



Correspondent

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Inside Out

STORY IAN MCINNES

I know that the Lord secures justice for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy.'

Psalm 140:12

God's faithfulness to those in poverty is irrefutable. He doesn't simply remember people in their hardships—he actively moves on their behalf. The Psalmist reminds us the lengths God goes to to rectify their situation: "I know that the Lord secures justice for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy" (Psalm 140:12).

Tearfund supporters have been living instruments of God's mercy and grace for 50 years. Not only does this usher in the Kingdom of God on earth, but we're also told it's how we truly encounter Jesus.

Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

Matthew 25:40

This special 50th-year edition of *The Correspondent* lays out some of those extraordinary moments of faithfulness – both God's and yours. From our partnership with *Compassion* in 1986, wrapping love and nurture around children, to our extensive, government-backed programme today tackling exploitation and elevating livelihoods, Tearfund's work is a testament to faith, faithfulness, and perseverance on behalf of those less fortunate.

In acting justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly, we arrive at a place where pity has no place. The poorest people on earth are also some of the most dignified people I've met. Their determination to rise from poverty, their love for their children, their willingness to fight injustice—never fails to astound me.

During my first week as CEO at Tearfund, I watched a Year 9 girl take to the stage in Delhi, India. Straight-backed and confident, she explained to a large gathering of dignitaries why she leads her Children's Committee in her slum lane and ensures every child attends school. The Indian Finance Minister sat in the front row at these 25-year partner celebrations. He followed her to the stage and praised her leadership.

Remarkable as that scene was, it's not unusual. All over the world, Tearfund's vibrant and unique mix of independent partners unearths the extraordinary potential that lies within communities and churches—for the betterment of all. Our part at Tearfund, and your part as a supporter, is to recognise God at work and generously get behind that work in a variety of ways—whether through prayer, petitioning for legislative change, or giving to a worthy project, cause, or a child who would benefit from sponsorship and the love of a church community.

Bless you, and thank you for 50 years of faithfulness. Let's keep going!



50 Years Strong: How Kiwis like you have made a difference through Tearfund

STORY KEITH RAMSAY

After witnessing more than 40 million people flee due to war and disaster in the 1960s, the global Church began to rise up in a new way—putting faith into action worldwide by meeting the practical, human needs we all share. Here in New Zealand, Kiwis began to show extravagant mercy to their global neighbours by stepping up financially and in prayer to address global poverty.

By 1975, Tearfund New Zealand was born, and Kiwis like you haven't stopped showing up for people in need around the world since. This year, as we celebrate 50 years of participating in God's redemptive story, we want to pause and say thank you for the part you've played in this collective mission.



1960s

When mercy became a movement

War and disaster displaced nearly 40 million people during the 1960s, creating a global humanitarian crisis. In the UK, Christians saw the suffering and refused to look away. Stirred by powerful images and heartbreaking stories, they responded—not just with words, but with action—giving generously to the Evangelical Alliance. This began a radical shift in the Christian response to poverty and human suffering—focusing beyond salvation and prayer to meeting people’s urgent, practical needs. In 1972, the Evangelical Alliance officially launched Tearfund UK—the first of many Tearfund offices to come.

1975

The birth of Tearfund New Zealand

Led by the Evangelical Fellowship of New Zealand, this mercy movement

continued to grow here on our shores as Kiwis embraced this hands-on approach to tackling poverty and injustice. Two years later, with a \$10,000 grant from Tearfund UK and the generous support of local churches, Tearfund New Zealand was born. The first project—the construction of a village well in West Africa’s Guinea-Bissau—was a small but significant project and a powerful symbol of what was to come.

Today, Tearfund is one of New Zealand’s leading Christian aid and development agencies, all thanks to the unwavering generosity of people like you.

1986

Forging a united response with *Compassion International*

At the heart of our work is the belief that we are stronger together than we are alone. That’s why partnership has always been our foundation.

In the 1980s, we began supporting programmes led by in-country church

networks and Christian NGOs based on our belief that communities knew best how to meet their own needs. From small-scale community development projects to large-scale disaster responses, we saw God’s restorative justice at work in his world. No partnership has been as transformational as the one we began in 1986 with *Compassion International*, which continues to change tens of thousands of children’s lives through the power of child sponsorship.

The response from Christians from all corners of New Zealand was overwhelming, and children began being matched with compassionate Kiwi sponsors in droves.

2004

A defining moment that would change everything

A devastating earthquake and tsunami ripped across 15 countries from Sri Lanka to Indonesia in 2004, killing an estimated 230,000 people. It was the deadliest disaster of the 21st century. It was also a turning point



📷 Sri Lankan children in the devastation following the Asian Tsunami in 2004.
Photo: Tearfund

in Tearfund New Zealand’s disaster response as compassionate Kiwis all over the nation responded massively to our call for support. Thanks to this outpouring of generosity, we were able to mobilise an unprecedented level of support for those affected, as well as cement Tearfund in the hearts of New Zealanders as a trusted humanitarian organisation.

The disaster also laid the foundation for the Integral Alliance, which we are still a part of today. This global alliance of more than 20 Christian aid organisations is committed to working together to respond to disasters and conflicts more effectively, each bringing our skills and expertise for maximum impact.

2008

Growing in impact

With the increasing support of Kiwis like you, Tearfund New Zealand was able to grow and focus on new areas of need: tackling modern slavery and pioneering innovative farming and enterprise initiatives.

Tackling human trafficking

Tearfund first partnered with *International Justice Mission (IJM)* in

the 1990s on a small project to address human trafficking. But it wasn’t until 2008, when we began partnering with *Share and Care* in Nepal, that we became a leading voice in New Zealand around this issue. In 2013, we further expanded to support *Nvader* (now *LIFT International*), focusing on human trafficking. Through our partnership with *LIFT*, we’ve helped support local law enforcement to dismantle trafficking networks at their source, secure convictions, care for survivors, and advocate for policies that promote their protection.

More recently, your support has enabled us to expand these anti-trafficking efforts into the Pacific to tackle the root causes of exploitation by helping families build sustainable livelihoods, which reduces their vulnerability to human trafficking and exploitation.

2011

Transforming lives through farming and enterprise

For many communities around the world, smallholder farming is the most effective way to earn a living. However, farmers in low-income communities may hold the knowledge and skills, but lack access to the resources and



📷 In 2008, Tearfund partnered with *Share and Care Nepal* to help combat human trafficking.
Photo: Tearfund

financing needed to succeed. With support from Kiwis like you, Tearfund has pioneered innovative solutions to economic development like dairy farming initiatives in Sri Lanka and Self Help Groups in Ethiopia that have helped families move from subsistence to prosperity.

2025

Looking to the future

For 50 years, the unwavering generosity of people like you has been the answer to our prayers on this pursuit for justice. Every child sponsored, every time our partners have been there for people in need, and every life restored, has been made possible by churches and individuals across New Zealand who have chosen to put their faith into action and declare that poverty and injustice are not part of God’s plan—we are.

Thank you for standing with us. Your generosity has impacted hundreds of thousands of lives—people you will never even meet in this life. And we believe we’re just getting started. Here’s to another 50 years!



📷 In 1967, Tearfund UK launched the provocative *They Can't Eat Prayer* campaign, which challenged believers to rethink what it truly means to bring good news to the poor.
Photo: Tearfund UK

50 Years: A look through the decades

STORY GRACE ELLIS



1975 The Evangelical Alliance Relief (TEAR) Fund New Zealand was born, with the aim of being the humanitarian arm of Kiwi churches. Tearfund's first project was to construct a village well in Guinea Bissau, with a \$10,000 grant from Tearfund UK, marking the start of Tearfund New Zealand's global impact.

1975

1976 Tearfund launched its first public newsletter, Tear Update, fostering communication with supporters.

1980 Tearfund was officially registered as a charity.

1980

1981 Artists Tours began, featuring musicians like Barry McGuire and Sheila Walsh, raising awareness and funds for Tearfund's work.

1984 Tearfund started promoting microenterprise initiatives, laying the groundwork for today's Self-Help Groups.



1986 Child sponsorship programmes were initiated in partnership with *Compassion*, providing sustainable pathways for child welfare.

1992 Tearfund partnered with efforts in Ethiopia to alleviate famine and build community resilience.

1999 Tearfund partnered with the *International Justice Mission (IJM)* to combat modern slavery in Thailand, taking a strong stance against human trafficking.

1990

2012 Tearfund pioneered the Wannu Dairy programme with *World Concern Sri Lanka* and funding from the NZ government. It was our first public/private partnership using NZ expertise/technology. It transitioned from a peacebuilding programme to a thriving livelihoods programme.

2010

2011 Tearfund launched the Poverty Cycle initiative to raise funds and awareness for social causes, especially focused on combating trafficking and poverty.



2005 Tearfund became a founding member of the *Integral Alliance*, joining forces with other aid organisations worldwide.

2004 Tearfund was the first organisation in New Zealand to launch an appeal in response to the Boxing Day Tsunami, providing crucial support for those affected areas and solidifying its role in global disaster response.

2000

2000 First Tearfund Compassion Day in New Zealand resulted in 544 children being sponsored through the generosity of New Zealanders.



2024 Tearfund responded to the Ethiopia Hunger Crisis, securing the largest disaster grant in its history (\$750,000) from the New Zealand Government to aid those affected.



2022 Tearfund developed the SAFE Programme, integrating agricultural livelihoods with anti-trafficking efforts to reduce vulnerabilities in at-risk communities.



2013 Tearfund supported survivors of Typhoon Haiyan through recovery and livelihood restoration efforts, which later became an innovative multi-year agricultural livelihoods programme connecting farmers to lucrative markets.



At the heart of it all is the Church

STORY KEITH RAMSAY

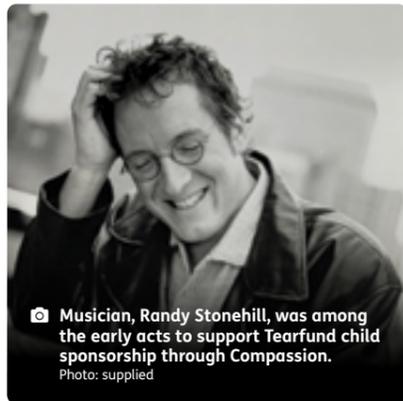
For five decades, Christians across New Zealand have been on a shared mission with Tearfund to bring compassion, justice, and hope to communities around the world.

Since we took that first leap of faith in 1975, churches have sprung into action to host child sponsorship events and welcome artists, raise awareness of global challenges, and raise important funds. Local churches have been the backbone of our mission and the hands and feet of Jesus to the communities we serve.

Here are some amazing ways the Church has made a difference for communities around the world facing poverty:

Art as a champion for justice

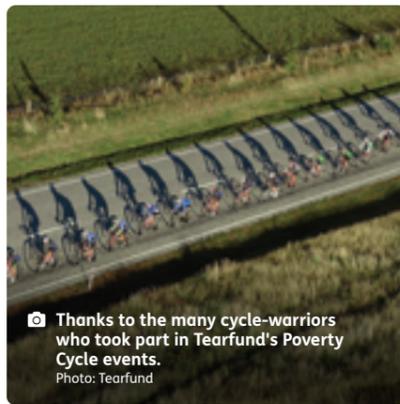
From Barry McGuire to Jars of Clay, the Watoto Children's Choir to For King and Country, countless Christian artists have offered their time and talent over the years to stir the hearts of Jesus followers across New Zealand and move them towards action. These musical partnerships have helped to inspire New Zealand churches and connect them to God's restorative work through Tearfund.



Musician, Randy Stonehill, was among the early acts to support Tearfund child sponsorship through Compassion.
Photo: supplied

Big laughs for a big cause

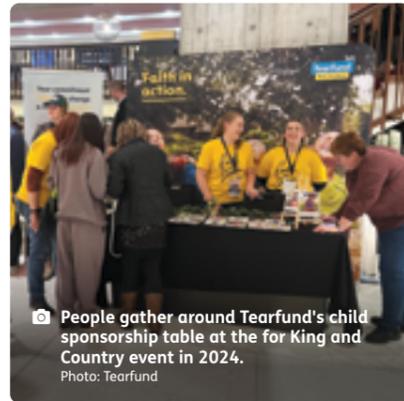
The Big Quiz Night has become a must-have event on many churches' calendars. This all-ages night of fun and fellowship has been an incredible force for good, as churches all over New Zealand come together to put their faith into action and raise important funds. This year, we're excited to have more churches than ever join us for this hilarious night of fun!



Thanks to the many cycle-warriors who took part in Tearfund's Poverty Cycle events.
Photo: Tearfund

Peddling for change

Over the years, countless churches and individuals have jumped in the saddle for the Poverty Cycle—Tearfund's one-of-a-kind cycling event that raises awareness and funds to tackle modern slavery. Thank you to all the teams who pushed themselves to their limits to raise tens of thousands of dollars to address exploitation and combat human trafficking.



People gather around Tearfund's child sponsorship table at the for King and Country event in 2024.
Photo: Tearfund

Compassionate action in times of crisis

New Zealand churches have been instrumental in responding to global emergencies. Your generosity has helped deliver life-saving aid to people impacted by the conflict in Syria, the earthquake in Myanmar, and the devastating drought in Ethiopia. In these instances, and many more, New Zealand churches have been a lifeline to people when they needed help the most.

Faith in action

To every church that has partnered with Tearfund—thank you. Your commitment to justice and compassion has transformed lives and communities across the globe.

Together, we are faith in action—bringing hope, dignity, and transformation to a world in need.

New Zealand life in 1975

Microsoft was established

John Walker was the first to run a mile in less than 3 minutes 50 seconds

The Waitangi Tribunal was formed

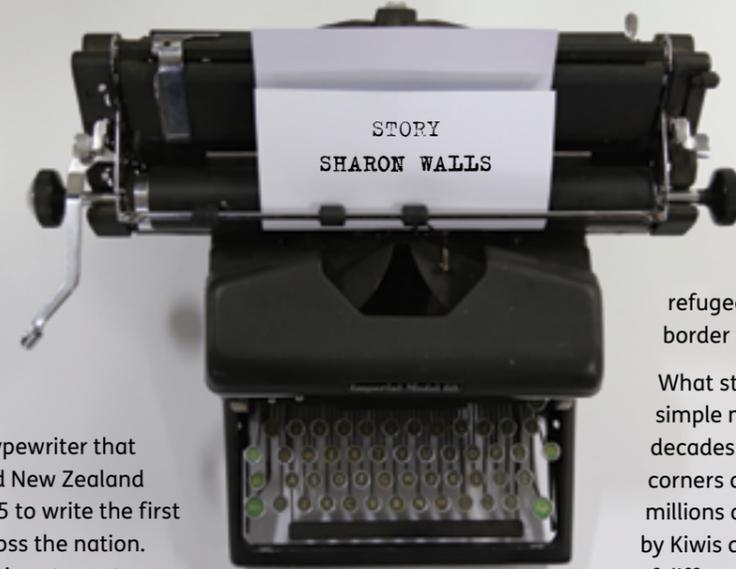
The Vietnam War ended

You've been part of the story since page one

If this typewriter could talk, oh the stories it would tell. A relic of a simpler time, this humble machine has been pivotal in sharing the heartbreaking experiences of our global neighbours with Kiwis across the nation.

It was on this exact typewriter that the founding Tearfund New Zealand team gathered in 1975 to write the first letter to churches across the nation. In it, they urged Christians to partner in response to the plight of people in Guinea-Bissau. The newly independent West African nation had been devastated by conflict, and countless villages were suffering from extreme poverty and a lack of access to clean water. A bold call was made to rally Kiwi Christians to fund a vital village well—and they responded generously. The letter was copied and hundreds of envelopes were individually addressed. It painted a picture of what our faith in action could achieve. Not only did the Church's response fund a brand-new community water source, it helped people in the village to regain their health, rebuild their livelihoods, and reclaim their dignity.

Another letter was written in faith on that typewriter that same year. The Khmer Rouge had orchestrated the genocide



of an estimated 1.5 to 3 million Cambodian people. Once again, New Zealanders responded with prayer, compassion, and generosity. With their support, refugee packs were purchased and distributed to Cambodian

refugees fleeing across the Thailand border to escape the atrocities.

What started as an act of faith on this simple machine has turned into five decades of transforming lives across all corners of the globe. In the years since, millions of dollars have been donated by Kiwis committed to making a world of difference for people made vulnerable through all kinds of crises.

Fifty years later, that trusty typewriter still sits on a shelf in the Tearfund office as a prompt that, if we are faithful with the little, God can multiply it for much. This old typewriter calls to mind every child sponsored, every woman freed from trafficking, every family lifted out of poverty over the past decades, and those to come, in communities across Africa, Asia, and the Pacific.

But most of all, it reminds us of you—our faithful supporters—who responded to the first call and continue to inspire us each year with your generosity and faithfulness.

It's a visual milestone that together, God's people can do the remarkable, in Jesus' name.

Robert Muldoon became Prime Minister

Eggs were 80c a dozen, petrol was 78.6c per gallon (17.30 per litre), it cost 30 to post a letter

The 'Land March' hīkoi led by Whina Cooper reached parliament with 5,000 people

The Bay City Rollers topped the NZ charts

Two Tearfund CEOs and the disaster that unites them

On opposite sides of the world, two men faced the same disaster in strikingly different ways. In Sri Lanka, current-CEO Ian McInnes, was on holiday with his wife when a devastating tidal wave hit the coast of Sri Lanka. Meanwhile in New Zealand, former-CEO Steve Tollestrup was watching the same tsunami unfold on the news. This is the story of how one shared event shaped them and Tearfund for God's purposes.

The moment my world changed

STORY IAN MCINNES

In December 2004, my wife, Himali and I were celebrating our recent marriage in her homeland of Sri Lanka. Three days later, we stood in shock on the rooftop of our apartment in Colombo, watching in horror as the tsunami surged towards the capital. CNN had broadcast a warning, but nothing could prepare us for what followed.

On 26 December, more than 30,000 people were killed in Sri Lanka by the tsunami triggered by a 9.1 magnitude earthquake. Only Indonesia was harder hit.

The hours and days that followed were a blur of raw emotion, sirens, and frantic action as people did what they could with what they had to save lives. Among them were Himali and her sister-in-law Anju—both New Zealand-trained doctors who wanted to help.

Two days later, I walked into the local Red Cross office with a proposal to run a clinic along the devastated southern coast. Overwhelmed by the need, the Red Cross director agreed, and within hours, we'd assembled a five-person team, packed a van with medical supplies, and journeyed south to the worst-affected region.

We drove past scenes I'll never forget—US Marines building Bailey bridges, roads ripped apart, and coastlines unrecognisable. We ran makeshift

clinics out of churches and temples, while soldiers guarded the entrances. Inside, Himali and Anju treated the injured. The rest of us did everything from inserting IVs to handing out medicine. None of it was textbook medicine, but every second mattered. We were nervous—even afraid—but we prayed as we responded.

What began as a brief volunteer effort became much bigger. I would later return to lead a multi-year tsunami reconstruction programme funded by Tearfund UK. Himali joined the ongoing medical response as a WHO public health official, visiting internal refugees from the civil war to check on their condition.

Some years on, I received the New Zealand Special Service Medal for

the tsunami response. But as with all humanitarian work, it was never about recognition. It was about communities rising, adapting, and rebuilding.

Those months changed how I understood humanitarian response. Emergencies demand speed, but true recovery takes time. It's not just about rebuilding homes, but restoring hope, livelihoods, and justice. I carried those lessons into later responses—Cyclone Nargis in 2008, and the Haiti earthquake in 2010.

Today, Tearfund New Zealand continues to walk with communities in Sri Lanka. We now support a thriving, farmer-owned dairy enterprise in the north, enabling thousands of smallholder farmers to build sustainable livelihoods.



© Ian McInnes surveys the aftermath of the 2004 Asian Tsunami in Sri Lanka. Photo: supplied

That's the arc of humanitarian work. It begins in disaster, but if we stay the course, it ends in dignity restored. And every step is made possible by people like you—those who choose to look human suffering in the face and act.

For over 50 years, you have been an answer to prayer for communities facing crisis. Not just in the moment of disaster, but through the long road to recovery and renewal. Thank you.'

Faith and action over perfection

STORY STEVE TOLLESTRUP

It was Boxing Day in 2004. I was at home when the news broke that a tsunami had struck vast coastlines across Asia. First, they reported a hundred dead. Then a thousand. Then six thousand. Within two hours, we knew this wasn't just a disaster—it was a catastrophe.

I called TVNZ, but the office was closed for Christmas. Eventually, someone edited our appeal in record time, and TVNZ gave us a prime-time slot in the six o'clock news for a reduced holiday price! The next day, a news crew set up at my home to front the news. We were

the only humanitarian agency in New Zealand covering the humanitarian response in Sri Lanka that week.

While all the pieces weren't in place, we had partners on the ground responding in real-time. This was a disaster of uncommon scale. Together, we began shaping a collaborative response. Planning proved difficult, with new information arriving daily.

Over the Christmas break, the Tearfund office became a hive of activity. Staff gave up much of their holidays to help. Things got so intense, some of us brought sleeping bags and camp stretchers to sleep in the office. It wasn't polished or tidy—but it was right. We sensed God in it. Sometimes you don't need perfect. You just need faith and action.

We faced all kinds of challenges. We didn't have enough staff to answer phones, so I wrote a script for a call centre to take calls from media and compassionate Kiwis wanting to support the tsunami response. The volume crashed their system in two days. Public support kept growing. Churches and community groups fundraised. The compassionate response was overwhelming.

To support partners and broadcast updates from the ground, our



© Former Tearfund CEO, Steve Tollestrup, in Myanmar following Cyclone Nargis in 2008. Photo: supplied



© A solitary boy picks his way through the rubble of destroyed buildings. Photo: supplied

Programmes Manager, Esther Duchai, flew to Sri Lanka. At home, newsletters and appeals landed in mailboxes and inboxes, generating donations for emergency supplies.

In that moment, something shifted. Tearfund stepped into a new humanitarian space—marked by greater impact, deeper responsibility, and renewed purpose. We were no longer 'just a child sponsorship organisation'. Our supporter base grew, enabling us to help partners more significantly and prepare better for future responses. **It was a defining moment.**

That response also became a catalyst for what became the Integral Alliance—a global network of more than 20 Christian disaster response organisations. Thanks to this collaboration, Tearfund can now respond faster, with more clarity, and trusted partners already in place.

Looking back, I'm still amazed by what was achieved for people whose lives and livelihoods were devastated. God equipped a small team with a big heart and urgency—willing to step out in faith and become an answer to prayer. That changed everything.

Because of your faithful prayers and generous giving, lives devastated by disaster have been rebuilt, futures reimagined, and hope restored. None of this would have happened without you. Thank you.'

50 Years of innovation and impact

STORY KEITH RAMSAY

Through disasters, poverty, exploitation, and a changing climate, Tearfund supporters have championed bold, compassionate responses to some of the world's toughest challenges for more than 50 years. Thanks to your generosity, we've partnered with trusted Christian organisations to create community-led solutions that help communities thrive and care for their most vulnerable.



📷 In Nepal, raising incomes through farming is helping reduce vulnerability to human trafficking. Photo: Tearfund



📷 In Nepal, women and their families take part in training to protect themselves and others from human trafficking. Photo: Tearfund

From rescue to resilience: Tackling the root causes of human trafficking

When we first started confronting human trafficking, the focus was mainly on rescuing people from harmful situations and supporting survivors. These efforts saved lives from harm, but the root causes remained. For every person rescued, others were trafficked in their place. The system itself had to change.

In 2008, we began partnering with *Share and Care*, a grassroots organisation in Nepal. At the time, thousands of Nepalese were being trafficked into India, lured by fake job offers and sold into brothels or forced labour. *Share and Care* focused on preventing human trafficking by helping communities understand traffickers' tactics, creating income-generating activities to overcome poverty, and guiding people toward safe migration opportunities. They also worked to change social attitudes.

And it worked. In communities where survivors of sexual exploitation were once shunned, dignity and acceptance began to take root. Survivors were no longer hidden but empowered to rebuild their lives in their communities.

Our supporters' commitment to the cause allowed us to start a new partnership with *Nvader* in 2013 to fight trafficking in Thailand. Like others, *Nvader* began with rescues, but soon recognised that real impact came from deterring criminals in the first place through stricter policies and laws. *Nvader*—now known as *LIFT International*—turned its focus to collecting intelligence, facilitating prosecutions and compensation for survivors and working with the government to strengthen legal systems. Survivors were supported in their healing as well as courageously testifying against their traffickers, which helped to secure justice and prevent further abuse of others.

Thanks to the unwavering commitment and financial gifts of our supporters over the years, we've been able to trial and innovate solutions to human trafficking that go beyond short-term rescue to long-term systemic change that stops modern slavery and exploitation in its tracks—for good.

Farming and Enterprise: Harnessing business to overcome poverty

The brutal civil war in Sri Lanka that ended in 2009 left millions of families without their loved ones and their livelihoods. Many of those left—especially widowed women and children—fell deep into poverty. Yet, while violence and destruction turned their lives upside down, we know that with God, it's never the end of the story.

New Zealand has always been a leader in dairy farming. So, when an opportunity came along to partner with the community organisation, *Yugashakti*, it felt like a God moment. What transpired since that moment has been a decade-and-a-half-long partnership leveraging New Zealand's dairy expertise in support of small-scale Sri Lankan farmers.

Over the years, the programme has offered training in animal care, feeding, and breeding to boost productivity. Field schools and mentoring groups have been established to encourage farmers to collaborate and share learnings. And milk collection centres have been built to improve market access. A game-changing solution was introducing milk chilling stations so farmers could keep milk fresh and demand better prices. The result has been stronger rural economies and more resilient livelihoods for families devastated by war, allowing them to look to the future with hope.

A continent away in Mongolia, the winter of 2009–2010 was catastrophic. More than eight million animals died in the freezing temperatures, which sent these nomadic herders who relied on them into crisis. Tearfund partnered with *FARM Mongolia* and a New Zealand agriculture and horticulture specialist to assist families to grow vegetables resilient to the harsh weather.



📷 Introducing milk chilling centres was a game-changer for Sri Lankan smallholder dairy farmers. Photo: Tearfund

The initiative required not only technical innovation, but a cultural shift from nomadic herding and a constant diet of meat. However, it was necessary if they were to survive until they could restore their lost herds.

Normal tunnel houses deteriorated in the harsh environment, so we introduced innovative rammed earth tunnel houses that trapped heat and extended the short growing season. New underground storage facilities prevented produce from freezing in sub-zero temperatures. Families began growing and selling crops like potatoes, cabbage, and tomatoes, which improved their diets, restored income to rebuild their lost herds, and made them stronger against future climate shocks.

SAFE Programme: A holistic approach to protecting communities from exploitation

Seeing how these two efforts—addressing human trafficking and building resilience through farming and enterprise—have strengthened communities over the years, we recently stepped out in faith to launch a brand-new programme called the SAFE Programme. This programme, which stands for Safe, Aware, Free and Empowered, is a multi-million-dollar, five-year initiative backed by the New Zealand Government's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and people like you. It is currently active in Fiji, Vanuatu, Sri Lanka, Solomon Islands, and Myanmar.

When people live in poverty, their risk of exploitation rises exponentially. By increasing incomes through agriculture and educating women and children about their rights, the SAFE Programme helps reduce people's vulnerability to all kinds of exploitation. It also strengthens legal protections and advocates for change at national and local levels.

The power of this programme is that it can be tailored to each country's context—whether it's coffee farmers in Vanuatu or dairy farmers in Sri Lanka. By 2026, this life-changing programme is expected to impact more than 100,000 people!



Traditional herders turn to growing vegetables after extreme weather wiped out their livestock. Photo: Tearfund



Agriculture initiatives in the Solomon Islands are making communities less vulnerable to exploitation. Photo: Tearfund

Facing the climate crisis

In the Pacific Islands, climate change is an urgent reality. In Fiji and Vanuatu, rising sea levels, erratic weather, and changing seasons threaten both communities' food security and livelihoods.

When you support Tearfund's farming and enterprise initiatives, you are helping to strengthen communities at risk of climate shocks across the Pacific through three core strategies:

- Introducing climate-smart agriculture to boost food and income security
- Integrating carbon credits to reduce emissions and open new economic pathways
- Ensuring women are central to climate solutions and involved in key decision-making roles

Through this bold, two-year initiative—also backed by MFAT—families are learning how to diversify crops, protect biodiversity, and lead their own solutions.

A legacy of transformation

Over five decades, Tearfund supporters have helped us and our partners pioneer some of the most innovative responses to global challenges. You've helped turn bold ideas into lasting solutions. Because of your generosity, children are safer, farmers are thriving, survivors are standing tall, and communities are more resilient than ever.

Thank you for being part of this bold, compassionate journey. The story isn't over—but because of you, it's full of innovation and hope.

If you'd like to support our SAFE programme or find out more, go to tearfund.org.nz/SAFE



The voice on the phone

The shocking new way human traffickers are preying on the vulnerable

STORY SHARON WALLS

Scam calls and texts are a frustratingly common experience for many Kiwis, with 62 per cent* of us saying we're targeted every month. But few realise that behind some of these messages lies a shocking truth: vulnerable people are being trafficked into scam operations and forced into digital slavery.

Kiwi lawyers Peter and Kate McKenzie-Bridle discovered this dark side of cybercrime during a Tearfund anti-trafficking visit to Thailand last year. Hosted by *LIFT International*, Tearfund's local partner, the group of supporters visited key sites and participated in learning labs to gain a deeper understanding of how human trafficking is being tackled. "We followed *LIFT's* work from gathering intelligence and forensic evidence through to prosecution and survivor care," says Kate.

What Peter and Kate discovered while in Thailand was that people vulnerable to poverty and exploitation were being trafficked into cybercrime and forced to carry out online scams under coercion.

We hadn't realised that some scam calls might come from people trapped in horrific conditions.'

Kate

* According to netsafe.co.nz

Tricked into modern slavery

While visiting Chiang Mai's District Courthouse, the Tearfund group received unexpected news: the defendant in a major trafficking case, where *LIFT* had provided vital evidence, had just pleaded guilty in a nearby courtroom.

Thanks to the survivors' bravery and *LIFT's* investigation, a record sentence of 12 years was handed down, and the survivors were awarded compensation.



Supporters Shirley Reynolds and Peter and Kate McKenzie-Bridle join an anti-trafficking lab in Thailand. Photo: Tearfund

The Thai girls had found a job ad on a trusted Thai social media website, offering well-paid administrative roles in Cambodia. "Everything seemed safe," they told the team at *LIFT*. However, at the 'job agency' in the city, they were told they were too young for passports. Instead, they were smuggled across the border.

Once inside Cambodia, they were taken to a building with high fences and armed guards. Their phones and ID documents were confiscated. They had been trafficked into a scam compound—known as a fraud factory—where they were forced into cybercrime.

Under duress, they signed an exploitative contract that gave traffickers access to their bank details. They worked 10-hour shifts under constant threat, following scripted scam calls with strict financial targets. Missed targets led to punishments or withheld wages. Refusal to comply brought threats of beatings, sexual violence, or being sold into the sex trade.

After a month, the girls managed to contact their families. *LIFT's* team was alerted and launched an investigation involving intelligence gathering, coordination with national and international partners, and help from the Thai Embassy in Cambodia. Against the odds, the girls were found and brought home—a rescue timeline that usually takes months.

The road to justice and healing

Their ordeal didn't end there. On return to Thailand, the girls were charged with illegal border crossing. "I felt victimised all over again," said one survivor, after a provincial committee refused to recognise her as a victim of trafficking.

LIFT's legal team fought on. They gathered crucial evidence and supported the girls throughout the court process. Eventually, the charges were dropped. According to *LIFT*, this marked the first time in Thai legal history that survivors were recognised as

victims of human trafficking in the context of forced criminality.

Since then, the girls have received long-term, holistic care like safe housing, medical care, counselling, and vocational support. Tearfund's commitment goes beyond justice—ensuring survivors have the support they need to rebuild their lives with dignity.

We tend to think of scammers as the criminals. But sometimes, they're victims too—trapped in systems that exploit everyone involved. Understanding forced criminality doesn't excuse the crime, but it helps us see the bigger picture.'

Claire Gray, Tearfund's Head of Advocacy

Claire says the case exposes a side of cybercrime most Kiwis never consider.

More about the lives transformed through Tearfund's work combatting modern slavery at tearfund.org.nz/modern-slavery

THE ETHICAL FASHION GUIDE:

From fashion labels to lawmakers

STORY MAYA DUCKWORTH

Exploitation is woven into our clothes, wired into our electronics, and sown into our food. But like you, we believe every person deserves to live and work in dignity, safety, and freedom. This belief has shaped Tearfund's work for decades and is why, together with our supporters, we've stayed the course in challenging exploitation at a key source: the supply chains of some of the world's biggest industries.

It started with one simple question: If we could give consumers the facts, would it turn their choices into a force for a fairer world? What we didn't expect was how far it would take us. From boardroom clashes to legal threats, from fashion brands to influencing national policy, this journey has changed us, and the direction of our mission. This is the story behind the Ethical Fashion Guide.

How a simple pitch gained ground

It started with an elevator pitch. Literally. At the Justice Conference in Melbourne, one of our team members struck up a conversation with someone from Baptist World Aid Australia in a lift. As luck would have it, they were looking for a partner to help launch a New Zealand version of their Ethical Fashion Guide. By the time the elevator doors opened, the seed had taken root.

The Ethical Fashion Guide posed a crucial question: How are brands protecting garment workers in an industry plagued by human rights abuses? Its strength was in providing clear information to help shoppers make better choices.

Over five years, the research presented through the guide sparked tough conversations and slow-building trust as we evaluated and supported nearly 30 New Zealand fashion brands as they improved their supply chain visibility. Some leaned in with humility, others with hesitation, and some never answered our emails, no matter how many we sent.

Tearfund's Head of Advocacy, Claire Gray, recalls, "I remember sitting with a CEO who flat-out said he didn't care if workers were exploited as long as the business stayed profitable. It was one of many grit-my-teeth moments." Claire continues, "I was already deep in the data—reading reports, hearing stories from workers about conditions so dangerous they'd seen colleagues die. So, to sit face-to-face with someone completely unmoved by it all... that was confronting."



We Can
ETHICAL FASHION GUIDE *MAKECHANGEFORMAKERS

📷 Kiwi shoppers embraced the Ethical Fashion Guide to make a difference for garment workers facing exploitation.
Photo: Tearfund

The media interest was extensive—at times intimidating, at other times energising. It's no small thing to publicly evaluate the ethics of major businesses, especially when those companies have deeper pockets, more influence, and legal teams on standby.

One Christmas, we received the first threat of legal action. After a moment of panic, we knew that it was important to stand firm in exposing this untold story of exploitation. Engaging legal counsel, we weathered that storm—and the risks were worth it. Year on year, we saw many Kiwi and overseas brands improving their standards.

One brand we worked with ended up overhauling its entire sourcing model. Rather than relying on third-party agents—which often keeps brands disconnected from the factories making their clothes—they shifted to direct sourcing. This made it easier to choose suppliers more carefully, build stronger relationships, uphold higher standards, and increase visibility into working conditions. It was a big step!

This wasn't an isolated story. Many local clothing brands, armed with the right tools and increasing accountability from people like you, took significant steps on their sustainability journeys.

Kiwis' overwhelming response

Everyday Kiwis like you didn't just support this work—you drove it! We had never done anything like the Ethical Fashion Guide before, and the day it launched, we sat in the office watching the downloads climb into the thousands before morning tea. It broke every traffic record on Tearfund's website.

When brands came to us for help with their sustainability efforts, they told us that the number one reason they were taking steps to trace their supply chain or increase their transparency was because their customers were asking for it

Claire Gray, Tearfund's Head of Advocacy

This work hasn't achieved everything—there are still plenty of deep-rooted problems in the industry. But in some areas, we've seen positive changes. In 2023, we talked with Rahela, a machine operator in Bangladesh who shared how her factory had improved: wider and cleaner workspaces, better lighting, drinking water more easily accessible. "The Government gives instructions on improving working conditions," she told us, "and some brands are also strict."

From catwalks to the capital city

Still, a quiet frustration remained. Maybe you felt it, too.

The guide was working, but only in one industry, and only with the brands willing to engage. Meanwhile, stories of forced labour and exploitation continued to surface across industries our research didn't reach—construction sites, electronics



factories, and banana plantations. That's when we widened our focus. We joined others advocating for modern slavery legislation in New Zealand that would require all large businesses, not just the willing ones, to take responsibility for the human rights risks in their supply chains. It would mean companies in construction, dairy, and electronics would also be held accountable. And it would no longer be voluntary to act.

We're not finished yet

The road has been long. That's often the nature of advocacy. There have been highs—government promises, thousands of signed petitions, and people like you showing up to demonstrate the overwhelming public support through submissions. And there have also been setbacks—portfolio reshuffles, MP demotions, and shifting political priorities.

Still, Kiwis all over the nation have joined us in stepping into adjacent areas of advocacy—writing submissions to strengthen legal definitions of trafficking, signing petitions calling for clearer pathways of support for survivors, and closing legal loopholes that leave children in our own country exposed.

"Our work is not finished," says Claire. "Nearly a decade on, we know this for sure: businesses should not be profiting from exploitation. Yet, they still are."

This is not a radical idea, it's long overdue, and we'll keep showing up until change is delivered.

Thank you to everyone who has joined us on this journey so far. We hope you will continue journeying with us to uphold justice and dignity for those being exploited in the pursuit of cheap consumer goods.

More about our advocacy initiatives at tearfund.org.nz/our-work



Blessed to be a blessing: The sponsorship legacy you're building

STORY TIMOTHY O'FARRELL

Towards the end of the Korean War, a minister chased a boy who had stolen his coat. But when Rev Swanson found it, the shivering child was huddled beneath. Then he noticed other 'piles of rags' nearby — and under each lay another war-orphan seeking shelter from the harsh Korean winter.

That moment in 1953 marked the beginning of something extraordinary. These children were the very first to be supported by *Compassion*. And for the next 40 years, faithful sponsors from here and around the globe helped care for South Korea's children.

Thanks to those prayers and monthly gifts, the impossible became reality.



Compassion founder, Reverend Everett Swanson, gets a smile from a sponsored child.
Photo: Compassion



Justin Suh, CEO of Compassion South Korea, meets a young child sponsored in one of the Compassion projects.
Photo: Compassion

By 1993, South Korea had undergone a remarkable transformation. Its economy strengthened, communities stabilised, and the Church became a beacon of strength. The country no longer needed support from sponsors. Instead, it was ready to give back—to pass on the blessing of child sponsorship.

In 2003, South Korea became the first country to move from receiving to giving within *Compassion's* Child Development Programme.

From receiving to giving

Recently, Dr Justin Suh, the CEO of *Compassion* in Korea, visited New Zealand to share this and other powerful sponsorship stories with Korean churches here.

As we were helped, we will now help many others. With God's blessing, the *Compassion* family worldwide will keep the ripple effect going, stirring hearts and changing lives in Jesus' name.'

Justin Suh, *Compassion* Korea CEO

What an incredible, ongoing impact your sponsorship makes!

As we reflect on South Korea's story, we're reminded that child sponsorship

does more than meet daily needs. It shapes children's futures, strengthens churches and communities, and affirms the God-given worth of every child.

"But what about us?"

The question asked when *Compassion* began is still the most frequently asked by Kiwis about sponsorship today. "Why are you sending money outside our country when we need it here?" Dr Suh's answer is honest and compassionate.

While children at home face real challenges, we're helping vulnerable children who are often in even greater need. [Because] in the Bible, even though God wants to save everyone, he always mentions children, widows, and orphans. That's where God's heart is.'

Justin Suh, *Compassion* Korea CEO

Dr Suh believes the need is just as urgent as it was 70 years ago. "Through sponsorship, we can be the channel of God's blessings. One-third of the world's population lives in extreme poverty," says Justin. "But to me, that is just a number. Can you imagine a child looking at you and asking, 'Can you help me?'"

This is the opportunity presented to Kiwis, he says—to open our eyes to the need and to "see and be compassionate."

Your part in the story

Kiwis were invited into this same restoration story when Tearfund partnered with *Compassion* in 1986. Together, through your sponsorship, we're supporting children around the world through education, healthcare, and the support of a local church so they are known, loved and protected.

Each month, your gift does more than meet the needs of the child you sponsor—it gives them hope, and we are enormously grateful!

To help write the next chapter for a child, or learn more, visit tearfund.org.nz/sponsor



The First Hello: What sponsorship looks like seven years later

STORY HELEN MANSON

Before I became a humanitarian photographer and storyteller, I used to imagine that mothers in lower-income countries were somehow different from me. Maybe, I thought, they didn't feel things as deeply—that hardship had numbed their expectations or dulled their hope for their children.

How wrong I was.

Seven years ago, while living in Uganda, I was given a photography assignment from Tearfund's partner, *Compassion*—"Help us bring to life our new young child survival programme," they asked. It's a life-saving programme that still runs today, walking alongside vulnerable mothers to journey with vulnerable mothers and their babies through the first critical year of life. Think of it as a supercharged version of Plunket, delivered through churches in the communities.

I accepted the challenge and decided the best way to tell the story was to follow three women—Juliet, Kate, and Rahuma—through pregnancy to their child's first birthday. I called it *The First Hello*.

Together with my friend and gifted Ugandan photojournalist Carol, we documented the mum's lives during their pregnancies, births, and at their children's three, six and nine-month, one-year, and five-year milestones—including their first day at school. Most recently, we captured their seventh birthdays.

On each child's first birthday, when they graduated from the Mum and Bubs survival programme and became eligible for sponsorship, my family handed each mum a card asking if we could become their sponsor. They said yes. And yes, I got the kids matching clothes. Naturally.

This story was born out of a heartbreaking truth: too many children don't survive to the age of five. But what I discovered through this journey was far more than statistics. I saw mums just like me, with kids just like mine. There's no difference in what we want for our children—only in what we can give them.



Christine runs to greet her mother with a huge hug as she comes home from work in Uganda.
Photo: Compassion

This year, I returned to Uganda to mark the girls' seventh birthdays.

Juliet is now raising Christine on her own after leaving an unsafe marriage. "If Christine wasn't sponsored," she told me, "I wouldn't be able to afford school or medicine. But she is. And now she's the first girl in our family to go all the way through school."

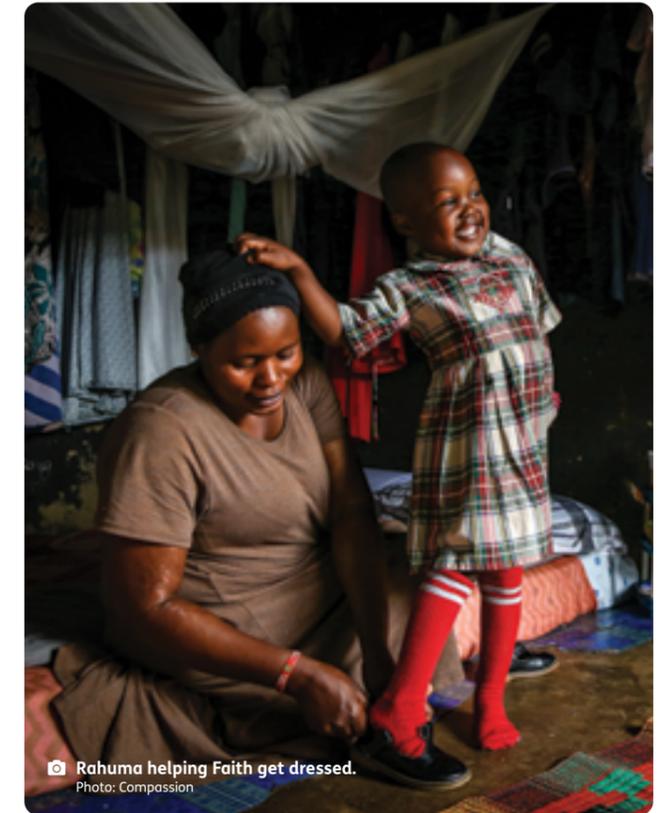
Kate, who once struggled to provide food, now runs a small business. Her marriage has been restored, and her daughter Pamela is thriving—bright, bubbly, and doing so well in class.

When Pamela was born, I didn't think we'd get to where we are today. But look at us now!

Kate

Rahuma's journey has been harder. After escaping an abusive relationship, she's now working two jobs to support her children. Faith is living with her grandmother in the village while Rahuma works, but she's fiercely committed to staying connected to the programme. "I can't risk losing this," she told me through tears. "It's our anchor."

The First Hello has given me a front-row seat to one of the most epic displays of feminine strength: pregnancy, birth, and unfolding motherhood.



Rahuma helping Faith get dressed.
Photo: Compassion



Newborn Juliet.
Photo: Compassion



📷 Mama Kate and Pamela with photo journalist Helen Manson.
Photo: Compassion

I've seen the quiet heroism of these women—their resilience, their joy, and their fight for their families.

I've also seen the remarkable power of sponsorship—the way it helps families face life's inevitable challenges with dignity, courage, and community.

In Tearfund's 50th year, I can't think of a better story to tell. **Because this slow, sustained, faithful presence is what real change looks like.**

Sponsorship isn't just a monthly gift. It's school uniforms and food parcels. It's emergency surgeries, business training, and letters that say: *I see you. I believe in your future. I'm not going anywhere.*

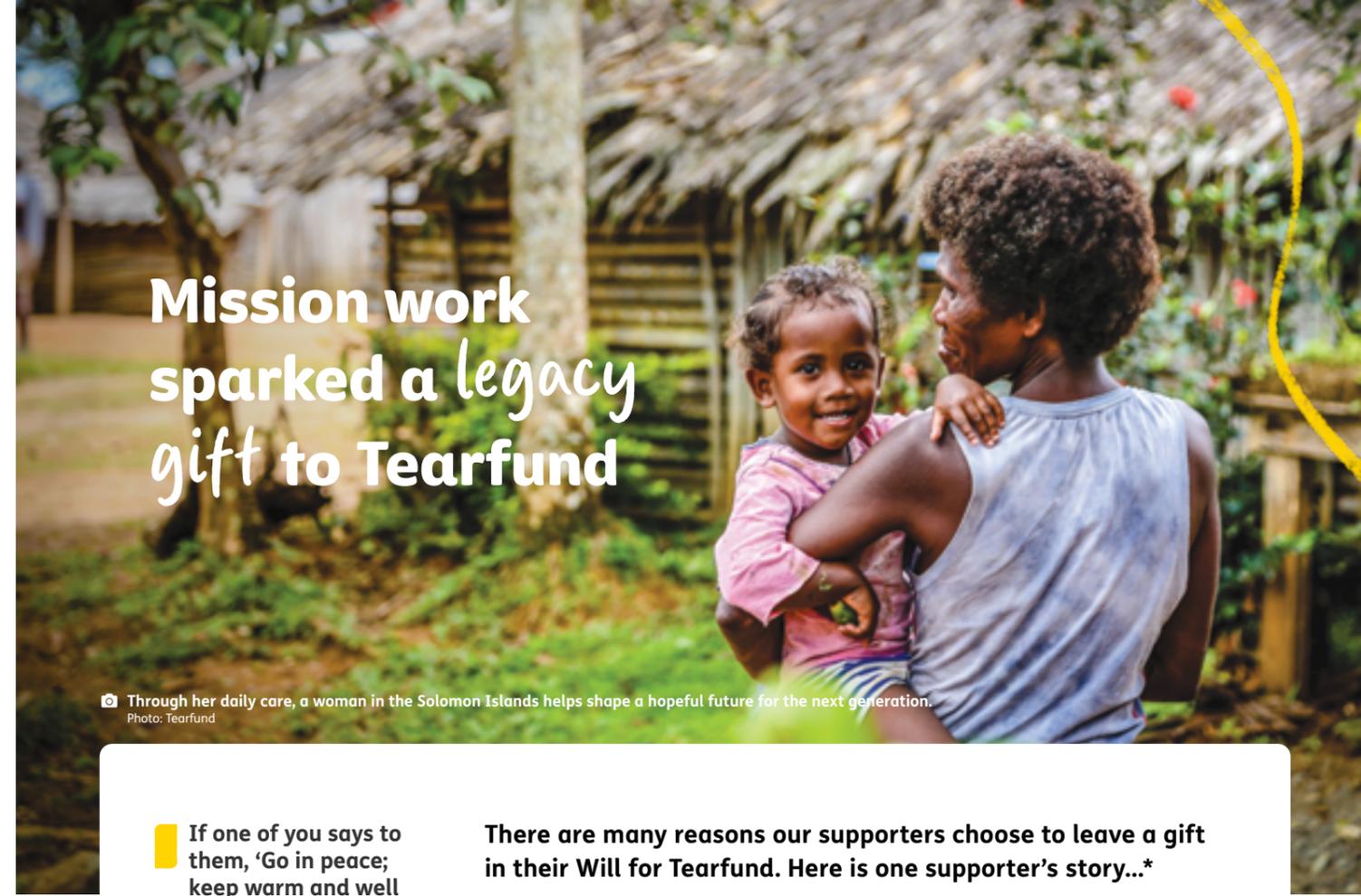
Christine. Pamela. Faith. These girls are living proof that sponsorship works. And I know that because I've seen it with my own eyes, camera in hand, since the very first hello.



You can be part of supporting vulnerable families in that first critical year. Start your journey at tearfund.org.nz/mums-and-bubs



📷 Pamela enjoys the snacks from Mama Kate.
Photo: Compassion



Mission work sparked a legacy gift to Tearfund

📷 Through her daily care, a woman in the Solomon Islands helps shape a hopeful future for the next generation.
Photo: Tearfund

If one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?'

James 2:16

There are many reasons our supporters choose to leave a gift in their Will for Tearfund. Here is one supporter's story...*

My interest in mission work began as a young child, hearing stories about missionaries living in countries very different from ours in terms of access to basic needs. My desire to be involved in humanitarian work was behind my decision to study nursing when I left school. During my training, I became a Christian and began to realise that material help isn't enough on its own; people need Jesus, but neither can we share the gospel and ignore people's physical needs.

In 2023 and 2024, I took up the opportunity to nurse short-term in a mission in the Pacific. I cannot overstate how life-changing the experience was! As a missions' nurse, I provided medical care to locals and other missionaries. I also facilitated church planting in remote tribal locations by providing care to keep missionaries on the field and able to remain in their role of bringing God's Word to unreached people groups. Before I left for the field, I had to make arrangements in case I passed away overseas. I decided to have a Will drawn up that would provide for the needs of my sponsor children, should they graduate from the sponsorship programme after my lifetime.

Through serving in missions, God gave me a fuller understanding that my life's purpose as a believer is to glorify him. I learnt that everything I do should flow from this. As Jesus' last words to his followers, I saw that obeying the Great Commission is a critical part of this; it is the mission of the church until Jesus returns. In light of this, I decided to prepare for a life of missions to the unreached.

Even though I am engaged in Bible study and training to work as a long-term missionary, I recognise that all my resources are gifts from God. This means they are to be used sacrificially for his glory. The sponsored children I continue to support until they graduate provide me with consistent encouragement and remind me that we are truly more blessed when we give than when we receive.

I hope this encourages you to consider where in your life you might give more glory to God.

**The writer prefers to remain anonymous.*

If you're considering establishing a Will or updating your current one to include a gift to Tearfund, we'd love to help. Request our free, no-obligation Gifts in Wills Guide to learn how you can create a simple Will at no cost. Contact us at bequests@tearfund.org.nz or 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

\$

Your details

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

Supporter No. (If known)

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Name: _____

Address: _____

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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

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Expiry: /

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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.

Sponsor a child today!

Since 1986, thousands of compassionate Kiwis like you have stood faithfully with children living in poverty—championing their dreams, cheering them on, and helping them rise above the barriers that hold them back.

There's something deeply special about child sponsorship with Tearfund and *Compassion*. It's not just a monthly donation—it's a relationship. A connection. A chance to speak courage into a child's life through letters that remind them they're seen, known and loved.

For many children, sponsorship is the start of discovering their worth, their purpose, and the greatest relationship of all—the one they can have with Jesus.

For just \$56 a month, you can become part of a movement that's been changing lives for decades. Your sponsorship helps a child flourish—physically, emotionally, spiritually—and realise their God-given potential.

You can choose one of these children on this page, visit tearfund.org.nz to meet other children still waiting for a sponsor, or call **0800 800 777** to begin your journey.

Let's keep changing the world—one child at a time.



Gloria

Uganda
DOB 20 Mar

Gloria lives in Uganda with her parents and two sisters. She is 14 and in the school equivalent of Year 6. Her favourite subject is Music.



Mone

Indonesia
DOB 31 May

Mone lives in Indonesia with his parents and five siblings. He is 6 and likes to play ball games.



Peter

Uganda
DOB 31 Aug

Peter lives in Uganda with his father and 3 siblings. He is 14 and in the school equivalent of Year 6. His favourite subject is Art.



Kato

Uganda
DOB 21 Jun

Kato lives in Uganda with his guardian. He is 17 and is in the school equivalent of Year 7. His favourite subject is Math.



Enid

Uganda
DOB 11 Jun

Enid lives in Uganda with her parents and 5 siblings. She is 15 and in the school equivalent of Year 8. Her favourite subject is Health.



Dancan

Kenya
DOB 17 Aug

Dancan lives in Kenya with his parents. He is 16 and in the school equivalent of Year 9. His favourite subject is Social Studies.



Sharel

Kenya
DOB 28 Jun

Sharel lives in Kenya with her parents. She is 15 and is in the school equivalent of Year 9. Her favourite subject is Language.



Aprilia

Indonesia
DOB 4 Apr

Aprilia lives in Indonesia with her parents. She is 2 and likes to clap her hands to music.

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. tearfund.org.nz/sponsor



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