

COMPASSION

magazine

www.compassionuk.org - www.compassion.ie 2015 Issue 2

RELEASING
CHILDREN
FROM
POVERTY

IN JESUS' NAME

BEYOND THE PROJECT GATES

You're impacting an
entire family

DANIELLE STRICKLAND INTERVIEW

One person matters

THE POWER OF A CHILD'S PRAYER

"God changed our father"


Releasing children from poverty
Compassion
in Jesus' name

Over the lifetime of a Compassion sponsorship,
a child receives an average of

4,000 HOURS OF FACE TO FACE
CONTACT TIME

with a loving Christian project staff member.



WHEN YOU'VE FINISHED, SHARE YOUR
COMPASSION MAGAZINE
WITH A FRIEND

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Compassion is an international Christian child development and advocacy ministry. Partnering with local churches, we are committed to the spiritual, economic, social and physical development of children living in extreme poverty, enabling them to become responsible, fulfilled Christian adults.

For just £25 or €30 a month, you can ensure your sponsored child attends a church-based Compassion project where they will receive the practical, emotional, social and spiritual care they need to escape from poverty. Each child is linked to just one sponsor and you can encourage the child you support through your letters and prayers.

DEAR FRIENDS,

In the aftermath of the 2010 Haitian Earthquake, one of my senior leaders, Justin Dowds, shared with me the dream of reconstructing a damaged hospital on the island of la Gonave. It's the only medical facility for over 100,000 Haitians, including 6,500 sponsored children.

Hundreds of thousands of pounds of fundraising, a trip up Kilimanjaro and five years later, the new hospital is finally open. I want to share an e-mail Justin sent whilst he was there recently:

"It's remarkable that the hospital is staffed with doctors, surgeons and nurses whose journeys have been shaped by Compassion – so many of them were sponsored as children. Even the new nursing school is led by a formerly sponsored child."

This small hospital is a testament to everything we do. The highly trained staff are living examples of the difference sponsorship makes and their success is being fed directly back into the community.

I met one little lad in the children's ward. He had been dumped at the hospital gates. They think he is four, his legs are withered, he's blind and he's deaf. I felt God say, "What if all we did, was just for him; would it have been worth it to you? Because it would have been worth it to me."

"Although this boy is not a Compassion-supported child, he is known, loved and protected all the same because others have been sponsored before him. They have taken up the mantle and are sharing all that they have been given."

What an amazing story. And there are thousands more like it. Children who have had their lives changed because of sponsors like you.

Thank you,

IAN HAMILTON
Chief Executive Officer
Compassion UK and Compassion Ireland

COMPASSION UK CHRISTIAN CHILD DEVELOPMENT

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We'd love to hear your experiences of sponsorship or any comments or suggestions you have, so please get in touch.

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DESIGN AND PRODUCTION

The Drummer Agency

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COVER

PHOTO: **CHUCK BIGGER**

You can watch Odupoi's story on our Youtube channel.

COM100912



NEWS

Members of the 4M team celebrating at the finish line. PHOTOGRAPHY: 4M



MARATHON IN THE MAASAI MARA

Ever imagined running a marathon amongst wild zebras? In June, the first Compassion UK team completed the Kenyan Muskathlon. Run by our partners, 4M, a Muskathlon is an ultimate endurance challenge, set in extreme locations to raise funds for causes of righteousness and justice.

Joining with local people, competitors from Compassion Netherlands and Leadership Development Programme students, our team ran, cycled or trekked through the spectacular scenery of the Maasai Mara. For the 250-strong group, it truly was a once in a lifetime adventure. Reflecting on his experience, team member Darren Allwright explains, "I feel immensely proud to have completed a marathon in the heat and altitude of Kenya. The local people I met were incredible and have inspired me to use every opportunity to eradicate poverty in my lifetime." ■

Are you up for the challenge? Join us at the next Muskathlon in Uganda on 20-28 May 2016. Not only will you have an adventure, you'll also get the opportunity to see Compassion's work with the local church, go on home visits and take a safari.

For further information, visit www.muskathlon.com or e-mail darrena@compassionuk.org



OUR NEW WEBSITE

This summer we're launching our new website! With exciting new features, it will make it easy for you to connect with your sponsored child, as well as keep up-to-date with inspiring stories from the Compassion family. Keep an eye out at www.compassionuk.org ■



Children encouraging the runners to keep going. PHOTOGRAPHY: 4M



FASHION WITH COMPASSION

We recently joined together with high street fashion brands and ethical companies to hold an evening of "Fashion with Compassion". Amongst a showcase of the latest fashion trends, the event celebrated how sponsored children are taught vocational skills. The evening featured a Compassion project in India that has purchased a silk weaving machine to enable local families to run their own businesses. We were also excited to see 11 more lives transformed thanks to new sponsors. Thank you to everyone who came along to help make the night a great success. ■

SHARE YOUR SPONSORSHIP STORY

Do you have a highlight or have you received encouragement from your sponsorship? If so, we'd love to hear from you. E-mail us at stories@compassionuk.org and we may publish your story on our blog! ■

PINEAPPLE UPDATE!

In 2013, we shared how a pineapple farming RESPOND Initiative was bringing change to the community of Kinyamakara in southern Rwanda. We're pleased to report that two years on, the farm is flourishing. The parents and caregivers have sold over 1,000 pineapples and, due to the success, now plan to purchase a piece of land more than double the size of the existing farm to expand the activity. Using the skills they have learnt at the project, many caregivers have also been able to start growing pineapples in their own homes.

Single father Gakwandi Celestine says, "I now have a full time occupation with pineapple farming and I have also taught my children how to grow pineapples. As a group of caregivers, we have



started saving money due to this activity."

Not only have parents in the community gained economic security, children at the project love eating the tasty pineapples full of vitamin C and Bromelain, a mixture of enzymes which will aid their digestion. ■

Each caregiver is given a number of pineapples to eat at home. PHOTOGRAPHY: Richard Muliisa



PHOTOGRAPHY: Bryce Boyer



A TALE OF TWO EUNICES

In the vast country of Uganda, Compassion sponsorship is changing the lives of two girls, both called Eunice. The first is seven-year-old Eunice who lives in eastern Uganda. Before she was sponsored, Eunice was one of the poorest children in the community. She rarely had the chance to go to school and often went to bed hungry. Thanks to her sponsor, she is now at the start of her journey to being released from poverty in Jesus' name.

So what does it actually mean to be released from poverty in Jesus' name? Poverty is more than going hungry or being denied access to education. Poverty is a lie that tells people they are worthless, that they have no hope and no future. It is children who pay the greatest price as they are the most vulnerable. When you sponsor a child, you are fighting that lie. Not only are you enabling a child to go to school, receive food and medical check-ups, you are also helping the local church to teach them about the love of Jesus. Because ultimately, it is Jesus who transforms lives, changes nations and truly sets people free.

Natalie Jackman, Eunice's project director, knows this truth well. She's seen over 300 children start school thanks to Compassion. She's also seen children gaining confidence and self-esteem after reading encouraging letters from their sponsor. "It's so amazing for someone to care for a child that they don't know," she explains.

But when children are introduced to Jesus, true transformation takes place. Through the biblical teaching they'll be given, seven-year-old Eunice and her friends will have the opportunity to accept the eternal hope that only comes through Christ. The potential of this change is huge. "When the community is changed, the region is changed. The whole country is changed because people are being transformed," declares Natalie.

On the other side of the country in Kasese, western Uganda, 17-year-old Eunice lives with her grandmother. This Eunice is a walking testament to the difference years of sponsorship will make to her namesake hundreds of miles away. Eunice says, "I was three

WRITTEN BY ROZ WALSH



years old when I joined Compassion. Through the years, I have learnt many things like preaching, singing, dancing, even sharing with my fellow students.

Compassion has changed me in so many ways. Since I joined, I have been born again, at 13 years of age. Compassion is also

giving me school fees and leading me to a higher level because I want to become a lawyer in the future so I appreciate it very much. To sponsors, I want to say thank you for giving me this chance, for being my friend. I appreciate the things you give me. Thank you very much. God bless you."

Thanks to the support of sponsorship, Eunice is moving towards a life where she has choices. She can choose a job

that will provide a sustainable income thanks to the education she has received. She can choose to follow Jesus and share the joy and hope He brings. This is what being released from poverty in Jesus' name looks like.

This Compassion Sunday, we are focussing on releasing children from poverty in Jesus' name. Because to us, sponsorship is more than just providing a child with education or food. It's about introducing them to the love of a Saviour who ultimately sets them free from the bonds of poverty. With your help, we can release hundreds more children from poverty in Jesus' name. Please join us on Sunday 20 September to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves and find another sponsor for a child in poverty.

"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute."

PROVERBS 31:8

JOIN US THIS COMPASSION SUNDAY

On Sunday 20 September, join hundreds of sponsors across the UK and Ireland to speak on behalf of children in poverty. With your help, we can release hundreds of children from poverty in Jesus' name. It doesn't have to be complicated; simply speaking for a few minutes about Compassion and setting up a sponsorship sign up table can have great results.

As project director Natalie says, "When you look at a child, you never know who this person will become in the future. So I want to encourage people who want to sponsor a child, it is not in vain, it is really rewarding."

Sign up today to receive your free resource pack which contains everything you need to hold a Compassion Sunday event. To order, visit www.compassionuk.org/compassionsunday



BEYOND THE PROJECT GATES

WRITTEN BY
REBECCA STANLEY

BY SPONSORING A CHILD, YOU'RE IMPACTING AN ENTIRE FAMILY

SPONSORSHIP RELIEVES FINANCIAL BURDENS.

By providing a child with an education, regular nutritional support and health check-ups, you're relieving a family of financial pressures. With one child's school fees and medical checks paid for, parents are released to provide for their other children.

In Odisha, East India, Gatchina's two sons were rarely able to attend school as the fees were beyond the family's reach. The two boys even had to share a school uniform between them. When Ismael was sponsored as a 7-year-old, the project paid for his uniform and school fees, allowing both boys to return to full-time education.



COMPASSION PROJECTS CONNECT FAMILIES WITH CHURCHES.

As your sponsored child attends their church-based project every week, the staff will get to know their family. Parents or caregivers will be invited to regular church celebrations and services at Christmas and Easter. We regularly see children sponsored through the Compassion programme leading their families to Christ!

SIBLINGS BENEFIT FROM PROJECT TEACHING.

Your sponsored child is likely to share what they have learnt at their project with their entire family.

11-year-old Madeline has shown her siblings how to brush their teeth. The whole family sits down together and reads the Bible she was given thanks to her sponsorship.



PARENTS ARE GIVEN TRAINING.

At least once every three months, you're enabling your sponsored child's parents or caregivers to attend training. Church partners select the topics which are most relevant to their local context. These may include parenting skills, adult literacy, hygiene awareness and the importance of sanitation.

FAMILIES ARE GIVEN SUPPORT DURING CRISES.

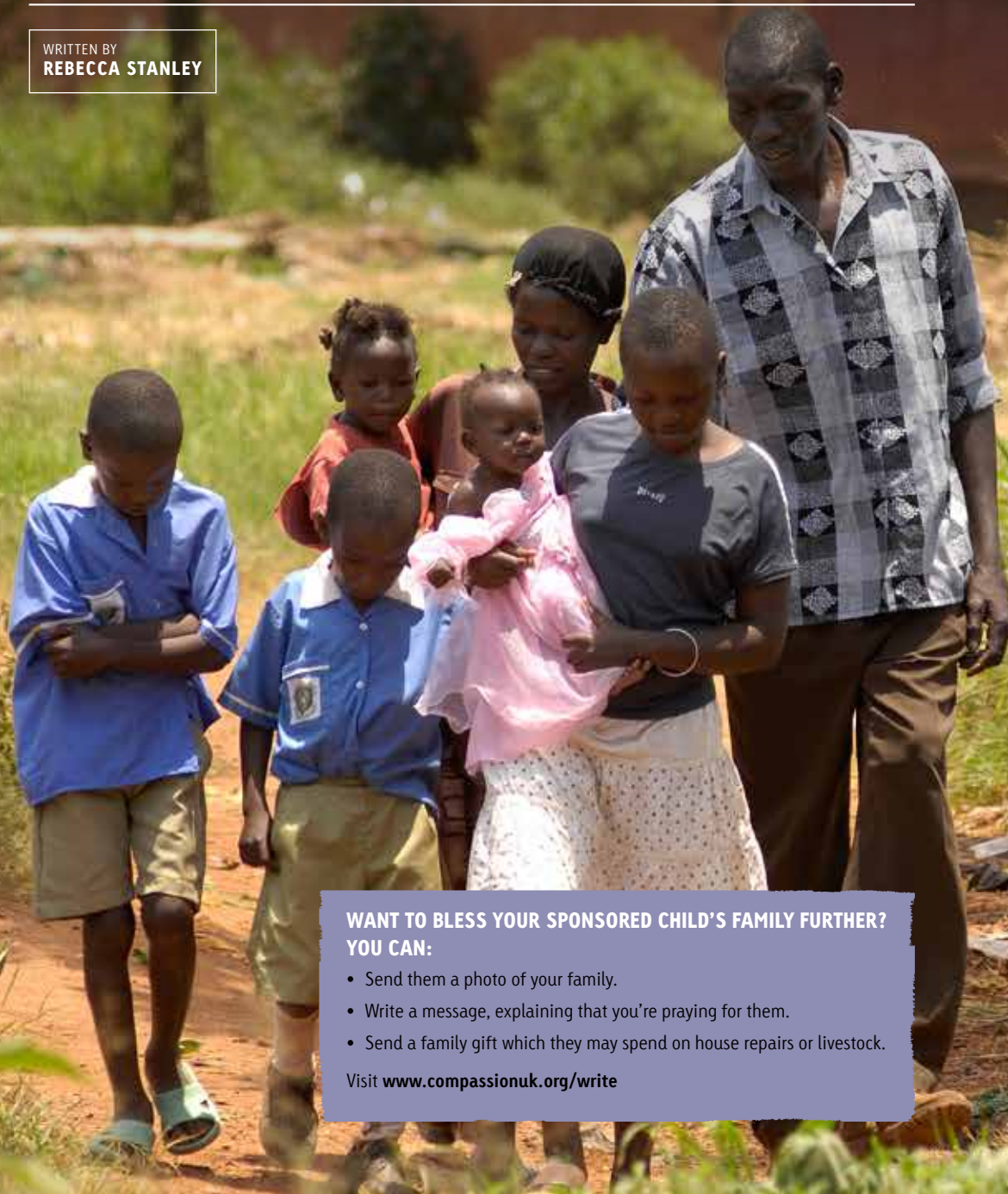
Your sponsored child is visited at home at least once a year and if they are absent from their project activities for two weeks in a row, project workers will follow up with an additional visit.

This means that project workers are familiar with the challenges a family faces. They are quick to identify and respond if a child is at risk or a family is in crisis. For example, those affected by HIV and AIDS may be offered counselling, and thanks to our RESPOND ministry, many church partners are able to provide parents with income generation training and resources if they face unemployment or underemployment.

WANT TO BLESS YOUR SPONSORED CHILD'S FAMILY FURTHER? YOU CAN:

- Send them a photo of your family.
- Write a message, explaining that you're praying for them.
- Send a family gift which they may spend on house repairs or livestock.

Visit www.compassionuk.org/write



ONE PERSON MATTERS

Danielle Strickland is a Salvation Army officer in Edmonton, Canada. Highly respected for her work with the least and the lost, and somewhat famous for taking cupcakes into brothels, Danielle speaks and campaigns internationally about issues of social justice. Compassion UK's Bekah Legg caught up with her to have a chat.

Was there a time where you suddenly caught God's heart for justice?

I'd say it was when I went to Africa on a mission trip. I had to get permission from my probation officer because at the time I was a juvenile delinquent. To cut a long story short, I had to tell the gospel to one person as part of the deal. It must have been the world's worst gospel presentation, "God loves you. Blah, blah ..."

But at the end, this woman, Fatima, wanted to receive Christ. I was amazed and told her, "I don't think you got it", so I went back to the beginning. I think I told her three times in total. I had this kind of revelation that, although I already knew that God *could* save Fatima, her family, other people, even me, I had never realised God could use me to do that.

I think that's real salvation, when it becomes about something more than you. It goes from self-centred, "I could be healed, I could be delivered, I can be redeemed," to "Oh! The whole world can be healed; the whole world can be delivered." It rescued me from myself, which is perhaps what discipleship is for.

When I got home, I still had to go back to school and finish detox. I had to get my life cleaned up. It was a long journey, but I felt like from that point on, my life changed, I just wanted to make a difference.



Danielle speaking out against injustice.

"I love that through Compassion you can make someone living in poverty on the other side of the world your neighbour."

And what is it about Compassion that you believe makes a difference?

I love that one person matters. When it all boils down, it's about who God is and who we are and discovering who your neighbour is. I love the idea of making someone living in poverty on the other side of the world your neighbour.

Last year at New Wine, we asked people to sponsor a child in the same village so that we could transform the whole village. It's a beautiful model. We're telling kids, "We don't just see your village, we see you. You matter to us. You're not invisible anymore, we've named you, and we've called you our own." It's exactly what God has done to each of us. *cm*



Mothers and babies are being given vital care through Antioquia CSP.



MY COMMUNITY IS NOW STRONGER

My name is Ana Lucia Vinueza and I am the director of Antioquia Child Survival Programme in Ecuador. Life here is tough. Most of the people don't have steady jobs. Groups of people, especially gangs, gather to play cards and the like. The darkest hours are the best for them because that's when they can steal from pedestrians, and if the victim refuses to be robbed, they can even kill them. Young parents struggle to find work, often leaving their children under someone else's care. But because of the Child Survival Programme, things are changing.

Through the programme, we help mothers generate income so they will be prepared to get ahead in life, even in the event of being abandoned by their husbands. They also receive baskets of groceries and medical check-ups. If the results of the health screenings say that they need specific medical treatment, we provide support for them throughout the entire process until the doctor discharges them. We also deliver workshops for parents with specific topics about family including hygiene training and nutrition. In case any of the mothers need counselling, our church's pastor provides it.

Let me tell you about Jennifer. We registered Jennifer into the programme because of her vulnerability. Jennifer's partner did drugs and was a violent person; we were worried about miscarriage. We guided her through her pregnancy and gave her advice. We worked with them both and now Jennifer's partner is quitting drugs. He's changed even more since his daughter's birth. He cares more for Jennifer and pays more

attention to her and her baby. Thanks to the medical support received, the baby was born with good health and a good weight.

This is just one of the very special cases we've had. Transformed families, even former gang members, now believe in God and accept Jesus in their heart and share that with their neighbours. This helps the community because we can develop people's leadership skills at church. Some have even become leaders. This community is now stronger.

Ana's story is one of many incredible testimonies from our 782 Compassion Child Survival Programmes. *cm*

Head to www.compassionuk.org/csp to watch our exciting video featuring the Child Survival Programme in Ana's community and read our new brochure.



WRITTEN BY ANA LUCIA VINUEZA, WITH LUKE HAMILTON

Ana is passionate about changing life for the mothers in her community.
PHOTOGRAPH: Chuck Bigger

“I find it hard to describe how great a role Compassion played in my life. After my mother died, the project were so very helpful for me and my brother.

Since graduating from Compassion, I’m now a third year accounting student. I have a dream of opening an orphanage so I can give other children love.”

SELAMAWIT MALESE, ETHIOPIA





LOOKING BEYOND CIRCUMSTANCE

Dignity is one of Compassion's core values; a cornerstone of our ministry. Recently, the UN recognised it as one of six main elements for delivering the Sustainable Development Goals, the successor of the Millennium Development Goals. But what's it really all about?

"My in-laws hurl abuse when they see me walk on the street and treat me like a stray dog," says Vanitha, an HIV positive widow from Madurai in India. "I lost my dignity and respect in the community. Nothing good came from me."

Growing up, Vanitha was just another girl; an expensive burden on her family. As a teenage wife, she was expected to care for her husband and give birth to a son. When she was diagnosed with HIV and both her husband and her child died, she became an outcast.

Her gender, her circumstances, local superstitions and the dreadful things others said about her began to

define Vanitha. The world told her she was useless and she started to believe it. She lost her self-worth and her dignity.

BEYOND THE CIRCUMSTANCES

But at Compassion we don't see circumstances; we see individuals with inherent potential. And when Vanitha arrived at the local Child Survival Programme after remarrying and discovering she was pregnant, the staff saw a loving wife, a caring mother and a remarkable woman striving against the odds to rebuild her life. They saw a woman created in the image of God.

Through projects across the world, our staff seek to be the hands and feet of Christ.

WRITTEN BY **KATE SHARMA**
WITH **FENN MOSES**

They treat families with the respect, love and compassion of Christ and work to restore dignity by showing children and their families that they are unconditionally loved and accepted by Him.

It's something Vanitha has seen demonstrated by staff at the Child Survival Programme, who cared for her through her pregnancy and now help her look after her beautiful daughter, Maheshwari. "When I am at the project, listening to scriptures, my faith increases and I deny every insult thrown at me," says Vanitha with her head held high.

Christ treated everyone, from the prostitute and the tax collector to the leper, with respect. He saw the person beyond the circumstances, and so do we. Dignity is woven into the fabric of everything we do here at Compassion and every day, we help those in our care to find freedom in Christ. *cm*

Dignity is woven into the fabric of everything we do here at Compassion.



THE WAIT IS OVER



Helena Asti has been waiting 18 months for this moment. As crickets murmur in the densely forested Sumba Island in southern Indonesia, a timid 8-year-old sits eagerly outside her Compassion project with her parents and project director, Kornelis. Finally, Asti hears the treasured words she's been praying for. "There is cause for rejoicing," says Kornelis. "You have received a sponsor and her name is Renee." Joyful tears fall from Asti's cheeks; her wait is over.

Fast forward a few months, and thousands of people have gathered in London's O2 arena for the 2014 Hillsong European Conference. Silence has swept across the audience as every heart is captivated by Helena Asti's story on the big screens. God is moving mightily, in ways we weren't expecting.

For the past few years I have attended the Hillsong Conference as part of a group from my local church, Valley Church in Preston. We go to be built up, encouraged and to receive life-changing teaching.

Last year I began serving on the Compassion stand with the Compassion Events Team. I consider it an honour to serve at an event that sows so much into the life of our church and there's also such a good atmosphere amongst the team.

On this occasion, something extraordinary happens as Joel Houston gives the opportunity to sponsor a child. It's exciting seeing profile after profile being handed

back, filled in. Each representing a child's life that will be transformed. It's energising to see that when a new sponsor takes a profile in their hands, that's another individual responding to God's call to care for the poor. You can see the potential of each one.

I'm speechless as we reach the milestone of over 700 children sponsored. Social media goes crazy. Having visited my sponsored child, Pedro, in Brazil, I've seen what a difference Compassion can make to one life. I can testify that nothing that is sewn into each sponsored child is wasted. Knowing that thanks to Hillsong Conference, it will now happen to so many more children – just wow!



I praise God as an incredible 711 new sponsors are found. 711 children from 26 nations are able to join Helena Asti, their wait finally over. *cm*

I encourage you to join us at Hillsong Conference 2015. "Speak, we're listening" is running from July 22-24. For more information visit www.hillsong.com/conference

Watch Helena Asti's story on our Youtube channel.

WRITTEN BY SPONSOR **TABITHA-COURTNEY SMITH**, WITH **REBECCA STANLEY**

WHAT DO TILAPIA AND VEGETABLES HAVE IN COMMON?

They're both helping children and families break free from poverty. In Ghana and Ethiopia, tilapia fish and vegetables are creating income-generating opportunities for the parents of children in Compassion's programmes. Families are being empowered to break the cycle of poverty and create a brighter future.

In Ghana, where malnutrition is an underlying cause of one third of all child deaths, one Compassion project is giving parents the opportunity to provide nutrition for their children and increase their income by learning a new skill.¹

After receiving funding from Compassion UK, the project created a tilapia farm. Using two locally built aqua cages and a canoe, the caregivers of the project were able to raise 16,000 young fish to maturity, resulting in a harvest of 2.3 tonnes. The meals at the project were supplemented with the tilapia and the rest were sold at market. With the profits, caregivers were paid and another aqua cage and more fingerlings were purchased. The project has a five year plan to expand the farm to 25 aqua cages and create an onsite hatchery to become entirely self-sufficient.



Caregivers collecting the fish.
PHOTOGRAPHER: Ruth Ojeru

From one small RESPOND Initiative, this successful fish farm is providing nutritious food to children, a sustainable income for parents and hope to a community.

Abera, a mother of five enrolled in the Child Survival Programme in Ethiopia, was given the seed money from Compassion to start a business selling vegetables. With her husband earning a meagre and unreliable income, the new business was a life-saving opportunity.

Abera has taken her opportunity and created something beyond anything she could have imagined. From a loan equivalent to just over £30, she is now running a successful shop. The original loan has been repaid and the shop currently has a working capital equivalent to over £350. That alone would be a success, but Abera hasn't stopped there.

She used some of the profit to start another business with her husband. After community consultation and research, they started a wood business, diversifying their risk and creating another source of income. From struggling as a family to survive, they now have two successful businesses and the hope their children will never know what poverty is.

Abera and her family's story would have been very different without the loan to start the shop. Their hard work has been rewarded as they have finally been able to afford their own home. *cm*

To find out more about our RESPOND ministry, visit www.compassionuk.org/RESPOND

WRITTEN BY **PAUL DYMOTT**



Abera with the wood from her husband's new business.
PHOTOGRAPHER: Ienodros G. Hekkel

¹ www.unicef.org/ghana/health_nutrition_7522.html



Nursing graduates giving back to their community.
PHOTOGRAPHER: Ricca St. Paulin



EMPOWERING EVEN MORE

WRITTEN BY
PAUL DYMOTT

By 2019, the Leadership Development Programme will have had over 6,000 graduates. That's over 6,000 young adults who were born into poverty but are now leaders, making an impact in their communities.

This is a great achievement, but we want to do more.

1.6 million children are currently supported through our programmes and we want every child to have the opportunity to learn leadership skills, giving them the ability to thrive in their future. Imagine – more than 1.6 million leaders influencing their communities and breaking the cycle of poverty for themselves and their families.

On the back of the LDP's success, each of the countries where we partner with churches will be introducing youth development strategies as part of the child

sponsorship programme. These strategies will cater for the individual needs of each child in their own context. From the age of 12, every sponsored child will receive increased developmental opportunities designed to:

- Provide additional vocational or academic education so each child can pursue their own career goals.
- Incorporate biblical leadership and discipleship principles that will empower students to not only learn but experience what it means to be a leader.

This is an exciting innovation and something we are eager to see rolled out over the next two years in the 26 countries where we work. Because leadership skills and greater educational opportunities will be open to all, the Leadership Development Programme in its current form will transition to become part of the new youth development strategies. Lessons learnt from the successful work undertaken in the Leadership Development Programme will be implemented. These youth development strategies will be funded through increased access to local resources and through Compassion's RESPOND ministry.

A great example is a nursing programme in Haiti. 20 participants in the child sponsorship programme have been given scholarships to study a four-year nursing degree, with the potential after graduation to work at the La Gonave Wesleyan Hospital – the hospital that Compassion UK helped to fund the construction of. These youth, who would otherwise be unable to afford tertiary education, are being equipped with the skills required for a sustainable source of income. A hospital built by Haitians, staffed by Haitians and meeting the needs of Haitians is a community changer. This is how countries are transformed – one child at a time. *cm*

To find out more about our fundraising for further education as part of our RESPOND ministry visit www.compassionuk.org/RESPOND



Passion. Shared.

Martyn with Paul.



NOT A MOMENT OF YOUR TIME WILL BE WASTED

AS TOLD BY **MARTYN LANGLOIS**,
COMPASSION VOLUNTEER

To this day, I love introducing a new person to a sponsored child. Just watching the pleasure it gives them is amazing.

I first encountered Compassion 12 or so years ago. I think I started sponsoring at a Tony Campolo evening but to be honest, I can't quite remember! I now sponsor seven children with Compassion. I love that the little we do makes a big difference to someone else. Along with my wife, Gill, I started volunteering soon after starting to sponsor. From the outset we enjoyed helping out at events around Guernsey and doing Compassion Sundays at our church [the church sponsors over 40 children with a congregation of just over 70!].

I recently went on a Compassion Volunteering Insight Trip to Kenya. There were 15 of us. Gill and I had previously been on trips to Rwanda and Ethiopia to meet our sponsored children. Sadly my wife recently passed away so this time it was just me.

Every time I see the work of Compassion in action, I have a greater appreciation of the difference sponsorship makes. Let me explain.

Before leaving, I went on Compassion's website intending to sponsor a child from Kenya but never quite got around to it. I don't believe that anything happens by chance and at the airport our Compassion UK trip leader, Steve, gave me a profile of a boy called Paul from the area we were visiting. I knew immediately that I had to sponsor him.

"It was so humbling and exciting to meet Paul."

Paul with his sister.



"Despite the fact Paul is only three years old, you can already see the difference Compassion is making."

During the trip I had the opportunity to visit Paul's home and meet him. It was so humbling. The family home is made of wood and mud and measures barely eight foot square. In this house live mum, dad, Paul and his 11-year-old sister. Our visit host explained that Paul's father is away for long periods of time working as a labourer. Seeing Paul's sister and the clothes she was wearing, it was clear that the family is extremely poor.

What struck me was that, despite the fact Paul is only three years old, you can already see the difference Compassion is making. Paul is such a bright young lad. He's well-clothed, confident and healthy. You can tell that he was registered in Compassion's Child Survival Programme before joining the sponsorship programme. Even from an early age the programme works. I've seen it!

After seeing Compassion's work again I can't help but do more. There is great satisfaction in both sponsoring and volunteering. Once you've been to the country, seen the conditions and the difference you can make, it's hard not to act. Now I can speak at church, at events and to friends with great passion. I have the knowledge to say that the integrity of Compassion is second to none. I have seen the money benefitting the children. When there are so many charities to support, with Compassion I can confidently say that it gets through.

If you're considering volunteering with Compassion, I'd say do it. Not a moment of your time will be wasted. Helping others to discover the joy of sponsoring a child is so worthwhile. *cm*

To find out more visit
www.compassionuk.org/volunteering,
e-mail volunteers@compassionuk.org
or call 01932 832250.

JOIN ME AND VOLUNTEER WITH COMPASSION

Four ways you can volunteer:

1 LOCAL CHURCH ACTIVIST



Our Local Church Activists are passionate sponsors who agree to represent Compassion in their churches.

2 EVENT VOLUNTEER



If you're an outgoing, friendly team player who is passionate about justice and ending poverty, we'd love you to join us at our events!

3 SHARE WITH FAMILY & FRIENDS



Combine your passion with our resources and challenge people within your sphere of influence to sponsor a child through casual conversations and social media.

4 PRAYER PARTNER



We need people who will commit to praying for our work and the activities our amazing volunteers are involved in.

“Receive my sincere appreciation for your support...the children now have hope.”



BEARING FRUIT FROM ABINGER TO CHEMWANIA

St James' Church, Abinger, has been partnering with Compassion for five years. With an average congregation size of just 15-20, they sponsor an incredible 40 children, mostly from the Compassion project run by Chemwania Anglican Church in Uganda. From Abinger to Chemwania, the leaders of these two churches have been sharing how partnering with Compassion has impacted their local communities:



Meeting the children from Chemwania.

Dear Chemwania Anglican Church,

Greetings from the UK!

Mad and our church team remember visiting you in 2011 with great fondness. You made us feel so welcome. It was a truly wonderful experience to meet the children who we had been getting to know through their letters. Somehow we forgot the differences and celebrated the oneness we have in God's family. It was a joy to join your Sunday service and share in familiar Anglican liturgy but with such fullness of expression in worship!

Together with our sister church Christ Church, Coldharbour, it is such a blessing to partner with you through Compassion's ministry. Our church is a small rural church in the Surrey Hills. Partnering with Compassion has made a big difference to our congregation. Many of the children we support are sponsored by unchurched households. Sponsorship is a great bridge for us to reach them.

The families in our community have also found sponsorship a helpful way of engaging with their own children. It provides a way for parents to really discuss and explain poverty to their children as the letters and photos bring it much closer to home.

All of us here want to send our encouragement to you. Keep going in your ministry, you are amazing.

Yours in Christ,

Rev Tony Berry, Mad Berry and
all at St James' Church, Abinger

Dear St James' Church, Abinger,

Thank you so much for the sponsorship and support you offer to the children through partnering with Compassion.

As you know, in this community there are a number of challenges including food shortages, unemployment, disease, lack of education and opportunity, delinquency and domestic violence. The people also do not know the love of God and have lost hope in their lives. The children are the most vulnerable to this and are the most affected.

My vision for the church and the project is to have a transformed community, ready and equipped to serve the Lord. We are beginning to accomplish this through the project. The sponsored children have learnt to praise and worship God and pray for others. They are obedient to elders, parents and their peers. They are smartly dressed, healthy, have admirable self-esteem and have the ability to manage emotions. They are able to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to other people. They have learnt livelihood skills and they are committed to studying for their future.

Receive my sincere appreciation for your support. Through this programme, the children who were very weak with no hope now have hope. Thank you.

May God bless you,

Venerable James Chelogi

We'd like to invite you to share this article with your church leader. A member of our Church Partnerships Team would love to have a coffee with them and share more about how a Compassion Church Partnership could impact your church.

To arrange this or to order a copy of our church partnership brochure, call **01932 836499**, e-mail partnerships@compassionuk.org or visit www.compassionuk.org/church-partnerships



SPOTLIGHT ON: THE POWER OF A CHILD'S PRAYER

WRITTEN BY **REBECCA STANLEY**,
WITH **GALIA OROPEZA**

As darkness falls over the dusty red rooftops of a Bolivian village, two young girls huddle together. They pull their blanket tightly over their heads as they hear the sound of their father returning from his evening drinking session. Without exchanging a word, their hands join in a gesture of solidarity. Both girls silently cry out to God. "Please God, protect us and help our father to change."

Gabriela and Maria can still recall those nights vividly. "Father was a drunk," 11-year-old Gabriela explains. 8-year-old Maria adds, "Whenever he came home, he looked for us. I'd always pretend I was sleeping because I was scared."

The girls' father, Felix, was in crisis. Months of unemployment had led him to drug trafficking. "It was chaos," Felix reflects. "Me and my home, we didn't have a dime. I used to go through the night drinking but it didn't stop the debt collectors arriving with threats and guns."

Struggling with their father's erratic behaviour, Maria and Gabriela drew strength from their Compassion project. Not only did the girls feel safe at the church compound, they learnt about Jesus and the power of prayer. "The Compassion staff taught us to pray in the morning, at noon and at night," says Gabriela. "We used to do it everyday. We believed that if we continued doing it, our father would change."

"I used to laugh at the beginning," Felix explains. "At points I even told them to stop." But then one sweltering August afternoon, his daughters' faith-filled words had a profound effect on him. "This time it called my attention. They were praying for God to take care of me and my wife. It broke me."

As Felix began to sob, 8-year-old Maria quietly and respectfully invited her father to church.

"It was then [the next Sunday] that I met the Lord," describes Felix. "I thank God for my daughters and their sponsors. They are my evangelists. I am now a new creature."

Maria and Gabriela are still rejoicing that God has answered their prayers. "We are not afraid of father anymore," they explain confidently.

Felix's life has changed completely since his daughters led him to Christ. PHOTOGRAPHER: Galia Oropeza



Rachel with her mum.

A SPONSOR'S PERSPECTIVE

On the other side of the world, there is a young girl I've never met praying for me and my family.

Last year my mum was diagnosed with breast cancer and I told my sponsored child, Naydelin, in one of my letters. My mum and I were so touched when I read out Naydelin's reply. This little girl in Ecuador wrote determinedly that she and her family were going to keep praying for God to make my mummy well again. She wrote, "God is powerful and I know everything is going to be better." I still get emotional and have to blink back tears when I think that she was only 10 when she wrote that. For me, her note was the kindest, most meaningful encouragement I received during that difficult time.

God answered Naydelin's (and our) prayers, and my healthy mum stormed across the finish line at Race for Life's 10k challenge this year.

Rachel Third, London

Do you have an inspiring sponsorship story? We'd love to hear from you. E-mail us at stories@compassionuk.org

You can also e-mail prayer requests to prayer@compassionuk.org and we will pray for you.

A young girl with dark skin and short hair is smiling at the camera. She is wearing a bright orange sleeveless dress with a white Peter Pan collar. She stands in front of a rough, textured stone wall. The background is slightly out of focus. In the top right corner, there is a solid blue rectangle.

Compassion²⁰¹⁵ Sunday

Join us on Sept. 20th

Do something extraordinary
this September.

Share Compassion with your
church and help us release
more children from poverty
in Jesus' name.

Hundreds of churches will be
uniting on this special day
and we'd love you to join us.
Together we can find sponsors
for many more children.

Let God use you this
Compassion Sunday.

**RELEASING
CHILDREN
FROM
POVERTY**

IN JESUS' NAME

ORDER YOUR FREE RESOURCES

www.compassionuk.org/compassionsunday

Call us on 01932 836 490