

Your

Compassion in Action



Caritas
AUSTRALIA

60 YEARS
1964-2024

Change starts with you | #2 March 2024

Emergency update

Your impact: the latest on the Gaza crisis.

Project Compassion 2024

Meet Ronita from the Philippines, Memory from Malawi and Leaia from Samoa.

Spotlight on our partners

How your support is helping communities in Indonesia.

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Cover: Ronita outside her Senior High School in Quezon City in the Philippines.

Photo: Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia.

All photos belong to Caritas Australia unless otherwise stated.

Ronita with her two children in her home in Quezon City, the Philippines.
Photo: Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia.

Words of Gratitude

Despite being only a few months into the year, 2024 is already offering numerous opportunities to strengthen our mission and work hand-in-hand with our partners across the world.

Last year was indeed challenging, as our world was struck with many a crisis. However, we also witnessed the impact that your generosity had across many vulnerable communities. Your support helped us reach approximately 1.5 million people across 36 countries. We also had the opportunity to work with 90 partners to deliver 108 long-term development programs and humanitarian emergencies worldwide. For this and so much more, I would like to thank you for your ongoing commitment to supporting Caritas Australia and for always putting your compassion in action.

Thus, I look forward to seeing all the wonderful ways in which the Caritas Australia community rallies together to raise funds for Project Compassion.

The theme of Project Compassion 2024 is For All Future Generations and it brings you the stories of three incredibly resilient women whose determination to build a brighter future have helped them, their families and communities forge a path out of poverty.

There is the story of Ronita from the Philippines who lives with her two young children and her husband. She left high school after becoming pregnant as a teenager, which put her at high risk of

never gaining an education. Ronita joined the Faithful Companions of Jesus, which helped her complete her studies and find employment to forge a path out of poverty for herself and her family.

There is also the story of Memory from Malawi, who despite facing many barriers to her education, enrolled in a technical school and became the first female carpenter in her village.

And finally, there is Leaia from Samoa. Without access to a reliable source of clean water, Leaia and her family struggled daily. With the support of Caritas Australia, a water tank was installed at their home, improving their living conditions.

These inspiring stories would simply not be possible without your support. On behalf of everyone at Caritas Australia, I thank you for your unwavering generosity and hope that you enjoy this edition of Your Compassion in Action.



With gratitude,

Kirsty Robertson

**Kirsty Robertson
Chief Executive Officer**

Your impact: the latest from Gaza

Since 7 October 2023, we have seen the unimaginable impacts and devastating human toll caused by conflict in the Holy Land. In Gaza, daily bombardments have only increased since this date, impacting the whole population and destroying homes, hospitals and essential water and sanitation infrastructure.

Recent updates report that more than **1.9 million people** (a staggering 85 percent of the population), have been displaced in Gaza with immediate food, shelter, health, and psychosocial needs.

According to the Ministry of Public Works and Housing, at least **70 percent** of all housing in Gaza has been damaged or destroyed. The Gaza Strip remains under an electricity blackout and medical care is devastatingly limited with only 13 of Gaza's 36 hospitals partially functioning.

Currently, the entire population in the Gaza Strip is facing an imminent risk of famine due to severely limited access to food and nutrition. Additionally, approximately **29,954 Palestinians** and **1,200 Israelis** have lost their lives, of which 70 percent are said to be women and children, and more than **7,000 people** in Gaza are estimated to be missing.

With your generous support, our partner CRS and other local organisations have been on the ground since conflict began. So far, they have distributed shelter in the form of **bedding supplies to 8,047 families** and **tarps to 59,556 people**. They have also distributed **food parcels to 63,525 households, cash assistance to 22,053 households** and ongoing psychological first aid to those affected by conflict.

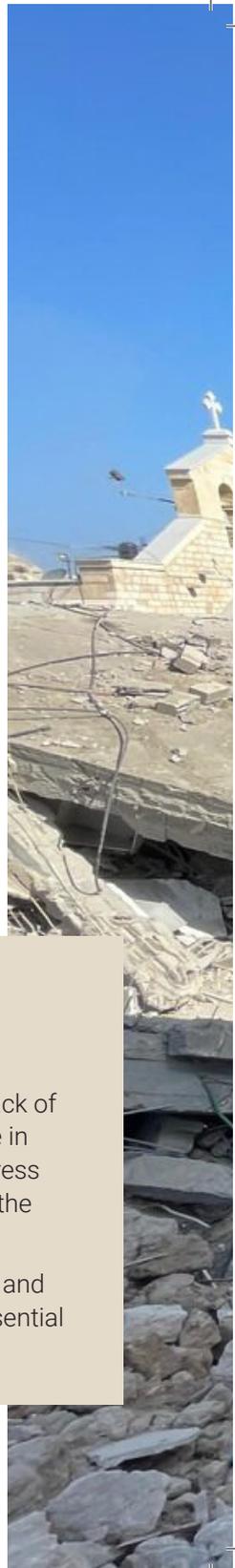


Voices from the field

Sally Thomas, Humanitarian Emergency Lead at Caritas Australia

Food deprivation in Gaza has reached extreme levels with the entire population at imminent risk of famine. Residents are also enduring a lack of access to medical care, safe shelter, and clean water. Meanwhile those in Jerusalem and the West Bank are under increasingly dire economic stress due to widespread loss of income, leaving families struggling to cover the cost of basic needs such as food and medicine.

The need across the region is extensive, with the ongoing compassion and support of the international community set to become increasingly essential as conflict displaces people in other areas of the Middle East.





Collapsed building after an airstrike in Gaza. Photo: Caritas Jerusalem.



60 years of Compassion in Action



To mark the 60th anniversary of Caritas Australia, we developed the 60 Faces: Portraits of Compassion in Action. This book tells the story of your support and impact across the world through 60 hand-picked photographs of participants from Caritas Australia's international and Australian programs.

Join us in celebrating 60 years of lives transformed.
You can purchase the book at: www.caritas.org.au/60-faces.

 **Caritas**
AUSTRALIA | **60** YEARS
1964-2024

A young woman with long dark hair, wearing a dark blue school uniform with a red tie and a white shirt, is walking towards the camera on a paved street. She is holding a green folder. The background shows a community with trees, buildings, and other people. The text 'PROJECT COMPASSION FOR ALL FUTURE GENERATIONS' is overlaid on the right side of the image. The globe icon in the logo is white and shows the Americas.

PROJECT COMPASSION

FOR ALL FUTURE GENERATIONS

Project Compassion 2024

Each year, Project Compassion invites people from all across Australia to put their compassion in action, and raise money to help fight poverty and to promote justice.

The theme for this year is **'For All Future Generations'**, a great reminder that the good that we do today will have a ripple effect for generations to come.

Project Compassion 2024 brings you stories of three remarkable women from the Philippines, Malawi and Samoa. Each of these stories demonstrates the powerful impact that your generous support can have For All Future Generations. Together, we can create lasting change for people living in some of the most vulnerable communities in the world.

Ronita walks to catch local transport to her lessons at a Senior High School in Quezon City in the Philippines.
Photo: Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia.



"We are very thankful and grateful for the water tank. It has helped us so much and made our daily life easier."

- Leaia

Leaia cooking in her home in Samoa. Photo: Laura Womersley/Caritas Australia.

8 - YOUR COMPASSION IN ACTION

YOU HELP PROVIDE CLEAN, SAFE WATER

Leaia's family built their home entirely out of recycled scraps collected from a nearby recycling plant, as not to waste precious income and provide for her children.

Their home is not connected to a piped water system, so they used to rely solely on rainwater collected in old fridges. When their water ran out, she had to walk with her young children to collect water in buckets and containers from a neighbour down the street.

With your support, and that of our local partner Caritas Samoa, a water tank was installed in Leaia's home to harvest rainwater. This means that her family can now have access to clean water to drink and bathe.

Prior to having the water tank, Leaia's children would sometimes miss school during the dry season, as they could not bathe before school.

Caritas Samoa is installing water tanks in crucial areas of communities, such as schools and family homes, to prevent children from missing out on their right to an education.

During the next phase of the program, Caritas Samoa will work to provide homes like Leaia's with hygienic toilets with septic tanks, which will improve the health of rural communities.

Thank you for being a partner in compassion and being there for resilient families like Leaia's.

A BRIGHTER FUTURE, THANKS TO YOU

Ronita lives in Quezon City in the Philippines with her husband Lean and their two children – Egzy Grey who is three years old and Clark who is five years old.

Her husband works seven days a week in waste disposal, from 3 am to 9 pm each day. Yet despite this, Ronita and her husband can only afford to rent a very small brick room (measuring around 10 square metres).

Growing up, her family faced many challenges. She grew up with her mum, who worked three jobs because Ronita's father left their family.

Ronita married Lean when she was 15 years old, and quickly became pregnant with their first child. This put her at greater risk of falling further into poverty.

With your support, Ronita was given a second chance at completing her studies when she joined a program supported by the Faithful Companions of Jesus, Caritas Australia's local partner. Through their program, she was able to re-enrol in her studies, and continue learning in a safe and flexible environment – even with the arrival of her second child.

After completing the learning program, Ronita attended senior high school classes. She has now completed her final high school exams and secured a job at a call centre. She hopes to earn enough income to continue her studies and support her family.

Thank you for being a partner in compassion and being there for determined people like Ronita.



Ronita standing next to her home in Quezon City.
Photo: Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia.



Memory working in a carpentry workshop in one of the largest hydroelectric power companies in Malawi. Photo: Tim Lam/Caritas Australia.

YOU HELP CHANGE LIVES THROUGH EDUCATION

Memory grew up in the Mwanza district in southern Malawi with her four siblings and her parents.

As the eldest child in her family, she had to support her family with chores such as farming, carrying water, cooking and cleaning, alongside her education efforts.

After being identified by local leaders in her village, Memory was referred to a technical college near the city of Blantyre with support from our local partner CADECOM. Thanks to the generosity of people like you, through the A+ program, Memory was supported by CADECOM with the provision of logistical support like tuition and boarding fees.

Memory decided to pursue vocational training in carpentry to prove to her community that women are capable of working in a male-dominated industry. After three years, she graduated with an advanced certificate in Carpentry and Joinery. With the skills acquired, she secured a job as a carpenter at one of the largest hydroelectric power companies in Malawi.

Memory's dream is to open her own carpentry workshop in her village and help provide carpentry services to households in her community. As the only female carpenter in her village, she is a role model for other young women who want to pursue a career in male-dominated industries.

Thank you for being a partner in compassion and being there for brave women like Memory.



CHAMPION for CHANGE

You can create lasting, positive change by helping provide food security, clean water and education to the people in greatest need.

**Make Change Happen.
Become a Monthly Giver Today.**

Call us today on 1800 024 413 | Donate online at caritas.org.au/champion



End poverty
Promote justice
Uphold dignity



Leave a Legacy of Love

Leaving just 1% of your Estate to Caritas Australia can change the lives of so many vulnerable people around the world.

Give the gift of hope and compassion by leaving a charitable gift in your Will today.

If you would like to leave a gift in your Will or would like to know more, contact our Gifts in Wills Specialist on **0438 530 908** or legacyoflove@caritas.org.au.



Caritas
AUSTRALIA

End poverty
Promote justice
Uphold dignity

Spotlight on our partners: your support in Indonesia

Yayasan Mitra Tani Mandiri, our partner in Indonesia

Yayasan Mitra Tani Mandiri (YMTM) works across 24 villages in the Belu, Malaka, and Timor Tengah Utama districts in the East Nusa Tenggara province in Indonesia.

With your generous support, their aim is to increase resilience of assisted communities through enhanced environmentally sustainable initiatives and improved income. They also focus on diversifying income through co-investment in non-agricultural livelihoods, and in improving social peace and harmony, wellbeing and protection of vulnerable communities.

YMTM assists community members to organise themselves into groups to share experience, skills and knowledge, and supports men, women and youth to increase their financial opportunities through enterprise development.

With your support, YMTM also strengthens local communities to improve resilience when dealing with crisis through Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and climate change mitigation and adaptation awareness and skills.

So far, thanks to your support, YMTM has helped:

- **205** community members attend training on disaster resilience.
- **617** farmers participate in training session on raising livestock and livestock management.
- **116** community members attend training on protecting water sources.
- **459** farmers participate in training on cultivating nutritious food.

Thank you for making a difference to vulnerable communities in Indonesia to better support themselves today and build for a better future.

Katharina's story

Katharina, 39, is a homemaker and a mother living in the Belu Regency in Indonesia with her four children.

With your support and the work of our partners, Katharina participated in training that allowed her to learn the necessary skills to become a pioneer in her farmer group and produce handwoven fabrics using natural dyes. Since then, she found success in her new business and even trained other people in her village.

"Over the course of three months, I successfully made and sold 25 pieces of handwoven fabric using natural dyes. Many people are interested because traditional handwoven fabric production using chemical dyes often results in low-quality and easily fading products. The technique of producing handwoven fabric with natural dyes is easy and cost-effective," said Katharina.

"We can obtain the dyeing materials from around us. Even difficult materials like tarum, I plant around the house."

"When the farmer group saw the results, everyone became interested, and now there are eight mothers in the farmer's group voluntarily contributing funds to expand our business. Currently, we have produced 10 large pieces of fabric ready for sale," she added.





Thank You Day 2023 at Caritas Australia's Melbourne office.
Photo: Tim Lam/Caritas Australia.

Thank You Day 2023

Caritas Australia celebrated its second annual Thank You Day in November last year to extend our gratitude and acknowledge the generosity of our supporters.

Our staff from across the country came together to make phone calls, send emails and write cards to faithful supporters who have been donating for years and in some cases decades, as well as new supporters who made their first ever donation in 2023.

And if you did not hear from us then, don't worry – we will try again this year!

The kindness and compassion of our supporters is the backbone of everything we do, and it has a lasting impact in the lives of those we serve.

Once again, thank you for your ongoing support.

THANK YOU

Get to know Praphulla Shrestha



Meet Praphulla Shrestha – Caritas Australia's Africa Program Coordinator for Malawi and Tanzania. Praphulla has been with us for three years, but has worked in the international community development for many years.

At Caritas Australia, he plays a pivotal role in supporting partners on an array of projects and in overseeing the implementation of initiatives such as the establishment of rural maternity hospitals and schools in remote Tanzania, Farmer's Field Schools in Malawi, and Village Saving and Loan Schemes in Malawi.

In his role, Praphulla actively engages with community members. His favourite part of his day is witnessing the tangible impact of these efforts and interacting with the beneficiaries, as well as witnessing the results that projects have in vulnerable communities. He finds immense satisfaction in contributing to positive transformations and making a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.

"In my recent trip to Tanzania, the community took me around to show me their new rural maternity and child hospital, where they can have regular check on their infants and women can safely deliver their children. The

communities and hospital in-charge were so happy to see their dream realised," he recalls.

A change that Praphulla would like to see in the world is significant climate action. This includes reduction in greenhouse gases through afforestation, use of energy saving stoves, capturing solar energy, biofuel, and organic fertilizers; forest-based livelihood – bee farming, medicinal plants, fruit trees.

Praphulla would also like to see increased income for women and youth through small businesses, with support from international agencies, training and startup funds.

We would love to hear your stories of compassion!

If you would like to be featured in Your Compassion in Action – or would like to nominate someone from your school or Parish community, please reach out to the Publications Editor at connie.zehender@caritas.org.au.



ACFID
MEMBER



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island readers should be aware that this publication may contain images or names of people who have since passed away. Caritas Australia acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians, past and present, of the land on which all our offices are located.

MIX logo



THANK YOU

For being a partner in compassion and helping vulnerable people around the world build a brighter future.

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