

CHILDWORLD

CHILDFUND'S SUPPORTER MAG

AUTUMN 2016

**ETHIOPIA'S WORST
DROUGHT IN DECADES**

**SAFE SPACES FOR
REFUGEE CHILDREN
AND FAMILIES IN EUROPE**

**SEEING AUSTRALIAN
AID IN ACTION:
PARLIAMENTARIANS
VISIT CAMBODIA**

ChildFund
Australia

ETHIOPIA'S WORST DROUGHT IN DECADES

ChildFund is working with the Ethiopian Government and local partner organisations to respond to this unfolding emergency



Ethiopia has begun the new year facing its worst drought emergency in decades. In 2016, it is estimated that more than 10 million

people will require urgent humanitarian assistance. This includes almost half a million children already suffering from severe acute malnutrition.

The Horn of Africa is no stranger to drought, but the impact of climate change in this region has been significant. While Ethiopia has traditionally suffered a severe lack of rainfall every ten years, this is becoming a more common occurrence – with drought conditions now occurring every two or three years.

It is extraordinarily difficult for the Ethiopian people, and the land itself, to remain resilient. Where previously families could fatten cattle in good years, and eat them to survive during failed rains, there is not enough time between one drought and the next to build up stocks.

Aquifers, which store water underground, have no time in which to be replenished, reducing the long-term quality of the soil. And when consecutive rains fail, communities are not only unable to cultivate and utilise the existing crops, but are prevented from planting the future harvest.

For children, the impact of ongoing diet deficiencies is devastating to their development, with potential for stunting, wasting and irreversible damage to their health.

Right now, our focus is on supporting 104,000 of the most vulnerable children and their family members in eight districts, by providing emergency relief in the form of supplementary food. ChildFund's local partners are also supporting the Government to provide basic materials to health centres, so that they can handle the growing demand as more and more children need treatment.

The Hon Tim Fischer AC, Former Deputy Prime Minister and Special Envoy for ChildFund Australia, recently visited Ethiopia and took the time to meet with local ChildFund staff.

"With strong, local leadership in place, supplementary nutrition is getting

through to the most vulnerable: children under five years and pregnant and lactating mothers. Yet, funding is critically low, given the scale of need over the coming months," he explained.



ChildFund remains deeply committed to the wellbeing of children in Ethiopia. This work would not be possible without the ongoing generosity of our Australian supporters. I acknowledge with deep appreciation those who have already donated to this emergency, and ask that all consider what assistance might be able to be provided. Thank you.

Nigel Spence

Nigel Spence
CEO
ChildFund Australia

DELIVERING QUALITY EDUCATION TO REMOTE COMMUNITIES IN CAMBODIA



On Valentine's Day, ChildFund Cambodia celebrated the inauguration of a new primary school in rural Kratie Province.

Speaking at the event, ChildFund Cambodia Country Director Prashant Verma said: "Today, the entire world is celebrating Valentine's Day, which is a symbol of trust, love and long-term relationships. This is such a lovely coincidence, which reconfirms our trust and long-term relationship with the community and the Royal Government of Cambodia."

Funded by ChildFund Cambodia, with support from the Australian Government, Prama Primary School is located in one of Cambodia's most remote areas, with many schools here in disrepair and unsuitable for children. ChildFund Cambodia is the only international development agency working in this region.

Prior to reconstruction, the school was in extremely poor condition. Inadequate classrooms were unable to accommodate the 212 students, and there was a lack of chairs and desks, no water or sanitation facilities, and few

teaching materials. These conditions also made it difficult to recruit teachers.

Now, the facilities include a preschool room for under-fives, a modern library, solar equipment to provide energy, brand new books and learning resources, as well as toilets and hand-washing stations. The new playground has also been effective in reducing student absence rates.

Importantly, the school can now provide classes to more students than previously, with places available to over 400 children. ChildFund Cambodia has also been working closely with the local community to establish a Children's Council.

The event was attended by Cambodia's Deputy Prime Minister He Keat Chhon, who commended ChildFund for its work in delivering quality education programs for children. Country Director Prashant Verma, Program Manager Narin Chan and Provincial Manager Sokleang Sim were presented with medals in recognition of these efforts.

ChildFund Australia would like to thank our supporters and the Australian Government for making this project possible!

ChildFund Australia is an independent and non-religious international development organisation that works to reduce poverty for children in the developing world. ChildFund Australia is a member of the ChildFund Alliance – a global network of 12 organisations which assists more than 15 million children and families in 58 countries.

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Front cover: Dambela and her two year old son, Chala, live in the Siraro District of Ethiopia. Their lives have been severely impacted by the current drought – the worst the country has seen in decades.

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SAFE SHELTER AFTER CYCLONE WINSTON

Ensuring children and families in Fiji have safe and adequate shelter is the top priority of emergency relief efforts being undertaken by Habitat for Humanity in partnership with ChildFund Australia, after Tropical Cyclone Winston tore through the island nation in February. This includes the distribution of temporary shelter kits, which contain tarpaulins, roofing materials, toolkits and training on how to utilise these materials.

In addition, providing access to safe

sources of water is critical. With many existing water sources damaged or contaminated by the cyclone, ChildFund and Habitat for Humanity are providing household water filtration kits, and will be conducting hygiene promotion among families.

Over the medium term, ChildFund will support Habitat for Humanity's reconstruction efforts in Fiji, as it is expected that thousands of family homes will need to be demolished and rebuilt entirely.



Sereana collects her belongings after Cyclone Winston destroyed parts of her house

A PLACE TO REST FOR REFUGEE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

In partnership with Terre des Hommes, the ChildFund Alliance has established Safe Spaces in Macedonia and Serbia to support children and families fleeing countries such as Syria and Afghanistan. Here, people can stop to receive medical support, warm clothes, food and other essentials, before continuing their long trek into Western Europe. Visiting Macedonia on behalf of the ChildFund Alliance, Carolina Ehrnrooth, Director of ChildFund Sweden, recounts the plight of those forced to leave their homes in search of safety.

In Tabanovce, a village in the north of Macedonia at the border with Serbia, aid staff stand in a line as trains arrive from Gevgelija in the south. As people disembark the train, their emotions are mixed – some seem happy, many look tired and lost.

Approximately 3,000 refugees arrive on the four daily trains; around half are women and children. Sadly, almost every train carries a few unaccompanied children. There are also many families, groups of young men, elderly people, and individuals with disabilities.

People are helped off the train and shown where to go next. A few refugees say “doctor, doctor!” and point at their sick children. Mothers might say “pampers” and gesture towards their infants and toddlers; they are in need of nappies. In just a few moments, the whole place has turned into chaos.

Staffed by qualified healthcare professionals, the Safe Spaces are open 24 hours a day and provide some temporary respite to those on the move. There is also a tent set up as a children’s playroom, where children can play with toys and just be children for a few short hours. Mothers are provided with hygiene supplies, winter clothes and practical advice. This includes the

importance of teaching children their parents’ full names, and putting labels with contact information inside their children’s clothes, in case the worst happens and they become separated during the journey.

Mazen is 15 and is traveling with his uncle, who is just 19. They are from Syria and want to reach Germany, where they have family. They have a phone number, but are unsure which city their relatives live in.



15-year-old Mazen has travelled to Europe from Syria, and hopes to eventually settle in Germany

With the help of a translator, Mazen tells me that he hasn’t been in school for the past five years. Instead, he has been selling vegetables to support his family. He is the eldest child, and the only one they could afford to send away. “If I had stayed, the risk of me being forced into the Syrian army would have been high,” he says. In school, Mazen’s favourite

subject was Biology and he hopes that once reaching Germany he can continue his studies and complete his education.

After spending some time at the Safe Space, people gather their things and move on. After crossing the border, they must make their way to a village four kilometres away where they can take a bus. Everyone has to walk, except those who are in wheelchairs or have to be carried on a mattress.

I watch as a mother and father each carry a small child, one-year-old twins, while two children around four or five years-old walk alongside them. An exodus of adults and children slowly disappear into Serbian territory. There are parents holding their children’s hands or carrying them in their arms, together with bags and rucksacks.

A Syrian woman with four children tells me, before she crosses the border, why she is undertaking this perilous journey: she wants to give her children freedom and a brighter future. A future that currently remains uncertain.



You can support ChildFund's Safe Spaces for refugee families at www.childfund.org.au/appeal/syrian-refugee-crisis

SIXTEEN YEARS OF SPONSORSHIP

As the Sponsorship Coordinator for Vietnam and Cambodia, and one of ChildFund Australia’s longest serving staff members, Sue Mandelik has been dedicated to helping children over the last 16 years. She has also made an incredible impact on the life of 17-year-old Thom from Bach Thong District in Vietnam.

Sue began sponsoring in December 1999, when Thom was 18 months old. “I decided to sponsor Thom as she was the same age as my daughter Jacinta, and I had learnt a lot about Vietnam and the needs of children through my work. I also wanted to be able to explain first-hand to other supporters about the benefits of sponsorship and share my experiences with them,” she explains.

Sue managed to visit Thom twice throughout her sponsorship, with her initial meeting taking place in 2002.

“Meeting Thom and her family for the first time was such a great experience. I was surprised at how little they had in terms of facilities and infrastructure, and could really understand why ChildFund Vietnam decided to work with children and families in Bach Thong. It was so eye-opening, while also exciting and emotional,” explains Sue.

The second time she visited Thom, Sue’s husband Ivan and daughter Jacinta joined her. “It was good to see how Thom’s community had improved since my last visit, and for Jacinta to learn about life outside Australia. I could tell Jacinta understood the needs of children, as when we returned to Sydney, she wanted to send all of her belongings, such as clothes and toys, over to Thom. It was really sweet,” says Sue.

Over the years, Sue continued to write and send photos to Thom. Today, she still keeps all of her letters and Child Progress Reports in an album. She often looks at them and thinks

Sue Mandelik, ChildFund Australia’s Sponsorship Coordinator for Vietnam and Cambodia, reflects on her unforgettable child sponsorship experience



Clockwise from top: Thom, Sue’s sponsored child from Vietnam, through the years; Thom and Jacinta during the Mandelik Family’s visit to Vietnam in 2003; Sue dancing with local children during her visit to Vietnam last year

about how fast time has passed, and how much Thom has grown.

At the end of last year, Thom graduated from the sponsorship program. With ChildFund Vietnam’s assistance, her community managed to achieve all of their development goals. Sue is delighted that Thom’s community is self-sufficient, and Thom well-equipped for her adult life ahead.

Reflecting back on her child sponsorship experience, Sue is most proud about having supported not only Thom’s education and health, but that

of many children in her community. For instance, every school in Thom’s commune now has safe water and hygienic bathrooms. When Sue began sponsoring Thom, not a single school had these facilities.

Reading Thom’s final letter, Sue can’t help but feel incredibly honoured to have contributed to Thom, Bach Thong, and ChildFund Vietnam’s achievements.

“To me, our memories are unforgettable,” says Thom. For Sue, their memories are unforgettable too.

AROUND THE WORLD

[INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY SPECIAL]



VIETNAM

Nguyet is a mother of four from Cao Bang. Keen to increase her family's income, she joined ChildFund Vietnam's Goat-Rearing Project several months ago. Goat breeding is ideal for families living in this mountainous region as they don't need large food supplies to keep them, with the animals able to forage in the nearby forest. In addition to providing vital nutrition to growing children, Nguyet can generate an income through breeding and selling. "I hope we can make enough money so that our children can have a better education than their father and I could," says Nguyet.



GUATEMALA

ChildFund Guatemala's Play With Me Project focuses on building the skills and expertise of volunteer Guide Mothers, who run Early Childhood Development activities at the village level. Last year, the project benefitted over 7,400 infants – with families taking part in workshops on effective parenting, nutrition, sensory stimulation, social-language skills and school readiness.



LAOS

Last year, ChildFund Laos established an embroidery group in the community where Khang lives. By providing women with materials and fabric, Hmong embroidery traditions have been kept alive, while extra income has been generated through the sale of textiles and garments. As the leader of her local embroidery group, Khang has a newfound sense of empowerment and now contributes to her family's financial security. "With the money I get from selling, I can buy clothes, books and pens for my two sons," she says.

Karthayini is immensely proud of her daughter, Shasimitha, for scoring high marks in her 5th Grade Exams. She attributes Shasimitha's success to ChildFund Sri Lanka's support. "The English classes conducted for children in our community, and the training sessions for parents on topics such as the importance of education, have really helped," she says. Karthayini's role as a Lead Mother and her dedication to leading by example – for instance, by creating a child-friendly study space at home – have also been key to Shasimitha's academic achievements.



SRI LANKA



UGANDA

As a new mother and small business owner, Jackie is lucky to have the support and assistance of her local Mothers' Group and the Village Savings and Loan Association, both established by ChildFund Uganda. Jackie now has a safe place to save money for her daughter's future, and access to low-interest loans to grow her charcoal-selling business.



PHILIPPINES

Nenita is mother to 15-year-old Rodel and has been taking part in ChildFund Philippines' LEAP Project. This program provides parents with alternative livelihoods, with the aim of reducing their dependence on their children's labour. With Nenita now able to access another source of income, Rodel no longer misses classes to work in the nearby sugar cane fields and can attend school full-time.

OUR CHILDREN ARE SUFFERING BECAUSE OF THE DROUGHT

Halko lives in one of Ethiopia's worst-affected districts, and her baby son has been diagnosed with severe acute malnutrition.

This is the situation for her family, in her own words.

"My name is Halko. I am married. I have four children. Due to the absence of rain, the conditions here are so hot and dry. The trees give no shade. It's really affecting us, this drought."



"We are facing a real problem. Our livestock have no grass to eat; they are not able to produce milk. Our children also suffer because of the drought...they don't get any curd or milk."

"There's been two years of no rain where we haven't been able to harvest crops. We have no vegetables, only maize. We used to buy cabbage and potatoes from the market. We cooked and ate it during normal times but there's no more now."

"WE NEED FOOD. THAT'S OUR MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM. BECAUSE OF THIS DROUGHT, WE HAVE A FOOD CRISIS. WE NEED PURE WATER AND MILK. IT'S IMPORTANT FOR MY FAMILY."



"My youngest boy, Fentale, is three months old. He cries and tries to get milk from me but there is none. If I'm able to give some milk, he's better. If he gets some milk, he'll sleep."

"I fear for the future. I don't know whether Fentale will pass through this situation and grow to be a man. We are hoping he'll recover his health. We don't know if this will happen. The whole night I hold him and sit with him. If our child recovers I will be thankful."



Please act now to help Halko and Fentale, and many other families like theirs, survive the worst drought Ethiopia has seen in decades. Find out more at www.childfund.org.au/appeal/east-africa-food-crisis

PARLIAMENTARIANS SEE THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF AUSTRALIAN AID

Seven Australian MPs recently visited ChildFund Cambodia's innovative education project in Svay Rieng



Sharon Claydon MP wrote: "ChildFund, thank you and the remarkable teachers, parents and students for hosting this visit. Terrific work. Lifelong results."

In January, seven Australian MPs visited aid projects in Cambodia as part of a special learning tour. With representatives from both sides of politics, the five-day visit was an opportunity for Australian ministers and senators to see the incredible work being undertaken by the Australian Aid program first-hand.

ChildFund Cambodia's education project in Svay Rieng, implemented in partnership with the Kampuchean Action for Primary Education, was a highlight of the tour. The project uses a groundbreaking approach to improve literacy skills, utilising mobile technology to help children learn more effectively. Older student tutors are paired with younger student learners to help them read and write using special reading toolkits and tablets. Outdated

school libraries have been redesigned to make them more fun and appealing for students to use.

The parliamentarians spoke to ChildFund staff, teachers and students during the school visit; with all being impressed by the innovative nature of the project, the dedication of teachers, and the enthusiasm of students.

ChildFund Australia CEO Nigel Spence said: "This education program has the funding support of the Australian Government, so it was a very valuable opportunity for the MPs to see how organisations like ChildFund can deliver projects that are not only cost-effective and value-for-money, but which deliver real and lasting improvements for children living in poor, rural communities in Cambodia."

Writing about her visit in the Bendigo Advertiser, Lisa Chesters MP said: "The pride and joy of a rural Cambodian primary school in Svay Rieng is their new library funded by Australian Aid at a cost of \$9,000. The students delighted in showing us their Samsung tablets with interactive learning games, favourite books and learning resources. The school also has a thriving kitchen garden and music program. The teachers credit having these resources and programs for the school's higher attendance rates."

"The school in Svay Rieng represents what can be achieved when we prioritise education. Australian Aid plays a crucial role in international development – with our support, countries less lucky than our own are finding a path out of poverty."

TORRENS PRIMARY ACTION TEAM: FIRST MISSION COMPLETE

By using their strengths and skills, a group of inspiring Aussie kids have made a huge impact on the lives of children in Timor-Leste



Students at Torrens Primary School held a Stall Day to raise funds for children in Timor-Leste

Last year, Ms Kowalski, a teacher at Torrens Primary School in the ACT, gave a presentation to her students about Australia's closest neighbours. "I mentioned that Timor-Leste was the fourth hungriest nation in the world, and over half of the population was illiterate and living under the poverty line," she says.

These three statistics inspired her Year 3 class to make a difference to the lives of children in Timor-Leste, and the Torrens Primary Action Team was formed. Comprising of over 30 students and Ms Kowalski, the Action Team decided to host a Stall Day to fundraise for a ChildFund Timor-Leste project that aims

to increase birth registrations of children aged 0 – 5 years in the Liquica and Bobonaro Districts.

According to the UN, the births of nearly 230 million children under the age of five worldwide have never been officially recorded. Birth registration is an official government process and imparts many rights upon children, including access to basic health and education services.

After 10 weeks of planning, the Action Team was ready for their Stall Day. Students organised a variety of booths, including a second-hand book stall and a toy car racetrack kiosk. The entire school of 400 students attended,

and parents helped out and visited on the day. Some students also raised extra money by holding lemonade and cupcake stalls outside their homes, and by placing donation boxes at their parents' workplaces.

In total, an amazing \$1,301.25 was raised – enabling the Torrens Primary Action Team to help over 850 children in Timor-Leste to be registered. Many students at the school said that it was "the best idea ever". Parents were also very pleased, with several saying that it allowed their children to use their strengths and skills in another way, and made them aware of the world around them, not just their immediate area.

Ms Kowalski is incredibly happy with the efforts of her students and the fantastic outcome of their hard work. With the Action Team's first fundraising accomplishment now complete, the students have already met to discuss their next set of ideas to make the world a better place. "Can't stop them now!" says Ms Kowalski.



Would your school like to get involved in fundraising? Visit www.childfund.org.au/schools

Trivia with friends can give a child an education – just ask Jacqui.

CHILDFUND'S
BIG?
ASK!



Jacqui (with the help of some good friends) organised a trivia event at a local venue. The great turnout meant she raised over \$1,700! That's enough to give 15 girls a bicycle to get to school quickly and safely every day.

FIND OUT MORE:

www.childfundsbigask.org.au

DROUGHT IN EAST AFRICA



An unprecedented drought has caused the number of severely malnourished children arriving at therapeutic feeding centres to triple¹.

ChildFund Ethiopia is delivering high protein supplementary food to children and mothers, to ensure adequate nutrition is received at the most critical time in a child's life.

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT:

- Make a donation to our appeal
- Hold a school mufti day fundraiser
- Have an office morning tea
- Fundraise on your birthday
- Sponsor a child in Ethiopia
- Leave a gift in your will to support emergencies such as this
- Find us on social media (childfundaustria) and share our messages

¹Government of Ethiopia and Humanitarian Partners, 'Humanitarian Requirements Mid-Year Review 2015' (August 2015) 3, page 5.

WWW.CHILDFUND.ORG.AU/WAYS-HELP