

CaritasNews

CHANGE STARTS WITH YOU

#161 | SPRING 2020

WOMEN LEADING COMMUNITIES

COVID-19: Recovery beyond the pandemic.

WOMEN LEADING CHANGE: Inspiring stories from Zimbabwe, Timor-Leste, Cambodia and Papua New Guinea.

COMMUNITY GIVING: Local community, global impact.



Caritas
AUSTRALIA

End poverty
Promote justice
Uphold dignity

THANK YOU

Strong and resilient women are the foundation of their communities, yet women who live in the poorest regions in the world face a higher threat of violence and human rights abuses.

In Lebanon, where you are supporting shelter and education programs, which enable Syrian women to enjoy a more stable future after the trauma of war, the situation is dire. After the tragic Beirut blast on August the 4th which took over 200 lives, through your support, we are on the ground and working with Caritas Lebanon to respond with immediate emergency support such as food, medicine, soap and masks.

In Lebanon and globally, your support makes such a tremendous difference to women and their communities! We love to see as many women as possible involved in our annual Women for the World campaign. By hosting a Women for the World event of your own you are supporting our global sisters with the means they need to improve their lives. You are helping women like Srey Oun, who after a difficult childhood, found herself in prison at the age of 24. When I met Srey Oun in Cambodia earlier this year I was moved by her resilience, her commitment to her own healing and her wish to see her children grow well and strong. Visit www.womenfortheworld.org.au for lots of great ideas about how you can get involved.

As ever, it's your support that makes the difference. Thank you for standing with us for a more just world, where, in the words of Pope Francis, 'all are responsible for all.'



With gratitude,

Kirsty Robertson

Kirsty Robertson
Chief Executive Officer
Caritas Australia

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A PRAYER FOR THE PEOPLE OF LEBANON FOLLOWING THE BEIRUT BLAST

United in solidarity with our Lebanese sisters and brothers we pray for healing and strength for those injured and suffering.

That the international community will respond with generosity and compassion.

And that stability and peace will be restored in Lebanon.

Writer/Editor: Daniel Nour

Design: Three Blocks Left Design – threeblocksleft.com.au

Cover: A young refugee from South Sudan, photographed in her tailoring shop in Bidibidi refugee camp in Northern Uganda. Through your support, she benefited from tailoring training thanks to a skills programme initiative and with a loan, has opened a shop and bought stock.

All photos Caritas Australia unless otherwise stated.

**CATHOLIC
SOCIAL TEACHING
PRINCIPLES**

Look out for
the CST icons
throughout
this edition.



**Dignity of
the Human
Person**



**Care for
Our Common
Home**



**The
Common
Good**

CARITAS IN THE LOOP



EMPOWER WOMEN, CHANGE THE WORLD

Women's rights are human rights and human rights are women's rights.

When a woman is empowered to improve her life with education, training and employment opportunities, she makes a huge difference for herself, her family and her community.

Yet women are most affected by marginalisation, poverty and discrimination. Your support is making the difference.

Through education and training programs you are not only improving women's lives but changing social norms towards more just societies.

This year's **Women for the World** edition explores women's empowerment across communities, through programs made possible by your generosity.

These include women like Cicilia Cono, a mother of two in Timor-Leste who has been involved in a farmer's group that helps



In Nigeria, Musa's son was referred to a health centre. He received treatment for malnutrition and has fully recovered thanks to the generosity of people like you.

Photo: Caritas Internationalis, CRS/Michael Stulman.

her to reap a better yield and earn an income from the sale of her produce. There's Ruposi in Bangladesh, who, with her young daughter, has depended on livelihood support as a lifeline, because of income loss caused by coronavirus.

There's also Srey Oun, who is experiencing rehabilitation and a renewed sense of purpose through training programs that you make possible.

And for courageous women like Susan Angabu in Papua New

Guinea, training is the key which enables the discovery of a new life after domestic violence.

When you extend your kindness and support to empower women you create a world where all women, children and men have the opportunity to thrive in equality.

"Today too, amid so much darkness, we need to see the light of hope and to be men and women who bring hope to others." – Pope Francis

You can have a lasting impact on women's lives around the world!

Join the Women for the World Movement today by hosting an online event with your friends, or **donate** directly to support programs that will empower women around the world to bring positive change to their families and communities.

When you extend your kindness to empower vulnerable women you create a world where all women, children and men have the opportunity to thrive in equality.



To find out more go to: www.womenfortheworld.org.au



**Promotion
of Peace**



**Subsidiarity and
Participation**



**Preferential
Option for
the Poor**



Solidarity



**Economic
Justice**

'THANK YOU' FROM THE FRONT-LINE

HAVE YOUR SAY

Caritas Australia is part of a huge network of staff and volunteers, which through your support reaches 1.52 million people worldwide, across 30 humanitarian programs in 20 countries.

Here's a conversation between you, our valued Australian supporter community and the voices of our field staff.

Thank you for doing what I am unable to do.
May God bless you in all your endeavours and keep you in His loving protection .

Jennifer

Sydney, New South Wales.

Bernice Kitum, Hope Agency for Relief and Development (HARD) Program Officer, South Sudan

"After reading the messages from Caritas Australia's supporters, I felt strong and supported too. I am glad that so many people are thinking about the work we are doing, about the communities we serve. I and the project team feel encouraged with the messages. The messages make us brave, and give us the confidence to serve the most vulnerable people even better."

Through its Middle East Regional Response, the Caritas network is on the ground following the devastating blast in Beirut, providing essential emergency support in the form of:

- **Food**
- **Hygiene materials like soap and water**
- **Masks**
- **Blankets and heaters**

Visit caritas.org.au/lebanon to find out more

To Caritas Australia,

The way you are helping individuals and communities, empowering them to come out of the poverty cycle. Giving them hope for a brighter future. You are doing a great work of mercy.

Thank you and stay safe.

**Anthony Anastasi,
Melbourne, Victoria.**

Phaldyn Prum, staff worker, Australian Catholic Relief/Caritas Australia & Caritas Cambodia

"I give thanks deeply to all Australian supporters... for the material such as (instructional) posters and soaps for hand washing to protect my family and poor people in my community from the COVID-19 pandemic. I thank you very much. I wish all people of Australia, happiness, progress and to avoid illness such as COVID-19."

We are thinking and praying for you and the people you are helping. God bless you and your work.

Mary

Melbourne, Victoria.

Jonathan, Caritas Zimbabwe

"Through your unwavering and unconditional support, the most vulnerable people in communities have managed to get essentials for survival... You were there to the rescue, our people have their lives saved, food on the table and dignity restored. We are greatly thankful to your kindness."



We would love to hear from you! Have your say published here by writing a letter to questions@caritas.org.au or by calling 1800 024 413.



Beatrice expresses her thanks for the soap and bucket she has received during a COVID-19 distribution in Zimbabwe. Photo: Ivy Khoury, Caritas Australia.

COVID-19: RECOVERY BEYOND THE PANDEMIC

WOMEN LEAD CHANGE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

➔ For older women who live alone in **Zimbabwe**, becoming self-sufficient can be a great challenge. For 70 year old Beatrice, your support has strengthened her independence and improved her access to essential resources.

"Caritas Australia and their partners are angels God sent to help me," Beatrice said of the ways that your support has shored her up against difficulty.

Prior to COVID-19, Beatrice's simple home was improved with

essential services, including a toilet but since the outbreak of the pandemic, she has faced new challenges brought on by the emergency.

She is very grateful for the soaps and water which she has received through your support.

Protective measures adopted in her community to stop the spread of the virus, including hand-washing and social distancing, are also helping to prevent infections.

"Practising preventive measures blocks the chain in the spread of

the virus hence weakening the pandemic," Beatrice says.

"I have no words to say but only God knows how grateful I am."

Your ongoing support equips women like Beatrice not just to survive the pandemic, but to thrive in hard circumstances and lead the change in their communities with grace and resilience.

Your generosity makes a world of difference for women like Beatrice. Please donate today via caritas.org.au/give

Along with your generous support, this program is supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).



In **Timor-Leste**, for women like Cicilia Cono, a 50-year-old mother, the first outbreak of coronavirus was unnerving.

"It has already been months and many families have reported that their household income has

reduced because of these (social-distancing) measures," Cicilia says.

However, information sessions run by Caritas Australia through your support are educating people about the virus and helping communities to concentrate on their daily activities, such as farming programs, with protective measures in place. The distribution of equipment, such as masks, soap and self-made, easy-to-use water systems (tippy-taps) is also helping to

protect people in vulnerable communities.

"It has been difficult with the coronavirus and we do not know how long this will continue. Through support from the Australian public, my family and I can feel more confident and prepared to face these uncertainties," Cicilia says.

Thank you for standing with women like Beatrice and Cicilia and enabling them to thrive beyond the darkness of the coronavirus pandemic.



CAMBODIAN WOMEN PREPARING FOR LIFE BEYOND PRISON

SUCCESS THROUGH REHABILITATION



Photos: (L) Your support of prison rehabilitation programs is giving hope to Cambodian women. (R) Caritas Australia CEO Kirsty Robertson with Chanthea Nou, Program Coordinator for Cambodia.

Photos: Nicole Clements

Faces have been blurred for privacy reasons

Women in Caritas Australia's Cambodian prison program are gaining new skills through programs that will equip them to find employment once they reintegrate into society. ➔

➔ **S**rey Oun* grew up in Battambang province in Cambodia. One of eight children, she lived with her godmother as a baby. As she grew older, she sold water lilies to pay for food.

Srey Oun dropped out of school and tried to make a living with various low-paying jobs before meeting her husband and having a son. Not long after he was born, however, they split up – and by age 24, she found herself in prison.

That's where the Comprehensive Prison Program, an initiative enabled by your support, is changing lives across six Cambodian prisons.

Health staff provide regular medical checks which enable inmates to manage chronic health conditions, such as HIV. They are also educated in life skills, health, the dangers of drug use, the consequences of human trafficking and domestic violence.

**pseudonym*

The program also provides vocational training in Khmer literacy, computer usage, sewing and other livelihood skills to help the women after they leave prison.

"Inside the prison, officers gave me advice and direction, so I became more self-aware – and I learnt so many skills. I won't make the same mistakes again," Srey Oun says.

Srey Oun trained in beauty therapy and when she left prison after three years, she knew she was a changed person with a whole new world of opportunities in front of her.

"I HAD NEVER REALLY EXPERIENCED LOVE OR COMPASSION UNTIL I WENT TO PRISON," SREY OUN SAYS.

Around 4,500 inmates and 370 prison staff benefit from this program each year.

These days, Srey Oun sells cooked eggs with her brother and has plans to run a cafe or sell beauty products online.

"I'd like to thank Caritas Australia supporters so much for helping the prison to provide skills training, not just for me but for all the inmates. Without you we would not have the skills and the opportunities we have today."

INMATES LEARN ABOUT:

- health,
- life skills,
- the consequences of drug use, human trafficking and domestic violence.

Thanks to your support, participants also receive vocational training in Khmer literacy, how to use a computer, sewing and other livelihood skills to help empower them after they leave prison.



Join the Women for the World movement today by *hosting an online event* with your friends, or *donate* directly to support programs that will empower women around the world to bring positive change to their families and communities.

Visit www.womenfortheworld.org.au today



PLANTING SEEDS OF HOPE
AND CHANGE IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

SUSAN'S STORY OF GRACE UNDER PRESSURE

Through the Centre of Hope's Safe House program in PNG, women and girls receive training, counselling services and safe accommodation. Photo: Richard Wainwright, Caritas Australia.

➔ In Papua New Guinea, where women and girls face a high rate of gender-based violence, the challenge of creating a new life requires immediate and long-term support.

The Centre of Hope program is enabling women to change their lives and support communities to address gender based violence.

Susan a 32-year-old mother came to the Centre of Hope and was assisted with immediate psychological counselling to work through trauma.

Like all women who stay at the Centre of Hope, Susan also received training in other useful life skills, including financial training and workplace skills.

At the Centre of Hope Susan was equipped with greater independence, which allowed her to escape a violent situation and to lead a self-sufficient life with a sustainable livelihood.

The program is also working with community stakeholders to create wider and longer-lasting social change.

The Departments of Health, Police and Community Development are working with Centre of Hope for the long-term case management of survivors.

The Centre also engages men in the community through its Male Advocate's program to promote positive approaches to conflict resolution and relationships.

THE CENTRE OF HOPE OFFERS:

- Basic book-keeping
- Finance management
- Food processing and cookery classes

Thanks to your kind support the Centre of Hope is improving the lives of Papua New Guinean women and children and addressing the causes of gender-based violence in PNG.

You can help build a brighter future for women and children in PNG.

**Visit caritas.org.au/give
Thank you for caring and
providing critical assistance.**

Along with your generous support, this program is supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).



RUPOSI'S STORY

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES OF COVID-19 IN RURAL BANGLADESH



Bangladeshi mother, Ruposi Begum, is able to support her children during coronavirus, with your donations.
Photo: Caritas Bangladesh

This program has helped over 5,800 low income households and 3700 people to:

- Develop skills in vegetable gardening
- Rear livestock
- Boost the sale of their produce at local markets

raising sessions about COVID-19 prevention measures, such as hand washing, use of masks and social distancing measures.

"Most of the program participants work as wage labourers who could not go out and work at the height of the pandemic, due to movement restrictions," says Eleanor Trinchera, Caritas Australia's Bangladesh Program Coordinator. "The project staff identified those who are most vulnerable – those who could not manage to get food under the circumstances – and provided cash support."

Ruposi says this cash assistance has been lifesaving.

Ongoing challenges to water access, health care and sanitation, as well as threats to food security are destroying lives and livelihoods – with no end in sight.

Please donate today to continue to help Bangladesh's most vulnerable women and their families to survive this global health emergency.

Along with your generous support, this program is supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).

➔ **T**he COVID-19 pandemic has made life even tougher for some of the most vulnerable communities in Bangladesh – and women have been amongst the hardest hit. Your support has been a lifeline for essential services and assistance.

In Bangladesh prior to COVID-19 many people were already facing the challenges of overcrowding, an under-resourced healthcare system and food insecurity. Fewer than half of Bangladeshis have access to clean drinking water¹ and one fifth of the population live on less than \$5 a day².

Thirty-five-year-old Ruposi is among those whose lives were rocked by the pandemic. The mother of three, with children ranging in age from newborn to 12, she faces limited employment options in her small village in

central Bangladesh. She is unable to work as household help, for fear of transmission of COVID-19 to herself or her baby. Her husband, formerly the family breadwinner, lost his job as a day labourer in the capital, Dhaka, due to the lockdown.

With your support, Caritas Australia, in partnership with Caritas Bangladesh, has provided assistance to Ruposi and other vulnerable Bangladeshi families, through the Sustainable Food Security and Livelihood Program II (SuFoL II).

During COVID times, emergency cash assistance has also been provided to support vulnerable program participants who could not work during the lockdown. This helped families to buy food and hygiene materials. Our partners also ran awareness-

¹UNICEF ²Asian Development Bank

OUR COMMUNITY



Diana Ayoub is a Lebanese Australian Caritas Australia supporter working for social justice through her donations to Caritas. Photo: Diana Ayoub.

When Diana Ayoub migrated to Australia eight years ago, she already knew about the work of Caritas from her native Lebanon.

"For as long as I can remember, Caritas has been there, the active caregiving hand of the Church. When I moved here I wanted to give back and there were countless charities to choose from (but) I committed my monthly giving to this organisation."

Diana realised that consistent long-term giving was one of the surest ways to empower entire communities.

"At first, I would give occasionally, here and there, when I remembered. But as I delved deeper in my faith and practice,

I wanted to commit to something more. Caritas Neighbours was the perfect way for me to build a habit of giving."

Diana says that hope allows her to stay positive despite these difficult times.

"When I read the stories, I feel connected to the people they are helping...always brings a sense of fulfillment and joy to my day."

Thank you Diana for being a Neighbour to those in need! You can do the same by visiting caritas.org.au/neighbours



#ENDCOVIDFORALL CAMPAIGN

Caritas Australia has joined together with a group of churches, international aid agencies and thousands of Australians to sign the pledge for the #EndCOVIDForAll campaign.

The worst impact of COVID-19 will be experienced by the communities who were already facing poor sanitation, overcrowding and limited access to healthcare.

Overcrowding makes social distancing a challenge, and puts

vulnerable family and community members at risk.

But, with more vital support, Australia could expand on the work already being done. The pledge will be provided to the Australian Government to demonstrate the support that the Australian community has for Australia to do more to help our neighbours.

Sign the pledge now at caritas.org.au/end-covid-for-all to show your support for vulnerable communities around the world. Because it's not over until it's over for everyone.

#ENDCOVIDFORALL

75%
of people in the most vulnerable countries lack access to clean soap and water.

Pledge your support to

END COVID FOR ALL

JUSTICE ANIMATORS COMING TO YOUR COMMUNITY!

In a time where coronavirus has changed the way we live, technology is connecting *Social and Ecological Justice Animators* to a greater number of communities across the country.

Through presentations, interactive workshops and questions and answers sessions, our team of Social and Ecological Justice Animators bring life to the mission and goals of Caritas Australia within the community.

"We are showing our supporters the life-changing impact of the work they enable by connecting parishes and schools with Caritas' International Programs staff," says Social & Ecological Justice Animator for NSW and ACT, Christopher Nolan.

"We promote and explore important events like Project Compassion, Season of Creation, Reconciliation Week and other key points in the social justice calendar."



School and parish communities and your everyday support enable our shared vision for a just world, free of poverty.

Watch out for a Justice Animators event near you by following Caritas Australia on Facebook.

Chris Nolan is a Caritas Australia Justice Educator having a conversation with Australian schools and parishes about Caritas Australia's movement for social justice, globally.

Photo: Chris Nolan, Caritas Australia.



LOCAL COMMUNITY, GLOBAL IMPACT

In Perth, Western Australia students at Our Lady's Assumption College came together in a huge effort for the millions facing water shortages globally during the coronavirus pandemic.

Women and girls in vulnerable communities around the globe spend 200 million hours collecting water every day (UN). In a show of solidarity, all the students of Our Lady's Assumption College walked the campus trying not to spill any water.

The students loved the challenges set up by the Christian Leadership Ministry – walking over planks, following a path of dots along a bridge and around the campus.

Thank you, Assumption College for this incredible solidarity effort and the more than \$5000 you raised for poor communities globally.

Find out more about Assumption College's massive effort at bit.ly/3fRRUFz

Students carried buckets of water in a show of solidarity with those facing poverty globally, raising over \$5000 for Caritas Australia at Our Lady's Assumption College in Dianella, Perth. Photo: Rebecca Smith.



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



facebook.com/CaritasAU



youtube.com/CaritasAustralia



www.instagram.com/caritasaust/

MIX logo

**Martina is a caring mother of eight
and a survivor of domestic violence.**

**You can help provide vital shelters
and development programs that protect
and empower women like Martina.**

Safety can start with you.

PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY TODAY.



☐ **YES, I WILL HELP WITH A GIFT TODAY!**

Below are some examples of how your donation can help:

- ☐ **\$45** could provide counselling and legal assistance to women facing domestic violence so they don't live in fear.
- ☐ **\$125** could provide women with livelihood skills training to help them support themselves and their children.
- ☐ **\$215** could provide food, clothing and accommodation for women and children staying in a shelter.
- ☐ **My Choice of:** \$ _____

☐ **YES, I WILL BECOME A MONTHLY SUPPORTER:**

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

MY PAYMENT DETAILS

☐ **CHEQUE** ☐ **MONEY ORDER** ☐ **CREDIT CARD**

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Amex ☐ Diners

Card number: _____ / _____ / _____ / _____

Expiry date: _____ / _____

Name on card: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

☐ **BANK TRANSFER** to Caritas Australia

Bank: Commonwealth – BSB 062 438 – Acct 10072432

Ref. SP20NL

☐ **PLEASE DIRECT DEBIT MY ACCOUNT MONTHLY**

I authorise Caritas Australia to debit the above amount from my account identified below on the 15th of each month. Acting on my written instructions the user may, by prior arrangement and advice to me, vary the amount for future debits.

Account name: _____

BSB: _____ Account no. _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Before payments commence, Caritas Australia will provide you with a full Service Agreement and confirmation of your details regarding this arrangement. Payments will be deducted on the 15th of the month.

MY CONTACT DETAILS

Supporter ID: _____

State: _____ Postcode: _____

Title: _____ Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Mobile: _____


Suburb: _____


Email: _____


- ☐ I would like my receipt sent to my email address to help save administration costs and make sure more of my donations goes where it is needed most.
- ☐ I would like to receive information about leaving a Gift in my Will to Caritas Australia.
- ☐ Please tick here if you do NOT want to receive Caritas News in the future.

Donations of \$2 or more are tax-deductible.

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**



Caritas
AUSTRALIA

**End poverty
Promote justice
Uphold dignity**

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