

# CaritasNews

CHANGE STARTS WITH YOU

#167 | AUTUMN 2022



## PROJECT COMPASSION 2022 EDITION

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Preserving Indigenous traditions and culture for tomorrow's generations

### SHINING A SPOTLIGHT ON AFRICA:

Stories of hope from Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo

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Biru and Shaniella's determination to improve their lives

# THANK YOU

The crisis in Ukraine has escalated to a frightening level, creating an imperative need for humanitarian support. Many citizens have been displaced from their homes, and access to essential public services have been disrupted. The people of Ukraine need help today. Caritas Australia has been working closely to support our partner, Caritas Ukraine. I ask you to please join me in prayer, so that our sisters and brothers in Ukraine may soon find peace.

In a world that is often filled with turmoil and uncertainty, we must never lose sight of all the wonderful glimmers of light that continue to spark even in the blackest of nights. This is why I am so excited to share with you the inspiring stories from this year's Project Compassion.

Now more than ever, communities across the globe impacted by drought, conflict and natural disasters, need us to stand firmly with them.

My personal involvement with Caritas Australia dates back to when I was in primary school, carrying around my Project Compassion box. I quickly discovered the power of giving and the impact that my contribution could have in the lives of others. Compassion is contagious and creates a ripple effect of kindness and prosperity.

Project Compassion 2022 tells the stories of five resilient and inspiring individuals whose lives and futures have been improved by the support of our partners and by your unwavering generosity.

This year, we bring to you the story of young Anatercia from Mozambique, Biru from India, Rosalie from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Shaniella from the Solomon Islands, and Janice from the Northern Territory.

On behalf of everyone at Caritas Australia, I thank you for your support and compassion and hope that you enjoy this edition of Caritas News.



With gratitude,

*Kirsty Robertson*

**Kirsty Robertson**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Caritas Australia

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**Writer/Editor:** Connie Zehender  
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**Cover:** Anatercia is now thriving at school, thanks to your generous support.  
**Photo:** Emidio Josine/Caritas Australia.  
**All photos belong to Caritas Australia unless otherwise stated.**

LATEST UPDATES FROM UKRAINE

# STANDING IN SOLIDARITY WITH UKRAINE



Ukrainian refugees fleeing to safety at Ukraine-Poland border. Photo: Caritas Poland

At the time of printing, the Ukrainian city of Mariupol was still being shelled, despite efforts to set up a humanitarian corridor to get the 400,000 residents to safety. Russian bombs had destroyed a children's and maternity hospital, with an estimated 17 people wounded from the attack. Humanitarian assistance convoys had also been sent to the Kyiv, Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhia with essential goods.

Although the number of people fleeing conflict had slowed, the immense need for humanitarian support has remained and the massive influx of displaced people is overwhelming existing response capacities. Caritas Australia has been working closely with our partner Caritas Ukraine to provide families and those affected by this crisis with much-needed support in the form of emergency food, water, shelter, psychological aid and transit centres for displaced families.

We have also maintained regular communications with the Ukrainian Eparchy in Australia, including Bishop Mykola Bychok, to provide updates on the work we have conducted in partnership with Caritas Ukraine.

To continue to provide assistance, Caritas Australia has launched the **Caritas Australia-Caritas Ukraine appeal**. Your urgent support today will provide immediate assistance to vulnerable communities impacted by this crisis. Please donate now at [www.caritas.org.au/donate/emergency-appeals/ukraine/](http://www.caritas.org.au/donate/emergency-appeals/ukraine/) to help the people in Ukraine.



The theme of Project Compassion 2022 is 'For All Future Generations' and it is inspired by the biblical story of Noah's Ark. More specifically, when the flood waters subsided, a rainbow appeared in the sky and the dove returned with an olive branch indicating a new beginning.

'For All Future Generations' implies a ripple effect, and in the context of Project Compassion, that the common good extends to future generations. The generosity and compassion we show today is the pebble that creates ripples that will improve the livelihoods of vulnerable communities, supporting them to flourish for generations to come.

It is an open invitation for everyone, as one human family, to do our part in making the world a better place by working together and finding solutions to global issues.

Visit [www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion) to find out more.

**CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING**

Look out for the CST icons throughout this edition.



# WHERE THEY ARE NOW

We catch up with some of the past faces of Project Compassion campaigns whose lives have been transformed thanks to your generous support.

From Thandolwayo in Zimbabwe (2019), to Halima in Bangladesh (2021) and Shirley in the Philippines (2020), your generosity gives vulnerable people across the world the support they need to face the challenges of today and build better and brighter futures.



### Thandolwayo | Project Compassion 2019

Every morning, Thandolwayo would have to walk long distances to collect clean water for her family.

Thanks to your generous support, Caritas Australia's partner, Caritas Hwange, helped Thandolwayo's community to install two solar-powered pumps and two 10,000 litre water storage tanks. Now at 14 years of age, Thandolwayo is excelling at school, particularly in English and Maths. She is now able to concentrate on her studies instead of spending hours collecting clean water, and fulfil her life-long dream of studying to be a nurse.



### Shirley | Project Compassion 2020

Shirley is a Manide woman from the Philippines. As her family's sole breadwinner, she found it difficult to support her husband and four children.

Thanks to your unwavering support, and through Caritas Australia's local partner, the Socio Pastoral Action Center Foundation of Daet, Inc. (SPACFI), Shirley trained to become an indigenous health worker.

She has now taken over her father's role as tribal chieftain and has been able to lead her community through the COVID-19 pandemic.



### Halima | Project Compassion 2021

For Halima, a Rohingya refugee living in the world's largest refugee camp in Bangladesh, the past year has been particularly tough. Widowed at just 21, she fled escalating violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State in 2017, arriving at the camp with nothing. She is caring for her two young children, as well as for her mother who has a disability.

Halima is now earning an income from her hygiene training role with Caritas Bangladesh. Through this role, she is helping the community to prevent the spread of COVID-19, as best they can in the crowded conditions with limited access to water, soap and masks.

Your kindness has been pivotal in strengthening the livelihoods of Thandolwayo, Shirley and Halima. Thank you for supporting Project Compassion today and always.

[www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion)



*"With many elders gone, we must transfer knowledge, to keep a connection to culture and nurture future leaders. Me and my family, we keep the culture going, we need to keep our culture strong," says Janice.*

Janice outside of the Ghunmarn Culture Centre at Djilpin Arts. Photo: Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia.

## FROM THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

# PRESERVING INDIGENOUS CULTURE AND TRADITIONS



This year, Project Compassion brings to you the story of a Wagilak woman working to pass down the traditions of her culture.

Janice is a traditional dancer who tells stories through movements handed down over generations. Her commitment to pass down Indigenous traditions has led her to become an integral member of Djilpin Arts and a leader in her community.

Like many other Artsworkers, she feels strongly about the important part that Djilpin Arts plays in keeping culture alive and strong in the community.

Janice believes that the cultural activity that Djilpin Arts promotes and facilitates can actually decrease marginalisation in her community.

According to the United Nations, traditional knowledge is communicated between generations through stories, songs, dances, carvings, paintings and performances. Through the years, and as different cultures continue to blend in together, many of these traditions have been lost or are at risk of extinction.

With your generous support, Djilpin Arts works with Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory to

help them gain new culturally appropriate skills that will not only provide financial stability to the community but preserve Indigenous traditions.

Djilpin Arts advocates for remote communities while also protecting and sharing indigenous traditions. It supports cultural enterprises, all while supporting artists in the community with an income.

Elders run workshops and share their knowledge with the younger generation and with visitors. Local guides run bush cultural tours and architect-designed tourist accommodation is available.



You can learn more about Janice's story at [www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion/janice-story](http://www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion/janice-story)





*"With the help of Caritas Australia, my life changed because I was able to study up to 5th grade and attend 6th grade this year. I am also able to help my elderly grandmother and she teaches me the housework in addition to taking care of my mother," says Anatercia.*



Anatercia carries corn next to her fields. Photo: Emidio Josine/Caritas Australia.



Rosalie near her home. Photo credit: Arlette Bashizi/Caritas Australia.

## FIVE MINUTES WITH



**Dan Skehan**  
Director of Programs at Caritas Australia

**Q: What is the best part about working as the Director of Programs at Caritas Australia?**

**A:** *Definitely the honour I have every day of witnessing the impact that the generosity and compassion of our supporters, as well as the work of our partners, has in the lives of people like Rosalie and Anatercia. Seeing their resilience and strength humbles me, and their determination to forge a path out of poverty gives me hope for future generations.*

**Q: What does the word 'compassion' mean to you?**

**A:** *Despite all the crises and disasters that our human family has endured in recent years, compassion is still an unstoppable force that has the ability to bring people together and to make changes. If we look closely, we see compassion all around us. We see it in random acts of kindness from strangers, in the smiles of children and in the work that we do every day. To me, compassion goes beyond empathy – it requires action and the determination to lend a helping hand to friends and strangers alike.*

**Q: The theme for Project Compassion this year is 'For All Future Generations'. What comes to mind when you hear this phrase?**

**A:** *I find the phrase both inspiring and reassuring, and it fills me with hope and comfort. 'For All Future Generations' assures me that the work that Caritas Australia does as an organisation has and will continue to help many create brighter and better futures for themselves. It is delivering on our life-long promise for improvement.*

## STORIES OF STRENGTH FROM AFRICA

# SHINING A SPOTLIGHT ON AFRICA

**This year, Project Compassion brings the inspiring stories of Anatercia from Mozambique and Rosalie from the Democratic Republic of Congo, shining a spotlight on the work of our partners in Africa.**



Anatercia, a 12-year-old girl living in southern Mozambique, was struggling to cope with adult responsibilities after her father passed away. She had to walk nearly five hours every day to collect water, leaving her with little time to focus on her education.

Thanks to your generosity, Anatercia and her family participated in the Integrated Rural Development Program, supported by Caritas Australia's partner Caritas Regional Chokwe, which provided them with water, food, seeds, school supplies and a school uniform for Anatercia.

The program has changed the lives of members of Anatercia's community by providing knowledge and education around children's rights and girls education, providing them with safe and clean water, as well as sustainable agricultural production skills.

Now, Anatercia can easily access clean drinking water, community members are able to grow healthy crops all year round, sell excess vegetables to earn a small income to pay for school fees, and there is enough nutritious food to eat. Anatercia has more time to study and do her homework and hopes to fulfil her dream of becoming a nurse.



When Rosalie was only 15 years old, she was forced to join the army and made to transport munitions to soldiers on the battlefield. Upon leaving the army she was eager to start a new life, free from violence, but like many ex-combatants, Rosalie found the challenge to adjust to civilian life overwhelming. With her childhood and education cut short by the war, she had missed out on developing skills that would help her to find secure employment.

With your support, Rosalie was able to participate in the Protection and Re-Integration of Ex-Combatants program, where she learnt business and social skills. Supported by Caritas Australia's partners, Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) and Caritas Bukavu, the Protection and Re-Integration of Ex-Combatants program supports ex-combatants to integrate back into society and deal with the trauma they have faced.

### Program Snapshot



**600**  
ex-combatants received business skills training



**35** Saving and Internal Lending Community (SILC) groups were provided with start-up kits



**1,200** people were provided post trauma counselling to help them reintegrate into society.

### Program Snapshot



**54** farmers harvested and sold approximately 37 tons of crops



**202** people were trained in sustainable agriculture irrigation practices



**180** school students were able to continue their Education.

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

# IMPORTANCE OF PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES TO VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

This year, Project Compassion looks at the journeys Shaniella from the Solomon Islands, and Biru from India. Through the power of your generosity, both Shaniella and Biru have been able to access support and training to overcome the barriers of natural disaster, poverty and disability.



Biru receives a face mask before a community meeting. Photo: Sameer Bara/Caritas Australia

## Biru

Biru lives in a rural village in India. He lost mobility in one of his legs after contracting polio as a child, which makes it difficult for him to walk.

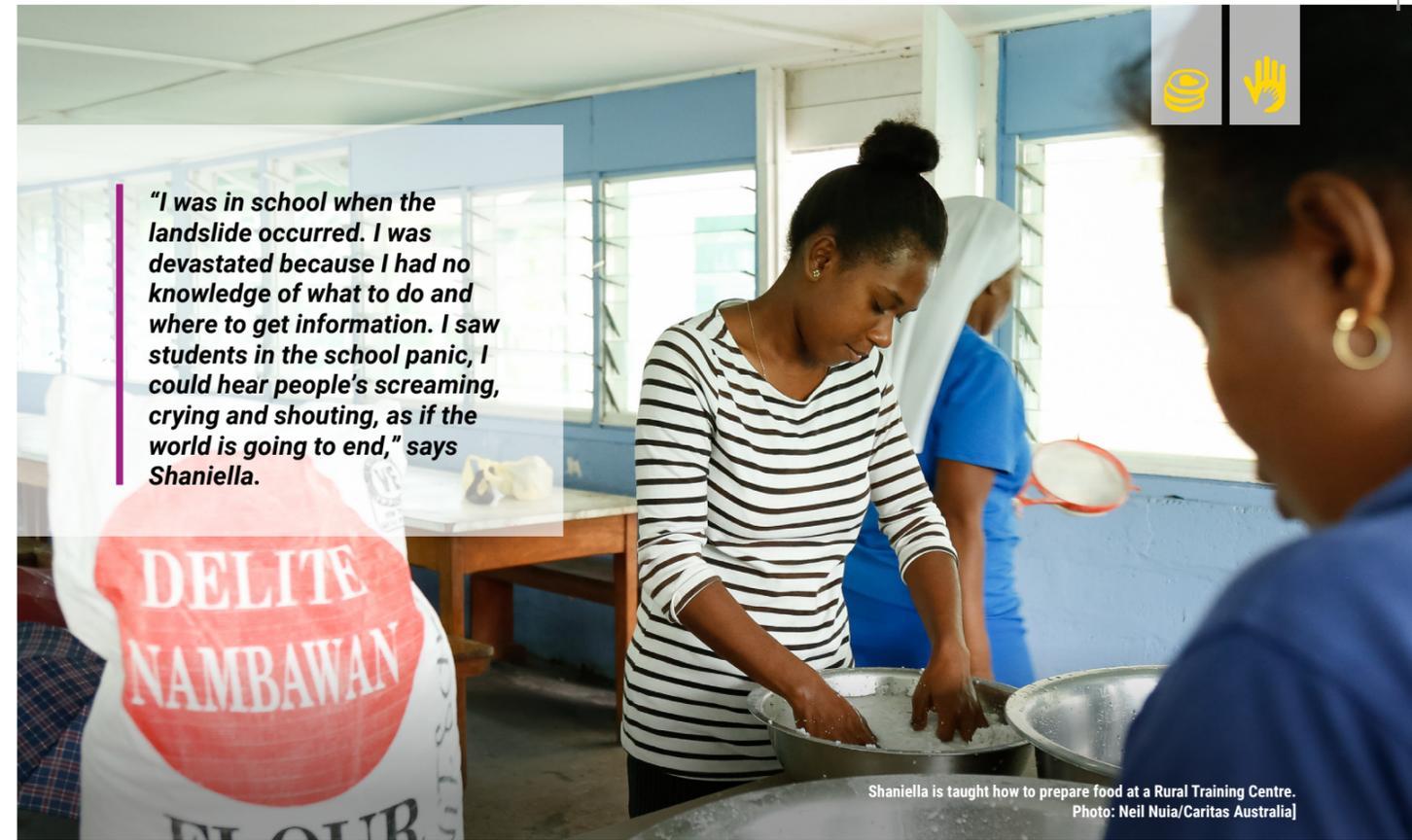
A member of India's Ho ethnic minority population, Biru started to work as a shepherd from a young age, looking after other people's cattle. He continued this work, after he married his wife, Budhni and had four daughters, even though keeping up with the cattle was a challenge.

Over 26 million people who have a disability in India also live in poverty. A further 69 percent of the population living with a disability reside in rural areas which makes access to support services, education and employment an even greater challenge. Discrimination can further limit job opportunities and lead to social exclusion.

In 2016, Biru joined the Community Led Development and Governance program, which is supported by Caritas Australia. Through your generosity, the program works with tribal communities and vulnerable groups, such as people living with a disability, women and the elderly. It supports the development of small businesses; to improve farming and financial management skills, which helps increase incomes. Undertaking the program helped Biru to realise his potential.

Although Biru had taught himself to repair bicycles by watching other people, Biru never dreamed of using his skills to start his own business.

With your generous support, Biru was able to gain the skills and support he needed to establish his own bicycle repair business.



*"I was in school when the landslide occurred. I was devastated because I had no knowledge of what to do and where to get information. I saw students in the school panic, I could hear people's screaming, crying and shouting, as if the world is going to end," says Shaniella.*

Shaniella is taught how to prepare food at a Rural Training Centre. Photo: Neil Nuia/Caritas Australia

## Shaniella

Shaniella grew up in a small village in the Solomon Islands. In 2020, she moved away from home to study at the Rural Training Centre outside Honiara. The vocational school is supported by Caritas Australia Solomon Islands (CASI), through the Happy, Healthy, Holistic Community Development program.

Shaniella chose to study hospitality and tourism, in addition to compulsory subjects, like life skills, cooking, sewing and agricultural production. However, not long after she commenced her studies, the school was hit by a landslide, flooding, and a cyclone, all in quick succession.

Girls' and women's participation in secondary education, training and employment in the Solomon Islands is significantly lower compared to male students. Limited opportunities in remote areas, few live-in facilities at colleges and community attitudes relating to the traditional roles of women, all contribute to lower participation rates of women.

With your ongoing support, the Happy, Healthy, Holistic Community Development program, delivered by CASI, helps young women learn vocational skills like cooking, sewing, agriculture and livestock, as well as Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) training.

*"My sister thought it would be a good opportunity for me to participate. Thanks to the training provided by the program, I now feel ready and better-prepared for disasters."*

With the help of supporters like you, CASI was able to assist the school by installing eight water tanks. This restored students' access to clean drinking water and the tanks also supplied water to nearby schools, health centres and the wider community. CASI also provided the school with improved planting materials, 200 chickens, and training in agricultural skills and poultry management, to help boost food security.

Now, Shaniella can complete her skills training, with enough water and food to eat, as well as better hygiene and sanitation. She is improving her ability to earn an income, learning skills which will expand her job opportunities. The school community has increased and diversified its crop supply and its number of poultry has quadrupled. Students are also better prepared to respond when disaster strikes.



Want to learn more about the stories behind this year's Project Compassion?



Visit [www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion) to find out more.

# OUR COMMUNITY



## Pancake Tuesday Extravaganza

During Lent, Caritas Australia invites everyone in our community to host their own fundraising events and donate to Project Compassion.

Each year, members of schools and parishes across Australia are brought together in the name of generosity, to help improve the livelihoods of people living in vulnerable and marginalised communities.

Activities kick off with Shrove Tuesday which gets its name from the ritual of shricing, which Christians used to undergo in the past. In shricing, a person confesses their sins and receives absolution for them. When a person receives absolution for their sins, they are forgiven and released from the guilt and pain that they have caused them.

You may be wondering 'what does this have to do with pancakes?'. Shrove Tuesday was the last chance for a spot of indulgence before commencing the traditional 40 days of fasting. It was also an opportunity to use up food that couldn't be eaten during Lent. This included eggs, fat and milk, which were made into pancakes and eaten on that day.

As part of their fundraising efforts, parishioners at St John's, Numurkah flipped pancakes to raise money for communities in need. Rosary School in Prospect, South Australia also held their own Pancake Tuesday, with pancakes for everyone. Parents volunteered to prepare more than 450 pancakes. Students were asked to bring a gold coin donation for their classroom prayer table Project Compassion box. Through the school's social justice initiatives this year, they took this opportunity to "*Awaken their Minds*" on how to let our light shine and live out their Gospel values.



Parishioners at St John's Numurkah cooked pancakes for Project Compassion.

**You can help create lasting change by hosting a Project Compassion fundraiser.**

Visit <https://fundraise.projectcompassion.org.au> to sign up today.

Lord,  
As the crisis in Ukraine continues to worsen,  
We pray for the lives that are currently at risk,  
Lead us from despair to hope,  
from fear to trust.  
Let peace fill our hearts, our world and our universe.  
Let us dream together, pray together and work together,  
To build one world of peace and justice for all.



## Launch of Project Compassion at Mercy College

At Mercy College, Coburg, Shrove Tuesday had a little more in store than just pancakes.

On Tuesday 1st March, our College, located in the northern suburbs of Melbourne, Victoria, had the honour of launching this year's Project Compassion. Given that compassion and caring for those in need are the heart of our school's core values, it is such a privilege to be able to participate in and host this wonderful event.

The theme of this year's Project Compassion is 'For All Future Generations', and it invites us to work today for a better tomorrow. I believe that education lies at the very centre of this year's theme, and through the power of knowledge and opportunity, helps put an end to vulnerability and poverty.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the launch of Project Compassion 2022 looked slightly different than in previous years.

Approximately 60 student leaders were present at the launch, as well as members of staff. Archbishop Peter A. Comensoli from the Archdiocese of Melbourne also attended the event, and shared words of wisdom, reminding us all about the importance of love, generosity, kindness and compassion.

I am certain that I speak on behalf of all Catholic schools in Victoria and across Australia when I say that the principles we uphold are directly aligned with those of Caritas Australia. We are committed to upholding dignity and hope for humanity and all of God's creation through our social justice initiatives, and hope that our contribution and participation in Project Compassion 2022 has a deep and powerful impact on the communities that Caritas Australia serves.

With regards,  
Lila McInerney  
Principal at Mercy College



Image of Lila McInerney. Photo: Mercy College.



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:

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Signature:



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Acct Name: Caritas Australia

Acct: 10072432  
Ref:

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Complete this form and return it in the **envelope provided**

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