorify God through the work we are doing with Self Help Groups

Pray for new Self Help Groups that have been established, that they will be well established and grow together in unity.

DECEMBER 2017 – CHRISTMAS

'She will give birth to a Son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.' Matthew 1:21

Thank God for the incredible gift of his Son and all he came to bring us.

Around 360,000 babies are born every day, many into very poor communities. Pray for these precious new lives.

Jesus came that we might be saved and our lives transformed. Pray that his transforming work will continue in and through us.

JANUARY 2018 – YEMEN AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Over two years of conflict have virtually destroyed Yemen's health, water and sanitation systems. Yemen is a country in crisis. More than 18.8 million people urgently need humanitarian assistance – more than three-quarters of the population.

As we enter a new year, pray and petition God for peace in Yemen, so that those who are suffering can receive the help they need.

Pray for all those who remain separated from family or are grieving the loss of a loved one across the Middle East. Ask for the Lord's comfort and strength and that families may be quickly reunited.

Pray for Tearfund Ireland partners, that they may continue supporting those who are most vulnerable and offer dignity and hope to families in desperate circumstances.

FEBRUARY 2018 – ZIMBABWE ORPHAN CARE

'Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed.' Psalm 82:3

UNICEF figures indicate there are more than 1.2 million orphans in Zimbabwe. Please pray for them, that they will find loving care and hope for the future.

Pray for the church in Zimbabwe and Tearfund Ireland partners such as ZOE as they provide care for orphans in the community rather than in institutions.

Pray for the people of Zimbabwe, 72% of whom live in poverty, according to World Bank figures.

MARCH 2018 – CONNECTED CHURCH

Tearfund Ireland links churches and groups in Ireland with our partners who are doing remarkable work to release potential and fight poverty and disease in Cambodia and Uganda.

Thank God for all those being lifted out of poverty as they are awakened to new ideas and their God-given potential through the work of our Connected Church partners in Cambodia and Uganda.

Give thanks for churches and groups who have linked with an overseas partner to connect with, pray for, give to and visit them. Thank God for the enrichment Connected Church relationships bring. Pray that more churches in Ireland will connect with Tearfund Ireland partners in this way.

WE CAN'T HOLD BACK THE STORM BUT WE CAN HELP THEM WEATHER IT

Disasters will strike and they're coming fast and furious.

We can't shield people from the onslaught – but we can protect them from the worst impacts.

We teach communities how to prepare for drought or floods, earthquakes or hurricanes. So, they can withstand the storm and get back on their feet faster.

Your regular gift of €21 can help communities become more resilient so they are better placed to survive the next natural disaster.

Call us today to find out how you can help communities stand firm and face the storm.

To find out more:
call 01 878 3200
visit www.tearfund.ie

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