

COMPASSION

MAGAZINE

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2018 ISSUE 1

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**HOPE IN THE
MIDST OF
DROUGHT**

+
**THERE WERE
18 OF US IN
ONE BEDROOM**

RELEASING
CHILDREN
FROM
POVERTY

IN JESUS' NAME


Releasing children from poverty
Compassion
in Jesus' name



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Compassion-supported children celebrate at their project in a mountainous part of the border between Mexico and Guatemala.

Photographer: Ryan Johnson



DEAR FRIEND,

Starting a new year presents an exciting fresh page. It's an invitation for all of us to start a new chapter, whatever we're facing.



It's my privilege as CEO of Compassion UK and Ireland to hear stories of how people have overcome difficult situations despite adversity and I'm always humbled by the strength, perseverance and faith of those we serve.

We associate heroes with spiritual giants and aspirational figures – but what about the daily acts of unseen courage around the world? There are people who commit to giving sacrificially and those who serve faithfully even when it costs. People who choose to stay the path and stand against poverty, resolute in action and tenacious in love.

The single mother who challenges the customs of her culture to send her daughter to school, the father who makes selfless sacrifices to support his family, or the project worker who is dedicated to serving the children in her care.

And then I think of you. Your commitment and your generosity last year meant we could reach 103,929 children and we know that this is not always an easy task. We are so grateful for your continued support in joining with us to impact children's lives around the world.

So be encouraged: together, in partnership with the local church, we have the opportunity to change the narrative for a child living in poverty. You are re-writing the story, not only for that child but also for their family and community.

As we welcome in 2018, let's celebrate the limitless possibilities laid out before us and trust "...him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us." (Ephesians 3:20)

With heartfelt thanks and best wishes for all that lies ahead this year.

JUSTIN DOWDS

Chief Executive Officer
Compassion UK and Compassion Ireland

THERE WERE 18 OF US IN ONE BEDROOM

04



It's 11am in Togo. You're sharing a pot of steaming tea with one courageous grandma and one determined dad. You can't help but listen attentively to Maria and Laurent. They've faced the struggle of caring for a sick child amidst the vulnerability of poverty. Their honesty captures your attention. Their message is clear: sponsorship really does make a difference.

MARIA'S STORY

"It was around 11.30pm and we were in the room sleeping. All of a sudden, Gracia got up and collapsed. I called Gracia's project director right away who said we needed to go to hospital. By the time we got there, she was already there to support us.

"The project's emergency health funds took care of everything – the medicine, everything. And we did not have to pay anything. Not even a penny! I never thought anyone would do that for us.

"The project director stayed with us until two in the morning. She even came back to check on Gracia the next day. The team at the Compassion project do their job really well, they're true caretakers. I praise God my granddaughter is now healthy.

"Gracia's sponsor is named Christina. Whenever Gracia gets a letter, she is so happy and proud. If I could say one thing to Christina, it would be thank you for everything you've done to help our family. Gracia wants to be a doctor. And she will succeed. Not just by her own will, but because of the Lord's help."

Maria, grandmother to Gracia.

LAURENT'S STORY

"The way we were living, it was really hard to survive. There were 18 of us in one bedroom.

"When Chao was registered into the project it relieved our burdens. We can now eat three meals a day and Compassion has helped us to rent a bigger house. We used to follow voodoo but Chao and our other children have brought us to church. When the project opened we knew it would provide us with support – but it has been so much more than we expected – this project is backed by God.

"During his last health check-up, the medical staff noticed Chao had a problem with his jaw. The project made it possible for Chao to have the surgery needed. Now he wants to be a doctor."

Laurent, dad to Chao.



FIND OUT WHAT YOUR SPONSORED CHILD IS LEARNING!

Did you know Compassion has its very own global curriculum? Taught in every church-based Compassion project, your sponsored child participates in culturally adapted lessons specifically designed to support, empower and disciple them.

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1-6 YEARS OLD

If your sponsored child is between 1 – 6 years old, they will be learning things like:

- How to stay safe – being careful with fire, traffic, animals and insects
- The importance of drinking safe water and eating healthily
- How to make friends and listen to others
- Hear the basic gospel story
- The importance of praying



7-11 YEARS OLD

Between the ages of 7 – 11, sponsored children are encouraged to develop their social skills and grow in their understanding of God and the Bible. Some examples of what they will be learning include:

- Good communication skills
- Choosing and maintaining good friendships
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- The characteristics of God
- Developing healthy self-esteem

Different to the education they receive at school, this non-academic programme emphasises practical application,

for example instead of learning maths, children learn how to apply mathematical skills.

Most importantly of all, it gives children who may never have otherwise set foot in a church the opportunity to hear about Jesus.



OVER 12 YEARS OLD

If you sponsor a child over the age of 12, you are equipping them as they develop into a confident young adult, passionate about bringing change to their community. They will be taught topics such as:

- How to obtain and keep a job
- Entrepreneurial skills
- Hygiene education
- How to develop good spiritual disciplines
- Good decision making

PRAY FOR YOUR SPONSORED CHILD



- Pray your sponsored child would thrive as they're given access to education.
- Pray for your sponsored child's hopes and dreams as they grow up.
- Pray your sponsored child would know they are loved.
- Whether they go mid-week or on a Saturday, pray your sponsored child enjoys the safety and security of their project.

GEARS AND GIFT AID

HOW YOU HELPED AN ENERGETIC ENGINEER

08

Photographer: Ana Rafaela

GEARS AND GIFT AID

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GEARS AND GIFT AID

HOW YOU HELPED AN ENERGETIC ENGINEER

08

Photographer: Ana Rafaela



A trail of tangled wires, dismantled motors, gears and batteries leads us to the local engineer, an energetic nine-year-old called Mateus.

He's renowned in the community of Catende in Brazil for his boundless energy and he's always on the hunt for old toys he can take apart.

"When I grow up, I want to be the person that puts everything in working order," says Mateus excitedly. "I could spend all afternoon and night working with these batteries and wires. The only reason I don't is because my mother thinks I'll burn the house down!"

Despite his immense creativity, Mateus struggled in school. His boundless energy meant concentrating on lessons was extremely difficult. With overcrowded classrooms and lots of demands on his mother Maria's time, Mateus didn't receive the support or encouragement to study. Falling further and further behind, he began to skip school.

Next door, Monica couldn't fail to notice her lively neighbour. A cook at the local Compassion project, she suggested Maria take her son to a project registration day. Mateus was enrolled but wasn't sponsored straight away.*

When he was first registered, Mateus began receiving the same care as children who have a sponsor thanks to Gift Aid.

**Mateus has since been sponsored.*

Gift Aid is an amazing tool which gives us the flexibility to meet children's needs in a number of different areas such as emergency medical treatment or sanitation projects. For Mateus, it meant he received the one-to-one support he badly needed.

At first he was disheartened and claimed he'd never be able to learn to read and write, but the staff surrounded him with words of encouragement. They also came up with new tactics, as Mateus' project director explains, "After I finish explaining the lesson to the class, the teacher sits down with him and explains everything once again, as if he were in a private class."

With this dedication and hard-work, Mateus is learning to overcome his hyperactivity and he is now able to concentrate for longer in class. As well as engineering, Mateus has discovered a talent for drawing and the staff are excited to see where God will lead him.

THANK YOU

You may not realise, but your Gift Aid donations have helped children like Mateus unlock their potential - thank you!

TWO WOMEN, TWO ACTIONS

COUNTLESS LIVES CHANGES

It had been three days since she'd eaten. With no food in the house, Adaire dropped to her knees and prayed for someone to provide.



Adaire lives in Rwanda, but 4,000 miles away God was already preparing Rebecca to answer her prayer.

THIS IS THEIR STORY

"When I met my sponsored child in Rwanda, it was amazing. While on the trip, we visited a lady called Adaire with her daughter Ernestine. We took a few gifts like rice and oil and she was just so overwhelmed by it. We found out she hadn't eaten for three days. They had no food and she had been praying someone would provide for her. Our visit did just that. Then she said that she would share the food with her friends in the village as they didn't have food either.

"I think it was just so overwhelming to know that not only did she completely trust that God would provide, she was also going to share her food even if it meant she might go hungry in a month as it was more important that her neighbours ate. That really hit me.

I think just seeing that and seeing the



children in the projects, how happy they were as a contrast, it completely changed my outlook. I think when you actually realise what it is that Compassion does, the difference it makes to children and families, it's just amazing. I just want to tell more people about it," says Rebecca.

We love the ripple effect in this story. Thanks to Rebecca's food parcel, Adaire was able to feed her family and

help relieve the hunger in her village. Her faith and actions in turn inspired Rebecca to join our incredible team of volunteers and share more about Compassion.

Our amazing volunteers speak about Compassion over coffee with their friends, volunteer at events and even present in their churches. It is through their daily efforts that lives are changed as hundreds of children are sponsored every year. We can't thank you enough!

SHARE YOUR STORY

What inspires you to share about Compassion? We'd love to hear your story, why not drop us an email at stories@compassionuk.org





HOPE IN THE MIDST OF DROUGHT

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The UN refers to it as 'the worst humanitarian crisis since World War Two'. Across East Africa, millions of people are facing hunger every day. But in the midst of this crisis, your support is helping Compassion to bring hope to affected families and communities.



WHAT IS THE EAST AFRICA DROUGHT?

Three consecutive years of reduced crops and food production had brought countries across the East and Horn of Africa to the brink of drought. Then in 2016, rainfall dropped significantly. As a result, over 23 million people in this region need food assistance.

HOW IS COMPASSION RESPONDING?

The affected countries where Compassion works are Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia and Tanzania. Our local church partners are identifying families at risk and providing additional food support. In Kenya, an intervention saw 5000 beneficiaries from 50 Compassion-assisted churches receive food baskets. On the day of food distribution, the centre pulsed with singing and dancing as the caregivers thanked God for the provision.

"I received 10 kilograms of rice, beans and maize meal flour. It was a great burden lifted off my shoulders. Now my children could eat to their fill for a few months.

“
*I spent
sleepless
nights thinking
about what we
were going to
eat. Without the
food rations,
I could've lost
my children.”*

**FATUMA,
MOTHER-OF-TWO**

I was able to save some money that I used to buy vegetables and other food items. I am very grateful and I thank the donors who made it possible. This was God's blessing to us," Zawadi, one of the recipients, exclaimed.

We're also working with the local church to meet the long-term needs of their communities. Initiatives are being provided such as education on modern farming technologies like greenhouses which help to increase yield by reducing pests and water consumption. Water storage tactics including wells, underground water tanks and water pans for rainwater harvesting have been built, which not only benefit sponsored children but also their communities.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Thanks to generous supporters, funds are being used to empower children, families and communities to overcome and persevere in this situation. These steps will help to protect and nurture communities as they seek to break free from poverty.

Please stand with us in prayer for every nation facing this crisis.

YOUR WORDS MATTER

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Photographer: Compassion International

Words matter. The right ones will build us up, affirm us, and help us overcome difficult situations.

For children living in poverty, receiving positive, affirming words can be rare. Instead poverty lies to them, telling them they don't matter.

That's why your letters are so important. Did you know sending just two messages a year will boost your sponsored child's self-esteem?

Meet our letter experts and discover the words that make them feel bold.



JAMES

Five-year-old James received a confidence boost when his sponsor wrote to tell him: "I like your shoes, they are cool; I think you look like a professional soccer player."

JOYCE

Joyce from Kenya loved receiving a card with this message, "Happy Birthday Joyce, we love you and we are praying for you every day. You are wonderfully made!"





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Front cover image:

Seven-year-old Amevor and his mum Alice from Togo.

Photographer:

Compassion International

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**RELEASING
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GRACE

Becoming a teenager can be a difficult transition but Grace in the Philippines remembers her sponsor's words of encouragement, "When I became a teenager, I remember my sponsor wrote me, 'You are so grown-up and beautiful,' and that made my day."

AXEL

Axel, who spent years battling a brain tumour says his sponsor's words helped him through this difficult time, "I have found deep encouragement in her letters, as she lifts me up through Bible verses and words of love."



FATIMA

For Fatima in Guatemala, "The nicest thing that my sponsor has ever told me was that she loves me so much that she has a big family, and I am included in it." Fatima wants her sponsor to know, "Thank you for taking the time to write me letters. I know that you care about me, and I am part of your life. I love you."

THANK YOU FOR WRITING

No matter how simple your message is, receiving a letter is a cause for great celebration. In September last year we relaunched our new letter system, which means your messages now reach your sponsored child quicker than ever before – letters arrive within the same month they were written!



"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!"

PHILIPPIANS 4:4

SNAP & SHARE

Wear your passion on your social media sleeve by sharing this joy-filled image with your friends and family.

1

SNAP A PHOTO
OF THIS PAGE

2

SHARE WITH YOUR
FRIENDS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

3

TAG @COMPASSIONUK
AND USE THE HASHTAG
#SPONSORSHIPWORKS

Thank you for the difference you are making every day!