

# COMPASSION

MAGAZINE

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2017 ISSUE 1



MY GRANDDAUGHTER  
WON'T DIG HOLES

## MARIA'S STORY



"SHE IS SIX, ISN'T  
AFRAID OF LONG  
SLIDES AND  
LOVES DRAWING"

## MEETING WARRIOR

RELEASING  
CHILDREN  
FROM  
POVERTY

IN JESUS' NAME

  
Releasing children from poverty  
**Compassion**  
in Jesus' name

# IN THIS ISSUE

This special edition is all about women and girls, and the issues that affect them. Every day, across the world, girls are denied their rights; they are missing from classrooms and face unimaginable violence and discrimination. Yet the stories here are ones full of hope, transformation and dignity.

We meet two incredible young girls who are being released from a cycle of poverty that inflicted so much hardship on the women who raised them. Following the theme of transformation, read four testimonies from young women who are flourishing thanks to vocational and educational opportunities. And discover how income generation is putting food on the table for one family in Burkina Faso.

While there is no gender bias in the Compassion programme, we think it's time we talked about the girls.

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Photographers: Jeremy Tan and Ella Dickinson



## DEAR FRIEND,

I remember taking one of my daughters to Haiti to meet 17-year-old Rosedali, a girl our family sponsors. It was truly special to see two girls whose lives, cultures and circumstances are thousands of miles apart, connect through friendship. Despite their different situations, both are girls being empowered through education.



The daily reality for many girls in poverty means having to overcome obstacle after obstacle. Research shows there are still 31 million girls of primary school age who are not in school and, that in developing countries, one in three girls are married before the age of 18. Every day around the world, girls are facing female circumcision, maternal mortality, domestic violence and marginalisation.

Yet when a girl is given the chance to go to school and learn, she begins to tackle these pressures head on. Educating girls is essential to eradicating global poverty and nearly one million girls are being offered this opportunity through Compassion sponsorship. Which is why this edition is all about girls.

As a sponsor, I'm thankful that Compassion-supported children are nurtured in all areas of life, so they can step into adulthood as empowered and compassionate men and women. As a father, I'm motivated to ensure that my sons and daughters are raised with healthy views of gender equality.

So as we enter a New Year together, I want to thank you for your love and care towards children living in the vulnerability of poverty. Thank you for building friendships which reach across countries, cultures and languages. Thank you for joining with us, side by side, to help children break free from poverty in Jesus' name.

### JUSTIN DOWDS

Chief Executive Officer  
Compassion UK and Compassion Ireland

# MY GRANDDAUGHTER WON'T DIG HOLES



Rievelly and her grandmother

04

It's hard to watch Maria cry. As the soft evening light catches her tears, it's clear to see that this gentle-mannered lady has endured years of suffering.

"I've spent all my life struggling and working to survive," she murmurs softly. "I've worked in the field, in the forest, all sorts of labour. I don't want that for her. I don't want my granddaughter to dig holes."

## A GRANDMOTHER'S TALE

Maria sits with her granddaughter, eight-year-old Rievelly, perched on her knee. She dearly loves this little girl, but the battle to provide for her has been great. "I'm a grandmother and a mother at the same time," she explains. "Rievelly has been at home with me ever since she was born. My daughter Raimunda is away working in Minas Gerais – she has only lived here for two years of Rievelly's life. Rene, her father, works away in another city. It's rare that he helps."

Maria's story forms part of a bigger picture of rural poverty in north-eastern Brazil. Here, one in four people live in

poverty. Thousands of women head up households alone, tending small farms and raising children whilst family members seek work in the cities<sup>1</sup>.

Each morning, Maria awakens to a day's manual labour – digging or fishing. The relentless pain in her back is matched by the ache of grief she carries in her heart. Maria's life has been marked by tragedy.

"I don't want Rievelly to go through this way of hard life," says Maria. "All my life we did a lot of work in agriculture and it was really, really hard. Through it I lost my youngest son two months ago."

But in the middle of one woman's very real and painful

struggle, stands one church and one Compassion sponsor.

Primeira Igreja Batista em Sao José has been partnering with Compassion for six years, providing a source of hope to the community's poorest children. Thanks to the work of this local church, Rievelly has been linked to a loving sponsor who is supporting her and relieving some of the burden carried by Maria. The Church, God's plan for this hurting world, is at work.

"In my pain, Rievelly brings me joy," explains Maria. "I see her learning good things at the [Compassion] project at the church. She is so happy there, she loves to play. The food is very good and she enjoys it. I know Rievelly will have a good life."

## A GRANDDAUGHTER WITH A DIFFERENT FUTURE

Rievelly leaps from Maria's knee, determined to join in the conversation. She clearly agrees with her grandma. "I think the project is a nice place to be," she giggles, whilst dancing round the room. "I like to go to the project to do all the activities: writing, reading, drawing, praying and singing. It's a good place."

Rievelly is well-known at the project for her joyful nature. Watching her, you can see she's thriving thanks to the provision of a safe environment and loving church community where she can learn and play, week in, week out.

"When I grow up, I want to be a lawyer or a teacher," Rievelly declares confidently.

Hearing her granddaughter's dreams, Maria reaches out her hand and smiles. She knows she won't be digging holes like the generations of women before her.

“

*I like to go to the project to do all the activities ... It's a good place."*

05



Handing out watermelon snacks

# OUR FUTURE IS BRIGHT

06

Meet four young women who are defying the odds. Thanks to the local church and their sponsors, they've been equipped with the skills they need to break the cycle of poverty.



## THE ROLE MODEL

MILAGROS | AGE 16, PHILIPPINES

Born in a remote village in the mountains of Negros Oriental, Milagros never dreamt that she would graduate at the top of her class. Determined to go further, today she has an offer of a full scholarship to study engineering at university.

In an area where most girls don't finish school, let alone become engineers, Milagros is an inspiration to the next generation.

“My hope is to be an engineer. I will work really hard to achieve my goal, because I don't want to be poor for life. I want people to see that I can help my parents. I want to be the reason that someday they will not be in poverty anymore.”



## THE ENTREPRENEUR

YHOIS | AGE 16, HONDURAS

A diligent young woman with an entrepreneurial spirit, Yhois has set up a small beauty shop after receiving vocational training at her Compassion project.

“I always dreamed of becoming a hairstylist. I relate cutting women's hair with painting beautiful art on a piece of paper. When the hairstyling workshop was set up in the project, I did not hesitate to enrol.”

Yhois's ambition doesn't stop there. Her ten year plan is to open more beauty salons in surrounding communities.



## THE GRADUATE

LETY | AGE 28, GUATEMALA

Growing up in a family that struggled to put food on the table, Lety was a shy girl who was afraid to dream. “As a child it was challenging for me to think what my goals in life were when I did not have the money to pursue those dreams.”

Through the guidance of loving project staff, Lety began writing a career plan called ‘My Plan for Tomorrow.’ She was encouraged to pursue her ambitions and today she works in the Guatemalan government securing justice for abused women and girls.

“Without Compassion I would not have been able to accomplish my dreams. They would have remained written on paper. The staff from my project and my sponsor encouraged me to dream big and God gave me the opportunity to make them a reality.”



## THE FUTURE

RUTH | AGE 17, KENYA

Where Ruth lives, Maasai girls are often prevented from completing their education due to local customs. However, because of her sponsor, Ruth is able to stay in school and make plans for her own future. “I have big dreams: I want to be an electrical engineer.”

Thanks to her local church based Compassion project, Ruth has learnt that her education matters.

“At my [Compassion] project, David our project director is very passionate about girl's education and he has taught me that I can amount to anything if I put my mind to it. Knowing there are people rooting for me motivates me to achieve my dreams.”

07

# BREAKING FREE

08

As Kadzo works, her baby sits on the rough ground, unaware of the dangers from flying debris or the fine dust that surrounds her. "I do not wish to bring her to the quarry with me," says Kadzo. "But if I miss a day, we all sleep hungry and that breaks my heart."



Salama outside the Compassion centre

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**K**adzo straps her youngest baby to her back and sets off to the local stone quarry, about 5km away from her home. She leaves early in the morning before the Kenyan heat becomes unbearable, hoping to accomplish more by the time buyers trickle in.

On arrival, she digs out a large limestone boulder and begins the back-breaking work of shattering it into small pieces so the pebbles can be used for construction. For 10 hours a day, seven days a week, local women carry out this work. Many are accompanied by their children because they either cannot afford to send them to school or pay someone to look after them.

40-year-old Kadzo is the sole wage-earner for her family of 14 children, who range from seven months to 14 years old. Most of her children are school-age, but she cannot afford to keep them all in school.

In many parts of the world, women are the main breadwinners, as well as the primary carers. Sadly, many women like Kadzo miss out on a decent education when they are younger, preventing them from achieving well-paid employment. This could be because their family cannot afford school fees, or because strong cultural norms favour the education of boys. Inadequate sanitation facilities can also be a barrier for girls to attend school.

“

*I want to become a teacher so that I can be a role model to girls who are not lucky as I am.”*

**SALAMA,  
SPONSORED CHILD.**

But for Kadzo, there is hope. Thanks to Compassion, her 13-year-old daughter Salama is attending school.

Education can empower girls for life. Each year of schooling increases a girl's individual earning potential by up to 20 percent<sup>1</sup>. Children – especially girls – born to educated mothers are more likely to attend school themselves, resulting in opportunities that extend across generations, lifting them out of the cycle of poverty.

Salama has been sponsored since 2007, allowing her to pursue her dreams. She says, "I want to become a teacher so that I can be a role model to girls who are not lucky as I am."

When you sponsor a child, you're giving them access to an education, and a future free from poverty. That's why it's so important to share Compassion this Mother's Day – every child sponsored is a life changed, and you have the power to change it. We know the difference sponsorship makes – join us and change the world, one child at a time.

Order your free Mother's Day resources at [www.compassionuk.org/mothersday](http://www.compassionuk.org/mothersday) or by calling **01932 836 490**.

<sup>1</sup> www.unicef.org

# ANY GIRL

In honour of the International Day of the Girl Child, we sent photographers Jeremy Tan and Ella Dickinson to Kenya to chat about confidence, strength and self-esteem, with girls sponsored through Compassion.

**T**he two photographers met 10 girls aged between 13 and 16 years of age, who had grown up in rural Mashuru or urban Nairobi. The stories and images they gathered form a testament to the determination and courage of girls living in the vulnerability of poverty. They are girls who have been given a chance to shine through sponsorship with Compassion. They are girls who are changing their tomorrows.

These images formed our inspiring Any Girl exhibit, which has been featured by Marie-Claire, Psychologies Magazine, ELLE and the BBC. As Ella Dickinson says, 'In one sense, these girls are just like any other girls, anywhere in the world. They have best friends, teachers to please, homework to do and chores around the house. But in another they are extraordinary. They display an astounding resilience, strength and courage in the face of pressure from their communities and circumstances.'

Visit [www.compassionuk.org/blogs/any-girl](http://www.compassionuk.org/blogs/any-girl) to see the full range of images.

Photographers: Jeremy Tan and Ella Dickinson

*Strength enables us to choose education over marriage. I often think, for the girls who have been married off, maybe if they were strong they could have gone to the Chief MP and told her, I don't want to be married. For me, I know I can go to the Chief and tell her. "I want those girls to study, I don't want those girls to be married off."*

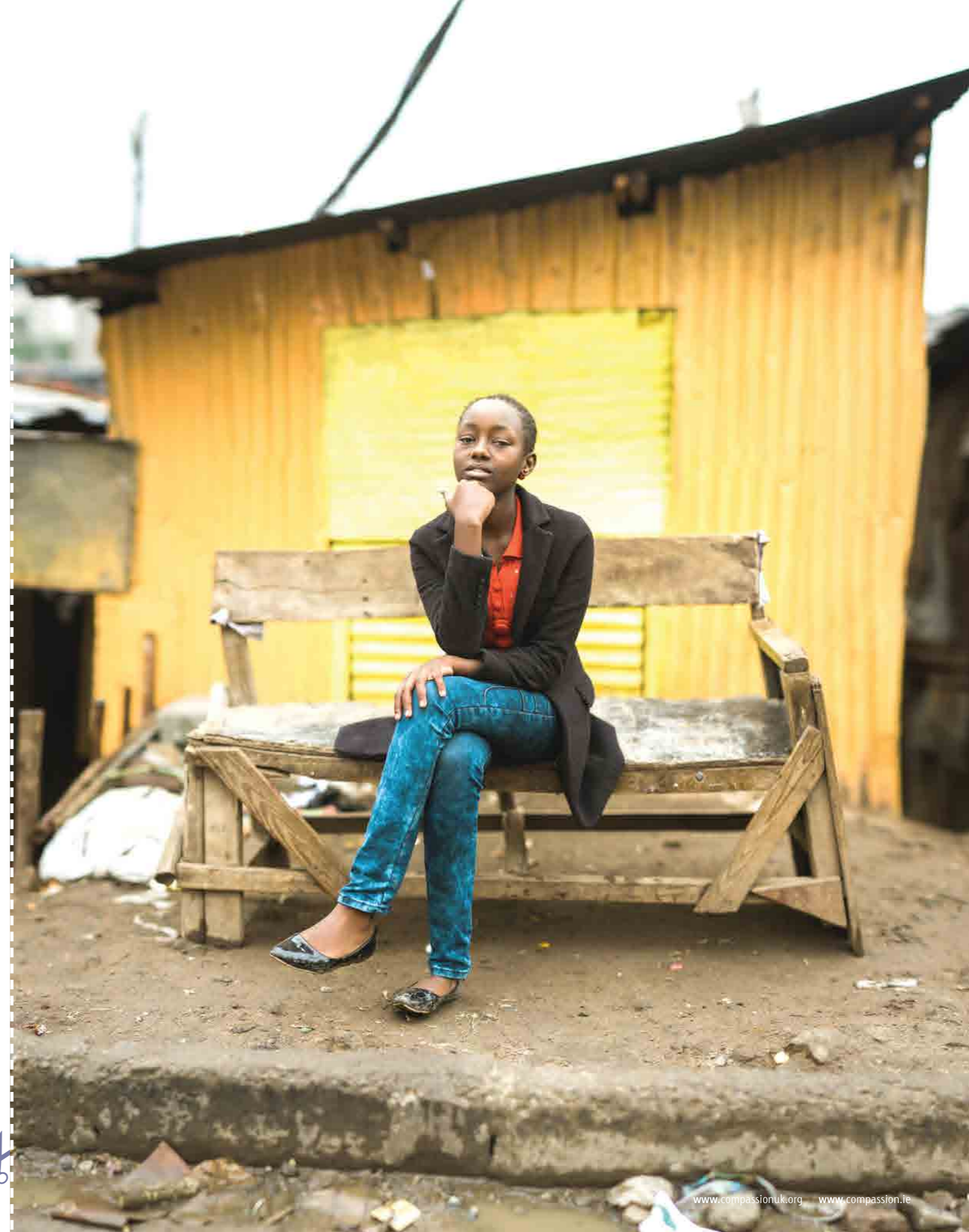
**SIYIANTA**, 13 YEARS OLD

*My family doesn't see my education as a good thing. That's why it is important to me to be a part of the Compassion project. I want my daughter to become educated and her house would be a good house. She would be able to sleep in a good bed that is not made of cow skin and she would go to a good school."*

**BEATRICE**, 16 YEARS OLD

*My strength is running. My confidence is running."*

**TALASH**, 14 YEARS OLD



Cut out and keep!

# MEETING WARRIOR

I like to think that Compassion handed me a paint brush so I could colour in some of my dreams. I always thought my dream of making the world a better place was a 'pie in the sky' ambition. But through Compassion, it's being fulfilled.



Dooshima playing with Warrior

“an experience that will leave you struck by just how far reaching sponsorship is.”

I've always wanted to help the most vulnerable, and from the time I heard about Compassion, I committed to sponsoring children. Last year, I had committed to sponsoring the maximum number of children I could, or so I thought. Then one day, I got my tap. You know the one that just won't let you go. The God tap. That tap on your shoulder that says, "I am doing something special here, would you like to join me?" Warrior needed a sponsor and I said, "yes, I will". That was in October 2015.

Little did I know that eight months later, I would have the incredible privilege of meeting her. She is six years old, likes Fanta, isn't afraid of long slides, is good at playing ludo, tells you if she wants something,

loves drawing, can dance and is scared of rivers. Her dream is to meet the President of Ghana and help others.

When I met Warrior, more light entered my heart. I felt joy mixed with a sense of peace. Joy, because I have no doubt that her dreams will be nurtured by the Compassion staff in Ghana. Peace because this particular child can dream and believe that her dreams can come true.

I was struck by how much Enoch, Warrior's social worker,

knew about her and the detailed involvement of the project staff in her development. They had even given her a mattress. It was so reassuring to entrust Warrior, not only into the hands of the one who made her, but also into the hands and voices that will shape her.

I left Ghana knowing with certainty that Warrior is in safe hands. If you have ever thought of visiting your sponsored child, go for it! It will be an experience that will leave you struck by just how far reaching sponsorship is.

## PLAN YOUR VISIT

For more information about meeting your sponsored child, head to [www.compassionuk.org/visiting](http://www.compassionuk.org/visiting)

Photographer:  
Dooshima Ikpaahindi

# SOAP & HOPE

In Burkina Faso, illiteracy and a lack of opportunities prevent many women from escaping the burdens of poverty. But on the outskirts of Tanghin Dassouri, change is afoot. And it comes in the form of soap.

THE  
SUPER MOSS  
MOTHERS  
NOW HAVE  
THE SKILLS  
THEY NEED  
TO CREATE A  
SUSTAINABLE  
INCOME.

In 2015, a RESPOND income generation initiative was set up to teach mothers from the local Compassion project how to make soap and run a business. The women decided to call their soap *Super Moss* and produce hundreds of bars each week to sell. They were also taught how to read and write in the local Mooré language to help run their business.

One of the participants is Julienne, a mother of three, who used to survive on her husband's income of the



The Super Moss soap ready for sale

equivalent of less than 50p a day. Julienne says, "My children couldn't have breakfast because I cooked one meal per day, and when a child fell sick, my husband and I either borrowed money with relatives to be able to send that child to the local medical centre, or we just rely on traditional medication."

Thanks to RESPOND, Julienne now sells *Super Moss* soap to increase her income. "I earned US\$2 after selling soap and the day after I realised that my husband couldn't provide for our daily meal. So I used my profit to buy vegetables and cook my husband's favourite meal, rice and fish for the family," recalls Julienne.

These remarkable women have big plans for their business and are already exploring surrounding markets to open up more stalls. By economically empowering women in poverty, not only are new jobs created with a positive impact to the local economy, it also helps to address the issue of gender equality. The *Super Moss* mothers now have the skills they need to create a sustainable income to support not only themselves but their families as well, giving them the hope of a future free from poverty. And that is something worth celebrating.

Photographer:  
Jehojakim Sangare

Thanks to generous donors leaving a gift in their Will, Compassion is able to support RESPOND initiatives like *Super Moss*. If you would like to find out more, visit [www.compassionuk.org/giftsinwill](http://www.compassionuk.org/giftsinwill)

# THANK YOU

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## YOU ARE INCREDIBLE

Thank you to everyone who stepped out in faith and spoke on behalf of children in poverty in 2016. Because of your efforts, hundreds of children in extreme poverty have the chance to go to school, have access to healthy food and a safe place to play at their local church-based project.

If you are looking for a new challenge in 2017, there are lots of ways to get involved and help release the next child from poverty. From trekking in Indonesia to holding a coffee morning, find out more at [www.compassionuk.org/fundraise](http://www.compassionuk.org/fundraise)



## THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE

In the July magazine we shared exciting news about faster letters between you and your sponsored child. Unfortunately, our new software that was intended to make the translation of letters quicker, has not been able to keep up with the incredible volume of letters. Thank you for being patient with us as we work to solve these problems as quickly as possible.

**Coming in 2017...** The Compassion Experience, heading to a school or church near you!



## 360 FILMS

Last year we entered the world of virtual reality. Thanks to a series of films shot in 360 degree vision we gave our supporters the opportunity to step into a Compassion project in Kenya without leaving their home. If you missed out you can find the films on our website: [www.compassionuk.org/360](http://www.compassionuk.org/360)

# PRAY WITH US

Thank you for praying for children in poverty – together our prayers are changing lives.

## HURRICANE MATTHEW

Three months ago the most powerful hurricane in nearly a decade hit the Caribbean. In parts of Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, the storm left widespread destruction of homes and livelihoods. Please continue to pray for God's provision for all those impacted. Pray for the continued protection over the children and families we work alongside.

## CHILD SURVIVAL

Thanks to your support we've opened a new Child Survival project in Jorlakee, a remote village in Thailand, 70km away from the nearest medical centre. Please join us in thanking God for the provision of this new project. Pray that the most vulnerable mums and babies will be reached and lives will be changed.

## PRaise REPORT

Many of you faithfully prayed for Aklobessi, a young girl in Togo who was kidnapped. Praise God, Aklobessi returned home safely and unharmed. Please continue to pray for her as she catches up on the schooling she missed. Ask for God's protection over her in the years ahead.

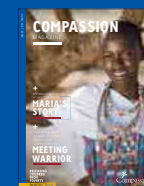
Pray with us in 2017 – Sign up to receive the latest prayer requests from children in poverty straight to your inbox at [www.compassionuk.org/pray-with-us](http://www.compassionuk.org/pray-with-us)

Or scan the QR code



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in Jesus' name

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Design and production  
The Drummer Agency

**RELEASING  
CHILDREN  
FROM  
POVERTY  
IN JESUS' NAME**

SUPPORT A MUM

# Mother's Day

SPONSOR A CHILD

When you sponsor a child, you are changing a mother's life as well. This Mother's Day, will you change lives? Join with hundreds of people across the UK who will be sharing Compassion with their churches on Mother's Day, and inspire others to sponsor a child in poverty. Together, we can make a difference, one child at a time.

To get involved, order your FREE resources, including Mother's Day cards at [www.compassionuk.org/mothersday](http://www.compassionuk.org/mothersday)



**RELEASING  
CHILDREN  
FROM  
POVERTY**

**IN JESUS' NAME**

THIS MOTHER'S DAY