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We are the official aid agency of the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

We are an international development charity who reach out to people living in poverty with practical help, whatever their religion or culture.

Front cover photograph:
Daniel, 21, in his carpentry workshop in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Photographs:
Annie Bungeroth, Svitlana Dmytrenko, Thom Flint, Liam Finn, HOPE Friendship for Development Organization, Leeds Trinity University, Joe Newman, Louise Norton and Amit Rudro.


Illustration:
Sam Osborne, Shutterstock.

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FOREWORD



Hello and welcome to the summer issue of CAFOD's *Side by Side* magazine.

As our summer draws to a close and the final months of the year arrive, we might be tempted to think of endings – green leaves will soon turn brown and days grow quickly shorter. But this September is still a time to mark beginnings: a new school year, a newly elected government and a new collection of inspirational stories from around the world – stories of life-changing work made possible by people like you.

With your support, we're continuing the fight to fix our broken food system. That's why in this update we've got stories about fantastic fishing families in Liberia (page 18) and mushroom farmers in Democratic Republic of Congo (page 26), as well as a first look at our *Family Fast Day Appeal*: the story of a young man whose carpentry skills are enabling him to earn enough money to put food on his family's table.

And what can we expect from our newly elected government? There won't have been many MPs who travelled to Parliament after the summer election without having heard from CAFOD supporters. Our campaigners asked politicians nationwide to commit to tackling global poverty. Now it's time for them to put those commitments into action.

Almost straight after our previous general election, the pandemic pushed dozens of low-income countries into serious debt. Governments in some of the world's poorest nations faced extraordinary pressures on their health systems. At the same time, they had to pay back debts to foreign lenders, including big banks demanding enormous interest rates. This new global debt crisis continues to force low-income countries to make an impossible choice: spending on basic public services, such as health, education and tackling the climate crisis, or repaying unjust debts.

The new government must change this. And it can. You can read all about the new global debt crisis and the Pope's call for hope in our upcoming Jubilee Year, on page 4.

None of our work would be possible without your support. Because of you, we're continuing to push for change, working in solidarity with our sisters and brothers around the world to tackle the injustices of poverty, conflict and climate change – so everyone has the opportunity to flourish.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Liam Finn'.

Liam Finn
Campaigns Manager

JUBILEE 2025: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR CATHOLICS?



BY CAFOD'S CAMPAIGNS MANAGER, HELEN MOSELEY

2025 will be a Jubilee Year in the Catholic Church. Pope Francis has invited us to be 'Pilgrims of Hope', but what does this mean for Catholics?

Pope Francis' vision for the Jubilee Year in 2025 is for renewed hope. In a special message titled '*Spes non confundit*', or 'Hope does not disappoint', Pope Francis urges us to look for signs of hope in the world around us – and to work for peace and justice.

In the Catholic Church, a Jubilee or Holy Year is a special year of forgiveness and reconciliation in which people are invited to come back into a relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation.

The Jubilee Year, beginning on 24 December 2024 and ending with the Epiphany on 6 January 2026, brings a special invitation from Pope Francis to discover a vision that can "restore access to the fruits of the earth to everyone". We are also invited to rediscover a spirituality of God's creation in which we understand ourselves as "pilgrims on the earth", rather than masters of the world.

HOW OFTEN IS A JUBILEE YEAR?

A Jubilee Year is celebrated by the Church every 25 years. This has been the case since 1470, when Pope Paul II changed it from every 50 years.

WHAT IS THE BIBLICAL BACKGROUND FOR THE JUBILEE YEAR?

The word Jubilee comes from the Hebrew word *yobel*, which is a ram's horn. This wind instrument is blown to mark the start of a Jubilee Year in the Bible (Leviticus 25:9). In the Bible, the Jubilee Year occurred every 50 years and involved the cancelling of debts, a period of rest for people and the earth, as well as land being restored to the landless.



THE NEW GLOBAL DEBT CRISIS

In the Jubilee Year of 2000, many Christians came together to call for cancellation of debt owed by the world's poorest countries, with some great success. Uganda had £715 million worth of debt relief and used it to double primary school enrolment. The Jubilee Year of 2025 is coming at a time when many lower-income countries in the world are once again facing a debt crisis of huge proportions.

THE NUMBER OF LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES IN DEBT CRISIS IS ON THE RISE

Despite facing significant poverty burdens, countries are having to make huge repayments on high-interest loans to wealthy banks, institutions and governments, leaving them unable to properly fund essential services.

Approximately 3.3 billion people now live in countries where debt-related payments are greater than spending on health or education. Debts are being paid at the expense of hiring doctors and teachers, as well as building schools, hospitals and sewage systems. This debt burden also leaves countries less able to cope with the increasing effects of climate change.

The Bible teaches us that money lending is about accompanying vulnerable people, not about profiteering. But in our current global system, powerful banks make huge profits from the vulnerability of poorer nations.

A Jubilee Year in the Church is historically a time for cancelling debt and restoring equality. CAFOD believes this Jubilee year is a time to push for action on this new debt crisis.

“I ask that [affluent nations] acknowledge the gravity of so many of their past decisions and determine to forgive the debts of countries that will never be able to repay them. More than a question of generosity, this is a matter of justice.”

POPE FRANCIS, MAY 2024



SANDUN THUDUGALA IS A HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER, ACTIVIST AND ADVOCATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE IN SRI LANKA. HE IS HEAD OF PROGRAMMES AT THE LAW & SOCIETY TRUST, A LOCAL ORGANISATION SUPPORTED BY CAFOD.

Sandun answers our questions about how the new global debt crisis is affecting ordinary Sri Lankans.

What is the debt crisis in Sri Lanka?

"We are trapped by debt. For decades, after independence, we've been increasingly depending on foreign borrowings for our needs. We've been borrowing money to cover the gap of our expenditures and incomes. We have to spend almost everything we earn as a country to pay our debt.

"Our local industries and local economy have collapsed significantly, which has destroyed our capacity for producing and earning income. So we have no way out, we just earn, and we

just keep paying our debt back. And we will have to keep borrowing to fulfil our needs."

How does the national debt impact everyday life for the Sri Lankan people?

"In order to pay the debt, the government is reducing fuel and fertiliser subsidies, electricity, social spending like health, education, and social security. This means our basic expenses have increased rapidly. Our electricity prices have tripled, our transport costs have tripled, food prices have increased rapidly. And we don't have a proper education or health system.



“Pope Francis has outlined a vision of hope that should inspire the world during the coming Jubilee Year. But the Pope hasn’t just set out reasons for hope. He’s set us a challenge to give witness to that hope – as individuals and as a society. The Holy Father is clear that leaders must ensure the hopes of so many of our global family aren’t quashed by the debt crisis dozens of countries face. Francis explains that debt cancellation is a matter of justice, with numerous governments having to make an appalling choice between paying for basic public services or repaying private creditors.”

CHRISTINE ALLEN, CAFOD DIRECTOR

“Every day normal people have to bear the burden of this debt crisis, because it’s extremely difficult for us at the moment to get the basic services that we need for day-to-day life. There is no medicine in hospitals, equipment is not available. The majority of the families in Sri Lanka now don’t have enough food.”

How are your organisation and CAFOD working together on this issue?

“We’ve been working with CAFOD for more than ten years to build active citizenship. This means helping ordinary people to have the information, knowledge and skills necessary to tackle unjust policies and advocate for their rights.

“We support the farmers’ and fisheries’ movements, trade unions, and other social movements. We help the people

understand how economic reforms are impacting on them, and how they can resist some of these unfair policies and advocate for fair justice policies and reform. CAFOD is supporting us, not just to oppose what’s happening, but also imagining and articulating a better future.”

Left: Sandun Thudugala, head of programmes at the Law & Society Trust, a CAFOD partner organisation.

Above: Pope Francis.

Previous page: Young campaigners at Falmouth beach protest climate crisis, Covid vaccine equity, debt cancellation and aid cuts.

ACT

Keep updated at
cafod.org.uk/cancelthedebt

Find Jubilee resources for schools
at **jubilee-school.org.uk**

EMERGENCY APPEAL FEEDBACK

Your support means we're able to respond to humanitarian crises around the world.

SUDAN CRISIS APPEAL UPDATE

The war in Sudan forced millions of people to flee their homes. Throughout the last year, Sudan has grappled with the largest internal displacement crisis anywhere in the world, including more than 3 million children.

At the launch of our Sudan Crisis Appeal, Telley Sadia, CAFOD's country representative for Sudan, told us:

"At least 25 million Sudanese need immediate, emergency help. Families are already going hungry and famine is looming. This crisis threatens to become the worst in living memory."

Recently, Telley updated us on the situation from inside the country: "People have been traumatised. I'm seeing a long-term impact on the mental health of most of the



Above: Telley Sadia.

Near right: Your donations have helped local professionals to build safe and secure toilets in Alagaya refugee camp.

Far right: Your donations to CAFOD helped fund the construction of a storeroom for vital hygiene items in Um Sangour refugee camp.



citizens. We are seeing a long-term impact on children who have gone without education – the impact of displacement will remain with them.”

THE FORGOTTEN WAR

CAFOD supporters have donated almost £1 million but there is little coverage of the conflict in traditional media. Telley says: “The Sudan crisis has not been given due attention. It’s a forgotten crisis. Warring parties are taking advantage because no one is watching.”

“They are committing atrocities against the civilian population because they know no one outside will take note of it, so they’ll get away with it. We have heard of mass murders in some parts of Darfur. We have heard of rapes. But attention has been more on other crises.

“Sudan also needs to get that attention because it’s part of the global community. We cannot let it go like that. As part of the global community, if the people see that they have been left to fend for themselves, some of the issues that we may see today as not very important for us may end up creating more security related challenges within the region as well as internationally.”

HOW YOUR SUPPORT IS HELPING

“Support from CAFOD donors (who have given almost £1 million) has been a comfort,” says Telley. “People are standing in solidarity with the people working through our local partners to respond to the needs of people who are displaced. But also, we



have about 400,000 South Sudanese refugees we are working with. We are looking at the communities that are taking in refugees because they are also vulnerable and are feeling the impact as a result of a huge number of refugees from South Sudan, as well as the influx of internally displaced people.

“We are looking at sanitation and hygiene, addressing the livelihoods of the people through cash vouchers. We are working currently in White Nile, where we have been able to respond immediately, but also looking at opportunities, working closely with our local partners, especially the Church leaders, at how we can scale up the

response [...] to meet the challenges of more people coming in.

“Now we are discussing how best we can reach out to them. The short-term impact of this is basically giving hope and confidence to the people and standing with them to show them that they are not alone in this. It’s not the end. We need to work together, build resilience, and see that their dignity is not washed away.”



Find out more and donate at cafod.org.uk/emergencies

ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CRISIS UPDATE



The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has led to huge loss of life and the displacement of 85 per cent of Gaza’s population.

Despite the limited humanitarian access, our trusted partners are continuing to respond alongside families with practical help, thanks to your donations.

CAFOD’s partner in southern Gaza is providing a space for children’s activities to give them some respite from the conflict that surrounds them. The children have painted pictures which reflect their desire for a better future, free from violence.

Amidst the destruction around them, the children decorated the centre and made lanterns to celebrate Eid festival. They used their creativity to draw monuments that reflect the culture and history which are an integral part of Gaza’s identity.

Above: Children in Gaza are decorating the centre ahead of the Eid festival.

UKRAINE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS UPDATE



With temperatures reaching lower than -20C, internally displaced families in Ukraine are at serious risk in the freezing cold winter months.

In order to keep warm, Irina and her children – alongside their cat Boginya (which means “Goddess”) – gather in just two rooms of their small, temporary home.

Irina (pictured) used to live with her family in Kherson but fled during the war. She says: “We lived on the top floor of an apartment building. Every evening, our windows shook from all those ‘fireworks’, so to speak.

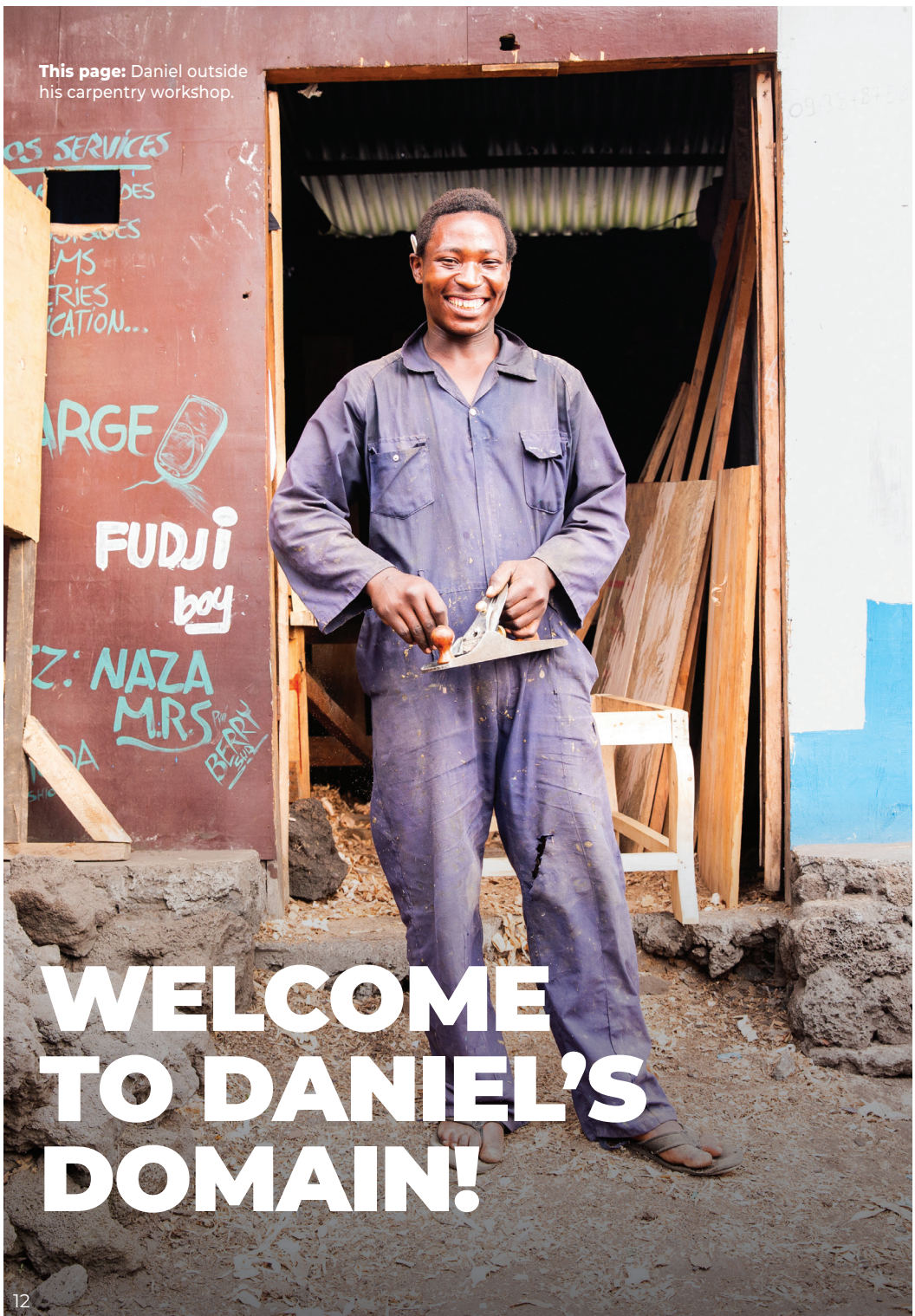
“One night, a missile was shot down over our roof. When they shot down the missile, it splintered and damaged some cars, houses and roofs. My son woke up and jumped out of bed. That’s when I said: ‘That’s the last straw. We need to think about getting out of here.’”

In her new community, in western Ukraine, Irina and her children were helped by local people with a place to stay, but she knew the family would struggle during the freezing cold winter without money for fuel.

Thanks directly to donations from people like you, our local partner organisation provided Irina and her family with fuel so that they would have life-saving warmth during the worst months.

Irina says: “For me, warmth means family, peace, friendship, support.”

This page: Daniel outside his carpentry workshop.



WELCOME TO DANIEL'S DOMAIN!

Daniel is a carpenter.

His wood workshop in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), is full of noise: sawing, hammering, sanding, carving. The air is thick with the warm, dry and almost sweet smell of sawdust. His overalls are stained with signs of hard work. He's smiling.

"This is my domain," he says. "This is what I'm supposed to do."

At 21 years old, Daniel is crafting wooden furniture and fixtures – tables, chairs, cupboards and doors – for happy customers. He's a rightfully proud professional.

"My life is this carpentry. I am living well with people and able to earn honest money."

But things weren't always so good. Daniel had a difficult childhood.

GROWING UP IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

"We grew up in a life that is not easy. It was a life of struggling all the time."

Options for work, education and healthcare are severely limited in DRC. Daniel's parents couldn't make enough money to send Daniel to school. When he was old enough, Daniel had to go out and find work so he could support his parents and put food on the family's table.

"Sometimes I used to help builders carry cement and sand. Other times I would just walk around and maybe find someone who'd say: 'Help me carry this to there.' And I would do that – just looking for small jobs.

"If my parents didn't get anything, I'd give them the money I earned

in the day to see how we could eat that evening.

"We would sleep without eating.

There were times when we would get sick and our parents had to get loans to get money to take us to the hospital. It was a problem when it was time to pay back that borrowed money..."

UNDERSTANDING THE CAUSES OF POVERTY IN DRC

Katy Katonda, CAFOD's Country Representative in Goma says: "I have seen young people in Goma facing many challenges due to ongoing instability across DRC. This is making it hard for so many to get either a good education or find sustainable work to earn money to support their families with nutritious food. Poor infrastructure and limited access to health services are making the injustice of poverty so much worse."

Decades of violence from rebel groups puts even more pressure on the country's already stretched infrastructure.

THE INJUSTICE OF POVERTY DOESN'T NEED TO EXIST

Today, Daniel is a carpenter because he attended a skills-training centre in Goma, run by CAFOD's local partner. The training centre is a space where people of all ages can learn new skills in tailoring, mushroom farming, carpentry and so much more. With classes run by local experts, hardworking people like Daniel are carving their own paths to better futures.



Above: Daniel and other young men learn carpentry from local experts.

DANIEL'S TEACHER

Simon is a local professional carpenter and carpentry teacher at the local workshop. He was the man who first recognised Daniel's diligence.

"I saw that Daniel is one who understands things quickly," he told us. "I call him family because we know each other well. I am proud when I see the young people that I trained who are now independent."

SIMON'S TRAINING CENTRE AND WORKSHOPS LIKE IT NEED YOUR SUPPORT

Simon says: "I would love for people in the UK to keep helping these young people so that those on the streets



***"My life is
this carpentry."***

**DANIEL, 21,
DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

can get occupations in order to have a better life. CAFOD has been working with and helping [us] for many years. May you continue helping us – please don't get tired!"

DANIEL IS CARVING HIS WAY TO A BETTER FUTURE

Daniel was on the carpentry course for eight months and learnt to make different items of furniture. Now, he has access to his very own workshop where he makes things that are ordered by local customers.

"We learnt to make cabinets, tables and chairs. I loved everything they taught us."

This *Family Fast Day*, we're appealing for your donations, to

support even more young people like Daniel with vital skills-training so they can carve their own ways to better futures. A donation from you will leave a lasting impact because determined people like Daniel can share their knowledge, passing it on to others.

"I never want anyone to go through the life I had when I was younger. If God helps and this work expands, then I can maybe train some young boys in the area, who are walking around just like I was."

GIVE



Give today at cafod.org.uk/give



This page: Daniel sanding rough wood smooth.





Raïssa is now a professional seamstress. She joined a CAFOD-funded training programme in Goma, the Democratic Republic of Congo, where she learnt how to sew, maintain the machines and run her business. The project includes savings and loans groups for women and training in mushroom farming and carpentry, so everyone has the opportunity to thrive. Raïssa said:

“At the end [of the training], we received sewing machines and some basic materials and that’s how I became a dressmaker. Since I’ve been doing this job, it’s helped me a lot to support my own needs and those of my brothers. My biggest dream is to open my own workshop. That’s why I’m saving up to buy other sewing machines so that I can open a large workshop in the future.

GIVE

Donate today to support young people like Raïssa at cafod.org.uk/give

HOW FELICIA STRENGTHENED HER FAMILY BUSINESS

THE DIFFICULTIES OF SELLING FISH IN LIBERIA

Felicia is a fishmonger who lives in West Point, Liberia.

“I used to sell my fish on the beach,” she said. “I was drying and selling my fish until one day a thief broke into our house and stole all the money I had made. I had no money to continue drying fish, so I stopped.”

Fish was Felicia’s main source of income. If her family couldn’t find the money to dry fish and sell it, they wouldn’t be able to afford to buy food to eat. They would go hungry.

The situation got even worse when Felicia’s husband, Augustine – a local fisherman and crew chief – experienced a dangerous accident while out at sea. His canoe smashed against a rock.

“It was completely broken,” he said. “I nearly died. I didn’t have a life jacket to help me. People had to drag me and my canoe around the coast. It was very frightening. My family were very scared.”

“My wife had to sell a few items and sell water to get by. She sold peppers. But these don’t sell as well as fish. We didn’t have very much; sometimes we had nothing.”

Felicia and Augustine had six hungry children to feed.

“We never had enough to eat,” said Felicia. “The children were not happy. The only way they could be happy was when they had a little food. I used to feel very bad because things were very difficult.”

FELICIA JOINS A SAVINGS GROUP

Thankfully, Felicia was able to get the practical help she needed.

With the support of local experts, funded by donations from people like you, Felicia joined a savings group with other women in her community. Now, working together, they have vital access to a secure money box to keep the group’s earnings safe.

“When I joined the savings group,” said Felicia, “things began to change.”



I never knew anything about saving money, so things were really difficult for me and my family, but after I started saving, it began to be a very great help!

“My children’s life has changed because after sharing out the savings, I can pay my children’s school fees and also buy food.”

AUGUSTINE FISHES SAFELY

Gifts from people like you also meant that Augustine was able to sign up to CAFOD-funded training sessions where he learnt how to fish more effectively and safely. He now has access to life jackets and GPS tracker systems.

“This training has helped us a lot,” he said. “We can go further out to sea – we can cross many miles and come back safely. We can get better fish.

“It has had a great impact on the amount of fish we can catch. We can see where there are lots of fish. We can go back to those spots. It has improved our lives a lot.

“This has helped our home because we’ve caught plenty of fish. You eat some. You reserve some. You sell some. You can educate your children by paying school fees. You can use some money to pay medical bills. You can pay for troubles if they come.”

HOW MONTHLY GIFTS MAKE AN EVEN BIGGER IMPACT

Paying for troubles when they come, as Augustine says, is exactly why regular donations make such a big difference. A monthly donation to CAFOD helps

local experts to confidently plan work in their communities. Because of monthly gifts, the teams we work with in Liberia have been able to support Felicia and her family in the long term.

Felicia now has access to a solar-powered freezer, so that she can store fresh fish and sell it on at a later date.

“It has been a great help for me and my family because CAFOD gave



our savings group solar freezers. So when I get fish, I can go and store them there so that they won't rot before I can take them to the market. I make more money because the fish is fresh. Making more money from the fish helps me to cater for my family's needs."

With your help, more parents like Felicia can feed their families for good. And if you can start a monthly gift, we can rely on this money and support

our local experts to make real change in their communities in the long-term.

GIVE

Set up your monthly gift today at cafod.org.uk/faithinaction

Previous page: Felicia prepares fish.

This page: Felicia and her husband, Augustine.



MONTHLY GIFTS

HOW MUCH OF A DIFFERENCE DOES MONTHLY GIVING MAKE?

Nearly a quarter of the work we do is made possible by people who give monthly, which means it is one of our largest sources of funding.

£5 a month can buy small mirrors for an entire community to help fishermen signal for help at sea

£10 a month can buy a GPS fishfinder to track fish – and find safety in storms

£16 a month can buy 12 fishermen life jackets to stay safe until rescue comes when the worst happens at sea

HOW IS A MONTHLY GIFT DIFFERENT TO A ONE-OFF GIFT?

All of your gifts are vital in our work to end poverty, but monthly gifts are particularly useful as they mean we can plan ahead for the long-term projects that our local experts run with communities.

WORLD GIFTS

MAKE A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE THIS CHRISTMAS

These are no ordinary Christmas gifts. CAFOD's *World Gifts* are a brilliant way to support people facing the injustices of poverty, conflict and climate change. Every time you buy *World Gifts*, you help to create real, positive change and stand in solidarity with your sisters and brothers around the world.

With over 40 ethical and sustainable gifts to choose from, we know we've got the ideal gift for your loved ones this Christmas!



BESTSELLER!
THE GOAT THAT GIVES
£28

You've just *goat* to buy this unusual charity gift for the animal lover in your life – especially popular with *kids*! Not only does the gift of a goat provide a family with up to 12 pints of milk a week – milk they can either drink or sell – it also produces free fertiliser!

Shop the full range of gifts at cafod.org.uk/worldgifts
New gifts and Christmas treats arriving on 1 October!



WINTER SURVIVAL KIT

£30

As the weather turns colder, give another family the gift of warmth through the winter by providing much-needed cash for essential items like warm clothing, blankets, fuel, and food.



SUPER SOUP KITCHEN

£10

Share hope this festive season by providing nutritious warm meals and shelter to refugees who have had to flee their homes due to conflict.

OUR FULL RANGE OF WORLD GIFTS IS ON ITS WAY

Visit cafod.org.uk/worldgifts to get a feel-good head start on your Christmas shopping. As well as brand new virtual gifts, you can buy Christmas cards, Advent calendars and stocking fillers. Plus, get completely free delivery when you spend over £40!

MILK OR VEGAN DARK CHOCOLATE COINS £3



ADVENT CALENDAR MILK OR DARK CHOCOLATE £5.50

CHRISTMAS CARDS £4



New gifts and Christmas treats will be in stock from 1 October, so start your browsing today at cafod.org.uk/worldgifts

WHO SAID WHAT



INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CAMPAIGNERS

Earlier this year, students at Leeds Trinity University took part in a CAFOD-run leadership programme where they discussed a range of issues surrounding global injustices like climate change, poverty and the impact of conflict. Together, they

designed a campaign – inspired by love, compassion and leadership – to raise awareness of what a better world might look like.

Amy Kiani, Philosophy student, said: *“I wanted to attend the event because I am passionate about combating global injustice and poverty. I very much enjoyed the compassion CAFOD evoked in me and other attendees, and it was lovely to see people of all faiths and backgrounds come together as one. It awakened and further strengthened our voices to positively contribute to changing our planet for the better by spreading love by helping others. The programme was a valuable experience for me, and I will reflect on the discussions I had as I continue to work towards global justice, peace and creating positive change.”*

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

Rachel is a dedicated CAFOD volunteer from Oxford. She recently told us about what motivates her and why CAFOD is the best channel for her loving kindness.

“Love is key and I think there’s a lot of it, that people are just looking for some way to channel the love they have for one another and for others around the world. And what CAFOD is brilliant at doing is giving us a way to channel that and come together. And sometimes that’s all people need: a really good way to channel their love for one another and the global community.” – Rachel, CAFOD volunteer, Oxford

GET READY FOR CHRISTMAS, THE PAINSLY PUPIL WAY!

Looking for some fundraising inspiration in the lead up to Christmas? Look no further than pupils from The Painsley Catholic Academy! Last Christmas, they raised a whopping £46,000 through fundraising activities. Children from across 16 schools, large and small, primary and secondary, took part in sponsored walks, cake sales, non-uniform days and raffles for luxury hampers. Children at St Giles' in Cheadle worked hard to collect all the loose change they could find and staff and children at St Anne's Catholic Primary School in Stafford ran a Santa's Dash.

Stephen Bell, chief executive officer at The Painsley Catholic Academy, said:

"As a Catholic community, we teach all of our children to care for each other, particularly the most vulnerable. The world faces many challenges and we are proud to support those who are less fortunate than ourselves. We must work together to build a better world for the future."

"Taking part in these joint fundraising activities is a great way of doing this and CAFOD World Gifts really make our pupils appreciate the impact that they can have. Our pupils, of all ages, really enjoy coming up with new and fun ideas to raise these funds."



RUNNING FOR CHANGE

Finally, a message from one of our inspirational London Marathon runners, Joan:

"One of the main reasons I chose to run for CAFOD is that I am from a developing country, so I understand first hand the challenges that are faced in these countries when it comes to eradicating poverty or following disasters."

"I would say to someone who's considering taking up a running challenge or a marathon to go for it! You are more than capable. A quote that helps me through the running is Philippians 4:13. I keep whispering this to myself when it gets tough: 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.'"

ACT

Want to run to raise funds for CAFOD? Look out for our Fun Runs this Advent. Visit cafod.org.uk/adventevents to find out more.

BACK TO SCHOOL

It's that time of year again. Children around the UK are heading back to school after a long summer. We are reminded that a good education creates options and is often the first step to a better future.

Every country we work in – even in the remotest regions – people strive to get themselves to school and are rightfully proud when they do so. Education is a tool for positive change – a way for people to empower themselves so they can fulfil their God-given potential and thrive.

Bernadette knows exactly how important a good education is. She's worked incredibly hard to get her children the education they deserve, in a situation that was oftentimes extremely difficult.

“ALL THE CHILDREN, THEIR FEET WERE SWOLLEN.”

Bernadette was forced to flee her home in Walikale, a town in the North Kivu Province of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

“The FDLR* arrived in the village at midnight. They burnt a lot of houses. They killed a lot of people. In my family, four men and seven women were killed. We didn't even find their bodies afterwards.”

Bernadette, her husband and children hid that night in the bush. Later, as they were fleeing, the rebels attacked them and took the little luggage they had managed to escape with.

“We continued with nothing. We were very, very afraid – just a mode of fear – we were just running. I did not get hurt, but my feet and body were tired. All the children, their feet were swollen.”

**The FDLR is a largely Rwandan Hutu armed group, some of whose leaders took part in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. FDLR fighters have killed hundreds of civilians over the years in eastern Congo.*



“LIFE WAS VERY DIFFICULT.”

Eventually, they settled in Goma. But trying to build a new life in a new town was difficult. Bernadette’s husband had joined the army, so he was far away from his family. Bernadette had to look after all her children with little support. She sold home-made charcoal stoves to buy food, but it wasn’t enough.

“The greatest difficulty that I had was that we used to stay hungry the whole day, and we used to go to sleep hungry. I used to go and look for sweet potatoes in the gardens for the children to eat. Sometimes we’d get food; other times we’d get no food at all.

“Life was very difficult. The children were not able to go to school. We did not have a lot to eat. It was not possible to get medication. I lost a lot of weight. I had a lot of stress.

“My children had been sent home from school because I didn’t have enough money to pay the school fees, so I went to the headmaster and told him to help me. I have no money, I said, but let the children study!”

“EDUCATION WILL EMPOWER THEM.”

From here, powered by Bernadette’s sheer determination, things changed for the better. Bernadette was walking home from her meeting with the headmaster. She passed the CAJED (Concerted Action for Disadvantaged Young People and Children) workshop – a CAFOD-funded training centre where people can learn new skills,

like tailoring or carpentry, from local professionals (this is the same place Daniel learnt to become a carpenter – see Harvest story on page 12). Outside the training centre, Bernadette saw a group of women learning how to grow mushrooms from compost bags.

“I watched all their activities from that day. They said: ‘This woman is determined. She’s very courageous!’ They clapped for me and that’s how I entered the mushroom group.”

During the training, Bernadette learnt how to cultivate mushrooms. Now, she has plenty of mushrooms to eat with her family and she sells the excess mushrooms for profit.

“I’m very excited by this mushroom project. These mushrooms have helped me, at the age I am, to improve my diet. But they have also helped me to take care of my children, helped me to send them to school.

“The little money I get [from selling mushrooms], I use half at home and the rest of it to pay for school fees for the children – and also the grandchildren, when they start studying. So the mushrooms are helping a lot!

“I know that if my children are educated, life will be better. A child who is educated does not lack a good life.

“I’m happy that my children are going to school. Keeping my two younger children in school is crucial for me. I regret that some of my older children were not educated, and I want a better future for the younger ones. Education will empower them and give them a chance.”



“LIVE WELL WITH EVERYONE.”

We could all improve our lives by heading back to school. Around the world, inspirational people like Bernadette, despite the incredibly difficult things they've lived through – whether it's conflict, climate change, poverty or social injustice – are finding ways to learn new skills through CAFOD-funded workshops, improve their lives and live in peace.

And as for Bernadette's children, their education doesn't stop at the end of the school day. They learn some of their most valuable lessons from their mum:

“I teach my children about life, to be humble in life, to see the good in everyone, to live well with everyone.”

Previous page: Bernadette with a bowl full of nutritious mushrooms.

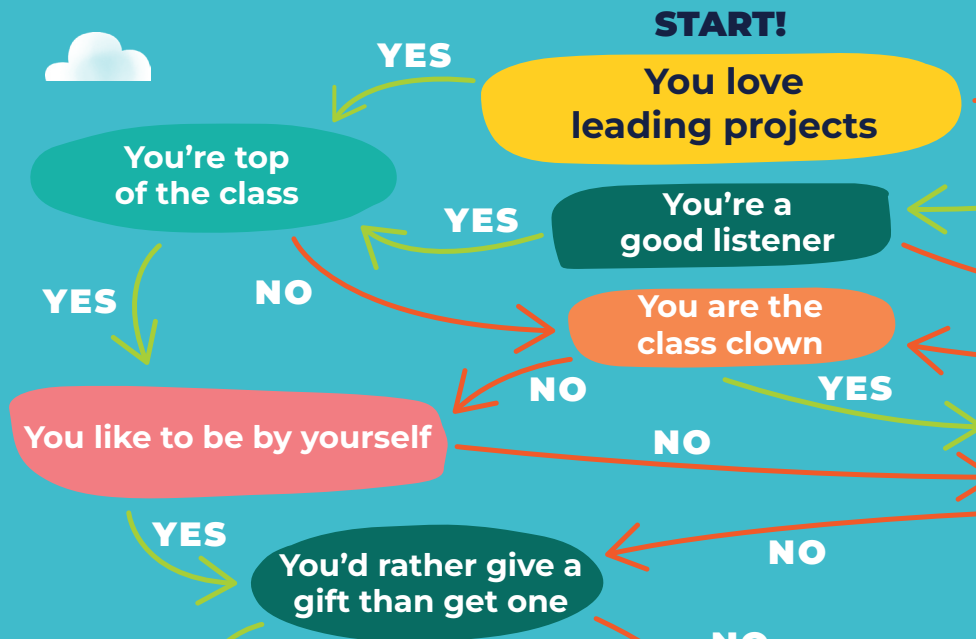
This page: Bernadette and her family outside their home.

ACT

Next month, on Friday 4 October, is *Harvest Family Fast Day*. Find out how you can reach out with love to support families like Bernadette's around the world at cafod.org.uk/fastday

Getting ready to go back to school? Check out our school team's top resources for a global year: cafod.org.uk/schools

KIDZ ZONE: WHAT TYPE OF LEADER ARE YOU?

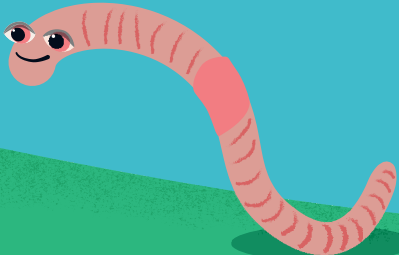


When it comes to leading, you're always sharing! You're a **Goat that gives** because you're caring.



Chatty, social and great fun - You're a true **Chirpy chicken** who speaks to everyone!

Earlier this summer, the UK voted for a new Prime Minister to lead the government. Being a leader is a tough job – but there's more than one way to rise to the challenge. Take our highly scientific questionnaire to find out exactly what type of leader you are.

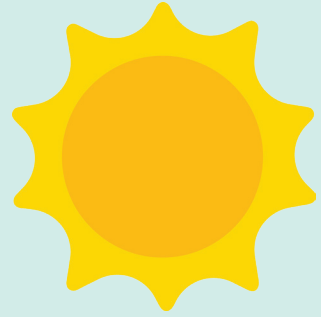


You're a **Happy queen bee**, ready to lead! Buzzing with ideas to help friends succeed.

You're keen to help and keen to learn and work as hard as a **Wonderful worm**.

FIND OUT MORE AT CAFOD.ORG.UK/WORLDDGIFTS

Laudate Deum,
O God we praise you,
for the world sings
of your infinite love.



Forgive us our failure
to agree a way forward
to protect this earth
and our children's future.

For the way the powerful
shelter behind their wealth,
while the poorest people are disregarded,
and the earth is at breaking point.

Guide our leaders
to set aside their own interests
in the interest of us all
and grant us all the courage
to turn our concern into change.

Strengthen our faith,
and let us never lose hope
so together we may rise up
responding to the urgent call
of your people and all creation.

Amen.

