

CaritasNews

CHANGE STARTS WITH YOU

#165 | SPRING 2021



WOMEN'S RESILIENCE AND LEADERSHIP IN CHALLENGING TIMES

WOMEN LEADING THE WAY:

Responding to disasters and beyond

WORLD HUNGER:

COVID-19 impacts food security

PNG PROTECTION:

Communities tackling violence against women

WOMEN FOR THE WORLD:

Your chance to make a difference



Caritas
AUSTRALIA

End poverty
Promote justice
Uphold dignity

THANK YOU

In many ways, this year has proved to be as tough as last year. But as the COVID-19 crisis continues to devastate communities in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and many more places, we're reminded of the vital importance of working together in the spirit of generosity.

I regularly receive reports of partners going above and beyond for the people we work with – whether delivering food to people at home in lockdown, or working through our Church networks to reach remote communities with vital lifesaving information about COVID-19. I especially love the stories about women who are finding a way to promote positive change in their communities, despite the obstacles.

This is why I'm excited to share this edition's inspiring stories of resilience and positive change that have been made possible by your generosity. With your support, we're able to work with communities to address real needs on the ground. We're able to support our partners to be agile and flexible, as this global health crisis becomes even more complicated.

In this edition of Caritas News, you will learn about your impact in communities in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines to combat the challenges of COVID-19. You will also hear from women like Aloma, who took part in Disaster Risk Reduction and sustainable farming training and is now a leader in her community in times of crisis.

This September, Caritas Australia will hold our annual Women for the World campaign to raise awareness about the disproportionate impact of poverty on women and girls globally. I hope that you will join us in being a champion for a world where all women and girls are able to reach their full potential.

Thank you for your ongoing support, and for contributing to meaningful and lasting change during these challenging times.



With gratitude,

Kirsty Robertson

Kirsty Robertson
Chief Executive Officer
Caritas Australia

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As we all grapple with the ongoing challenges of COVID-19 here in Australia, we stand in

support and solidarity with our closest neighbours, as they too continue to deal with the pandemic.

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Cover: Aloma in the Philippines has gained skills in leading her community during natural disasters and beyond, including during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Photo: Richard Wainwright.
All photos belong to Caritas Australia unless otherwise stated

PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION


INDONESIA - INTEGRATED VILLAGE PARTNER: Yayasan Mitra Tani Mandiri


Improves family income and food security, through training in sustainable farming and post-harvest production techniques, **strengthens community microfinance systems**, including savings and loans groups, and **supports economic recovery from COVID-19**.




IMPACT

 **9310** people, including **3816** children have improved food supplies

 **1708** women gained skills to diversify their income

 **172** women participated in savings and loan groups

 **9034** farmers reported annual income increases of 28%, attributed to agri and business skills training, as well as access to savings and loans groups.

YANI'S STORY

Before joining this program in late 2020, Yani and her husband produced small yields of low-quality crops which they sold at a low price. During the COVID-19 pandemic, they struggled to provide for their family, due to restrictions on their access to local markets.

With your generous support, Yani took part in training which helped to boost her harvest and diversify her production. She learnt how to process coconuts into virgin coconut oil and to produce banana and corn chips which earn



Yani and her husband boosted their agricultural production and income during the pandemic. Photo: YMTM/Caritas Australia.

higher market rates. She was also supported to establish a savings and loans group, gaining greater financial stability. This gave Yani and other community members the opportunity to grow their wealth.

LEGACY OF COMPASSION



Giuseppe celebrating the family dog's 9th birthday. Photo: Supplied.

Giuseppe De Simone, a long-time supporter of Caritas Australia, says he feels blessed to have been born in a peaceful and prosperous country that enabled him to build a comfortable life for his family and retire early.

"At 62, I'm part of the fortunate baby boomer generation," Giuseppe says. "About 15 years ago, I sold my IT business so I could enjoy being a father and give back to my local community."

Giuseppe recently decided to leave a charitable gift in his Will, as part of his commitment to pay his good fortune forward, and to help support the work of Caritas Australia for generations to come.

"Caritas changes lives from our nearest neighbour, Papua New Guinea, all the way to the Congo in Africa," Giuseppe says. "I am amazed by how much can be done with not very much money. A bequest to Caritas is a small thing I can leave behind to give thanks to God for the many gifts I've received."

"The whole process was very simple, straightforward and easy," Giuseppe says. "I simply spoke to my lawyer about putting my Will together with a bequest left to Caritas Australia."

With the generosity of everyday Australians like Giuseppe, we're able to continue our work supporting vulnerable communities to achieve their development goals, and building a brighter future where all may thrive.

Leave a Legacy of LOVE

When you include a gift in your Will, you create a life-changing legacy which can help transform the world for generations to come. Your gift will go towards the communities who need it. Thank you for leaving an enduring Legacy of Love.

www.caritas.org.au/gift-in-will



TACKLING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA



Supporting families through counselling and support, through the Centre of Hope. Photo: Autu Autu

Gender-based violence was a serious issue in Papua New Guinea, long before the COVID-19 crisis. It remains one of the most dangerous places to be a woman or girl, with rates of violence among the highest in the world. More than two-thirds of women in PNG are victims of domestic violence.

With your support, we work with the Centre of Hope Safe House program to provide a **safe space, counselling and support for women.**

The Centre also provides training for income-generating and leadership skills, which has boosted women's financial independence and participation in decision-making in their communities.

The Centre also runs male advocacy training to raise awareness about intimate partner violence. It promotes 'male champions' to become advocates in their communities. Over 100 women and 100 men have been able to seek refuge and counselling, and participated in these activities over the past five years which has helped to reduce violence at home.

Despite restrictions on movement imposed due to COVID-19, the number of those seeking the Safe House program's services has grown in recent months, with over 50 people visiting the Centre since July 2020.

"Caritas Australia is hoping to expand this important support to more Catholic-run Safe Houses in the future, so that women and girls throughout PNG can live a life with dignity and free from violence, in safe, empowering environments," says Emma Dawson, Caritas Australia's Pacific Program Manager.

Along with your generous support, this program is supported by the Australian Government, through the Church Partnership Program (DFAT) and the Noel and Carmel O'Brien Family Foundation.

Source: UN Women

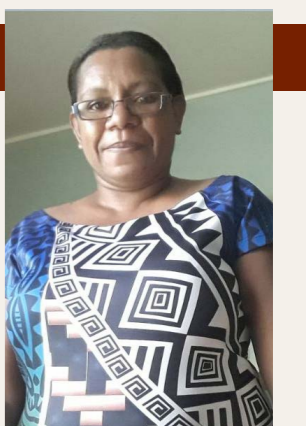
VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Roslyn Kuniata | Caritas Australia's PNG Program Quality and Effectiveness Manager.

Roslyn Kuniata says COVID-19 has led to an unfortunate increase in sorcery accusation-related violence.

"Some women have been tortured, even killed because they were accused of witchcraft towards people who seem to have died from COVID-19," Roslyn says.

"Through the Centre of Hope, more men have become champions of female empowerment and safety, and are trying to make changes in their communities. We're also supporting remote communities with awareness-raising activities."



THROUGH DISASTERS AND BEYOND

WOMEN LEADING THEIR COMMUNITIES

When natural disasters strike, women in vulnerable communities are at an increased risk of food and water insecurity. They also often shoulder the burden of recovery and re-building.

Following Typhoon Santi which raged through the Philippines in 2013, Aloma's village was heavily impacted. Her house was destroyed and so were the banana and coconut plantations which supported her community's livelihood.



Aloma learnt skills to better prepare for disasters. Photo: Richard Wainwright.



PROGRAM SNAPSHOTS

Philippines - Sustainable Income Generating Activity - Integrated Community Development



199 families increased preparedness for natural disasters, through community-led simulation drills



202 people participated in small business skills development, vermiculture and income generation management



194 women contributed to family income through activities like vegetable production, piggery groups, tailoring, dressmaking, coco jam production, rice trading, dried fish production, root crop farming and vermiculture.

Solomon Islands Rural Training Centre



30 women participated in vocational and life skills training, with livelihood opportunities to help them to generate an income which will also help their communities.

Malawi and Tanzania A+ program



427 women participated in leadership training that enabled them to have a greater voice in decision-making



Adult literacy classes and gender awareness training encouraged 14 women to stand in local government elections, 8 were successful.

RE-BUILDING AND SKILLS BUILDING

Aloma was determined to help her family and community to rebuild from the disaster. She joined the Integrated Community Development Program (ICDP) run by the Socio Pastoral Action Center Foundation Inc. (SPACFI), supported by Caritas Australia.

With your generous support, she learnt bookkeeping, ecological conservation skills and undertook training in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). She learnt how to manage the logistics of disaster response, and along with her husband, took part in first-aid training – skills which have helped her way beyond the typhoon.

"All the skills that I learned, I pass on to friends and neighbours," Aloma says. "I can lead other people in times of calamity, to guide them what to do first, and what to prepare during natural disasters and in this time of pandemic, because they are the ones who can spread important information to their families."

LEADING THE WAY

Aloma is now a leader in her community. She is a member of the local Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council, treasurer of her local area and a board member of the Small Farmers and Fisherfolk Association. As a frontline worker during the COVID-19 pandemic, Aloma helps remind others about prevention measures.

Women like Aloma are leading their communities in overcoming the challenges of recurring natural disasters and poverty.



Aloma's first aid and leadership training has enabled her to help her community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Photo: Richard Wainwright.

Eleanor Trinchera, Caritas Australia's Program Co-ordinator for the Philippines, says that the success of women like Aloma has a 'ripple effect'.

"If there's one woman who really stands out and can champion the rights of women in her community, she becomes a model and people really celebrate that kind of achievement," Eleanor says. "Supporting women like Aloma through skills training and leadership will pave the way for women leaders in remote, vulnerable and marginalised communities."

FUTURE HOPES

Aloma hopes her children will be able to finish their studies, that she will be able to continue her work and that all community members will maintain sustainable livelihoods.

"My dream for my community is to continue what we are doing right now, so that the next generation will benefit from what we have started."

With your generous support, vulnerable women around the world can gain the skills and support they need to improve their lives. They are able to improve their knowledge of sustainable farming, strengthen their communities' preparations for natural disasters, engage in microfinance projects including local savings and loans groups, and learn leadership skills that benefit their communities.

With your support, women and their communities around the world are able to not just survive, they can thrive.

Donate now to support other women like Aloma to become leaders in their communities



www.caritas.org.au/give



Be a Neighbour to those in need

Become a Regular Giver Today



Call Caritas Australia on 1800 024 413 or visit caritas.org.au/neighbours



COVID-19 has further impacted food security in vulnerable communities. Photo: Caritas Gweru.

FOOD SECURITY THREAT

WORLD HUNGER SPIKE DURING COVID-19

Alongside the devastating COVID-19 pandemic, there's another global crisis unfolding: a staggering increase in world hunger. A recent UN report estimates that global hunger has increased for the first time in decades, with an astonishing 18 per cent increase in 2020 compared to 2019. And when it comes to hunger, it's women and girls who are most likely to be impacted.

Women and girls are more likely to eat less, skip meals or eat a less varied diet compared to other household members. Rural women who rely on producing their own food usually receive less money for the same crops,

they may struggle to get access to credit, seeds, fertiliser and fuel for generators, and frequently lack proof of land ownership.

These factors put women at increased risk of hunger when problems arise, like failed crops, loss of income or natural disasters.

That's why your support for ongoing livelihood skills training for women and girls is so vital, to help to build resilience to these changes and reduce the rates of global hunger.

To support vulnerable people facing hunger, poverty and COVID-19, please donate <https://www.caritas.org.au/fight-hunger/>

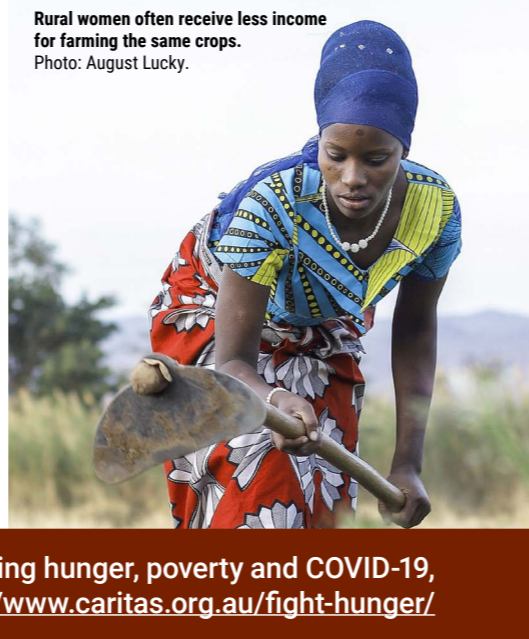


Approximately 690 million people are undernourished or going hungry right now.



A staggering 2 billion people either can't get enough food regularly, or have periods during the year when they don't have enough food to eat.

Rural women often receive less income for farming the same crops. Photo: August Lucky.



FLOODS CAUSE FOOD SHORTAGE FOR REFUGEES

Heavy rains and severe flooding have pounded Bangladesh in recent weeks, making life for hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees in the Cox's Bazar refugee camp even harder. The situation is further complicated by COVID-19 and a strict national lockdown.

With your support, help can be provided to those communities suffering in this unfolding emergency.

A letter from Caritas Bangladesh's Head of Operations, Emergency Response Program, Inmanuel Chayan Biswas, describing the situation on the ground.

"After four days of continuous rain, 400 villages in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, are now flooded. At least 300,000 Bangladeshi people are lacking food and clean water. Most people in the area haven't seen such a flood for the past decade. Many of the sources of pure water are submerged in [flood]water. Agricultural lands and sources of income are being destroyed by being submerged in [flood]water.

Although there is relief assistance available, many people are outside of



Volunteers trying to protect stores from floodwaters. Photo Caritas Bangladesh

the areas where relief is provided, and as a result, they are starving or half-starved. Although the floodwaters are temporary, the effects will be long-lasting, especially on livelihoods. It will be very difficult for poor people to overcome the effects of this flood as many of the families are dependent on agriculture.

Immediate assistance is required to address the immediate need and I urge people to extend their generosity to the Rohingya and the host community.

Caritas Bangladesh has been present on the ground from the beginning. We have been ensuring immediate support to the families who lost their shelters due to the heavy rain and landslides. We also have been providing immediate psychosocial, protection, and water, hygiene and

sanitation (WASH) support to ensure that they are being loved and can find comfort during their immediate need."

May grace and blessings of Christ be in your path,

*With my kind regards
Inmanuel Chayan Biswas*

You can provide support for communities devastated by natural disasters, like the Bangladesh floods, through our Asia Emergency Appeal

<https://www.caritas.org.au/donate/emergency-appeals/asia-regional-appeal/>



Along with your generous support, this program is supported by the Australian Government, through the Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP).



Flooding in Cox's Bazar. Photo: Caritas Bangladesh.

EMPOWER WOMEN, EMPOWER THE WORLD



Gather your family and friends and hold a fundraiser to support vulnerable women around the world. A Women for the World fundraiser can be anything you like – you can share a meal with your friends, go for a trek, or even host an online book club.

Your fundraiser may look a little different this year due to COVID-19, but vulnerable women around the world need your support now more than ever.

You can host your event virtually or come up with your own creative, COVID-safe way to help to raise much-needed funds for women around the world!

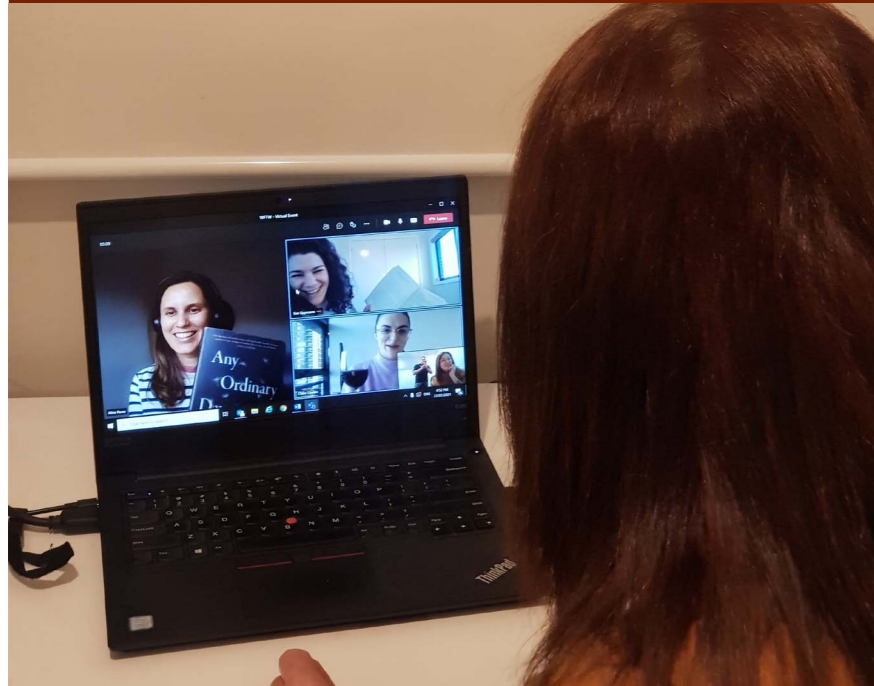


"Trek up the Hill", a Women for the World fundraiser, hosted by Tracey Tessitore in Adelaide, South Australia. Photo: Tracey Tessitore

We have prepared a selection of resources to kick-start your fundraising journey, including recipe guides to share with friends and a booklist on inspiring female leaders.



Please visit www.womenfortheworld.org.au to download these resources and to learn more about how you can change the lives of women across the world.



FAREWELL SUE

Sue Searls, our dedicated Diocesan Director for Ballarat, has retired after 29 years volunteering for Caritas Australia, 14 years as Diocesan Director. Caritas Australia depends on the generosity of spirit of our Diocesan Directors to communicate our work and our Mission in the Australian community.

"My most life-changing, unforgettable experience was when I was given the opportunity to visit several of our projects in Bangladesh," Sue says, and "seeing the difference Caritas projects made to the lives of many, the determination of the women in new projects, participating against adversity from their husbands to better their lives; the support and care that each offered the other when others were without; the sense of empowerment in the women and the changing attitude of the men when they saw how the programs made a difference to their lives and



Retiring Ballarat Diocesan Director, Sue Searls (left) with Kerry Stone, Diocesan Coordinator, Sandhurst Diocese, Victoria. Photo: Caritas Australia.

that of their children. I thank Caritas Australia for this life-changing, personal growth experience, a gift never to be forgotten."

Sue has been instrumental in connecting with the Ballarat diocese and her extraordinary commitment and tireless work over so many years means she leaves a lasting legacy. We wish Sue all the best in her retirement and thank her for the incredible impact and difference she has made on the lives of so many.

GIFT OF COMPASSION

The parish community in Echuca, St Mary's Primary School and St Joseph's College, put their compassion into action by walking in solidarity with those who have to travel many kilometres each day for basics, like water and firewood. The event helped to raise awareness about the transformative work of Caritas Australia around the world, as well as raising much-needed funds for some of the most vulnerable people across the globe. Thank you to all the students and families who participated in Project Compassion in 2021 and for your ongoing commitment to social justice!



Caritas Australia acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians, past, present and emerging, of the land on which all our offices are located. This edition may include images or words of indigenous people who may be deceased.



Caritas Australia is fully accredited by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Please note: some of the programs featured in this issue of Caritas News are funded by Caritas Australia and the Australian Government.



Caritas Australia is a member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID).



The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) is the national regulator of charities.

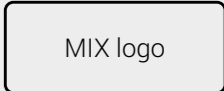


Caritas Australia is a proud member of CAN, a group of eleven Church-based overseas aid and development agencies committed to empowering people and providing avenues for them to overcome injustice and poverty.

FOR THE LATEST UPDATES HEAD TO:

- 24-32 O'Riordan St, Alexandria NSW 2015
- 1800 024 413 (toll free) 9am – 5pm AEST Mon – Fri
- questions@caritas.org.au
- www.caritas.org.au

- twitter.com/CaritasAust
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**YES, I WANT TO SUPPORT
VULNERABLE WOMEN TO
FORGE A PATH OUT OF POVERTY.
EMPOWER WOMEN.
EMPOWER THE WORLD.**



I WILL HELP WITH A GIFT OF:

Below are some examples of how your donation can help.

- \$45** can provide skills training courses on mangrove rehabilitation.
- \$125** can provide a school year of distance learning and modular classes for children like Aloma's.
- \$350** can provide potted mangrove seedlings needed for community regeneration.
- My choice of:** \$ _____

Donations of \$2 or more are tax-deductible

I WILL BECOME A CARITAS NEIGHBOUR AND GIVE MONTHLY:

I would like to provide ongoing monthly support as part of the 'Caritas Neighbours' program:

- \$18 PER MONTH** **\$27 PER MONTH** **\$51 PER MONTH** **OR** **My choice of:** \$ _____ **per month**

(please complete your credit card details)

MY PAYMENT DETAILS

Please find enclosed: **Cheque** **Money Order (Payable to Caritas Australia)**

Please debit this card: **Visa** **Mastercard** **Amex** **Diners**

Credit Card Number:

Expiry Date: /

Name of Cardholder:

Signature:

OR Make a bank transfer **Bank:** Commonwealth **BSB:** 062 438 **Acct:** 10072432
Acct Name: Caritas Australia **Ref:** SP21NL



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MY CONTACT DETAILS

Supporter ID: _____ State: _____ Postcode: _____

Title: _____ Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Mobile: _____

Suburb: _____ Email: _____

- I would like my receipt sent to the above email address to help save administration costs and make sure more of my donation goes where it is needed most.
- I would like to receive information about leaving a Gift in my Will to Caritas Australia.
- I have already left a Gift in my Will to Caritas Australia.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Complete this form and return to **Caritas Australia**

Call us on **1800 024 413** with your credit card details

Donate online at **caritas.org.au/give**

Website: caritas.org.au/give **Phone:** 1800 024 413
Address: 24-32 O'Riordan St, Alexandria NSW 2015
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