



Organic rice crops in southern Bangladesh © Amit Rudro

It is with immense gratitude that we present you another edition of the Summer Update - a testament to the transformative impact of your support. Whether you have given towards our emergency appeals in specific regions or to our long-term development work, your donations enable us to fulfil our mission. These are some of the projects we have been able to fund thanks to your support:

Emergency appeals

- Türkiye and Syria p. 2
- The occupied Palestinian territory and Israel p. 2
- Sudan p. 4

Supporting women and their livelihoods

- In Bangladesh p. 5
- In Guatemala p. 6
- How we work in partnership p. 7

Recovery efforts in Türkiye and Syria

CAFOD's local partners have been supporting communities affected by last year's powerful 7.8-magnitude earthquake on 6th February. Striking near the border of Türkiye (Turkey) with northern Syria, a second 7.5 magnitude quake and up to 150 further quakes followed causing extreme destruction. Over 53,000 people lost their lives and thousands more became homeless overnight as homes and buildings were destroyed.

Our immediate response focused on supporting ongoing rescue efforts, and providing emergency shelter and food. As needs evolved in the months following the disaster, we continued providing emergency assistance (food, hygiene kits and cash assistance) and supporting people rebuilding their lives through counselling, healthcare, education, and short-term job opportunities. For example, the photos below are part of a project to rehabilitate damaged public spaces in one of the affected locations in Syria. Our local partners met with community members and leaders to understand their needs. They decided to restore their public park because during challenging times, like they were experiencing, having a place, especially for children, to meet and enjoy themselves, was crucial.



The project utilised the skills of experienced men and women from all professional backgrounds that were unemployed because of war and displacement, offering cash-in-hand work. They were able to develop new skills, re-enter the job market, and earn an income to support themselves and their families. With their experience and our partner's support, they rebuilt the city's public park and even organised children's play activities to help families have fun despite all they have been through.



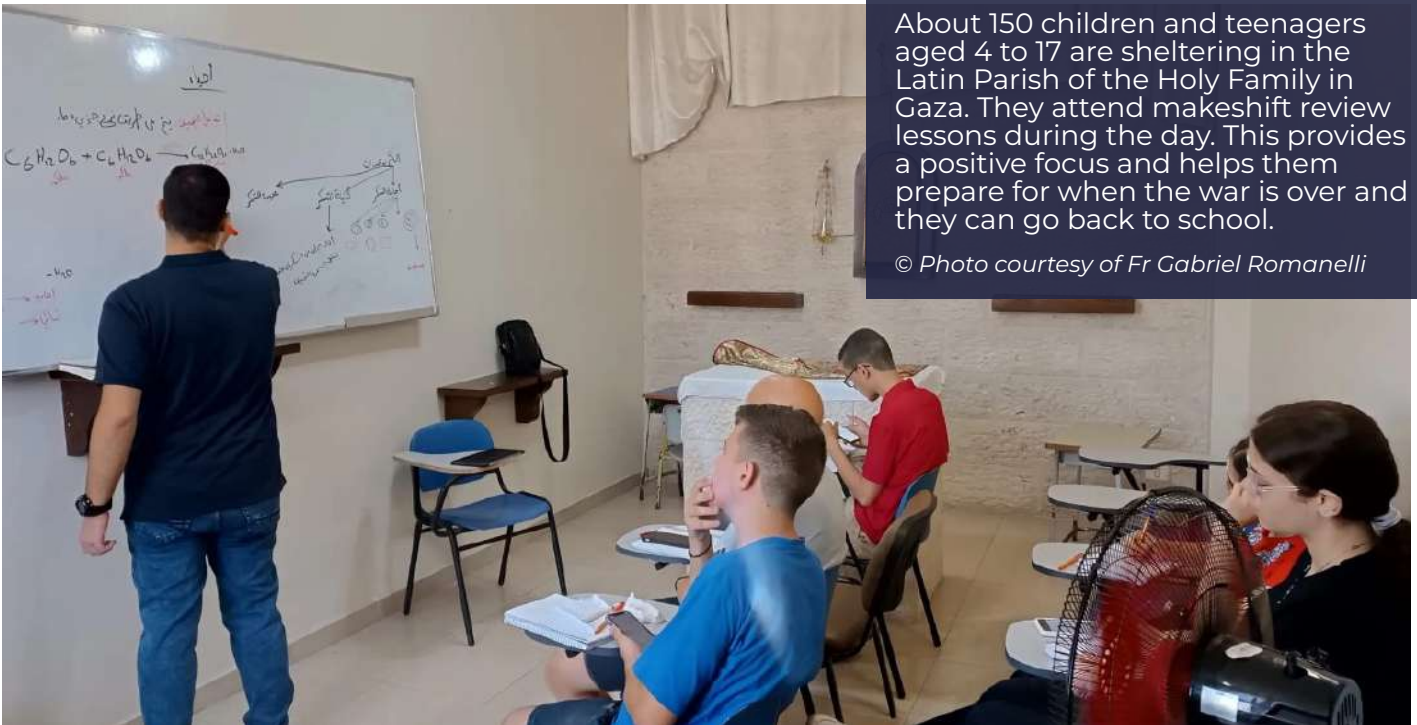
Critical support in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel

For more than 9 months, Gaza has been subject to bombardment from air, land and sea which has had a devastating impact on civilians in Gaza, the majority of whom are women and children. To date an estimated 2.3 million people in Gaza are affected by the current crisis. More than 39,000 Palestinians have been killed, over 89,000 have been injured, and 1.9 million people, or 90% of the population, have been internally displaced, many of them multiple times. Currently, the entire population of Gaza faces severe food shortages, with more than half experiencing extreme hunger and almost half a million people facing catastrophic levels of food shortages. Over 100,000 households are estimated to be in urgent need of shelter. And only 15 of Gaza's 36 hospitals are partially functional, with further attacks on hospitals reducing this even more. It is estimated that there are still 120 hostages being held in Gaza.

We appealed for support for our partners in both Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory. With your help we have raised to date over £900,000 and, together with our local partners in Gaza, have been able to provide critical support to some of the most vulnerable people caught up in the violence.

Our partner, **Catholic Relief Services**, have been able to provide essential shelter materials, cash assistance, and psychological support to those in need. They have distributed bedding supplies to 14,320 families, and cash assistance to 28,337 families. In partnership with other organisations, they have distributed food parcels to 141,178 families. Despite facing their own challenges, such as having to relocate when their office and warehouse in Rafah were in evacuation zones, they have been able to open new warehouses and distribution points to continue meeting the growing needs of displaced people across the Gaza strip.

Another partner, **Caritas Jerusalem**, has been instrumental in providing health and economic support through mobile medical teams. Their twelve teams across the Gaza strip, consisting of doctors, nurses, psychosocial workers, and lab technicians, are delivering primary healthcare, especially to children, the elderly, and pregnant women. In addition, they have been hosting Christian and Muslim families in church complexes, offering refuge to those in need, including severely disabled children. Caritas Jerusalem beautifully captured their mission: *"What we're doing is planting seeds of hope. Apart from psychosocial support and primary aid, we keep people's dignity intact. We listen to them and try to answer their needs."*



About 150 children and teenagers aged 4 to 17 are sheltering in the Latin Parish of the Holy Family in Gaza. They attend makeshift review lessons during the day. This provides a positive focus and helps them prepare for when the war is over and they can go back to school.
© Photo courtesy of Fr Gabriel Romanelli

CAFOD is also working with **local partners in Israel** who are providing mental health and resilience support to communities living close to Gaza and impacted by the conflict. They are working to foster solidarity and trust between young Israelis to equip them to play a future role in their communities. We are also providing support to families of refugees and migrants in Israel who were taken hostage during the 7th October 2023 attacks but who may otherwise not receive the help and support they need.

Despite the ongoing challenges in Gaza, your generous donations are making a significant difference. Together, we are helping families navigate this crisis and bringing hope to those in desperate need. Thank you for standing with us and the people affected during these difficult times.

In solidarity with refugees from Sudan

In April 2023, armed conflict broke out in Sudan, a country that was already host to a large population of refugees from neighbouring countries. News reports from this part of the world are rare, yet 8 million people are now displaced and living through the world's largest humanitarian crisis.



Mary (pseudonym) is a mother of 8 who also cares for her mother; the family has been displaced twice and has suffered painful losses. The camp in Upper Nile State is at four times its maximum capacity and, like many other displaced people, Mary couldn't find a tent when she arrived. She spoke to our partners who gave her blankets, food packages and household items to ease their most urgent needs until she can find a tent for her family. She said **“the biggest challenge here is finding shelter, but it's so peaceful compared to the bombing and shelling we've been through”.**

© ADA Development

Our local partners continue to support people like Mary as they stop over in their journey to safety. In addition to distributing supplies, they are also providing essential maintenance to the camps' water and hygiene infrastructure to keep disease at bay. Through your donations, people dealing with the most difficult circumstances can be supported, with our local partners prioritising a dignified and compassionate response.

Besides the appeals you usually receive regarding widely known emergencies, CAFOD supports other lesser-known emergencies around the world. If you would like to know how the impact of your donations can extend beyond the news headlines, watch the latest Every Seconds Counts case for support or speak to your contact at CAFOD.



Click or visit cafod.org.uk/esc to watch and find out more.

Supporting women and their livelihoods 1: Eco-villages in southern Bangladesh

In our Lent Appeal for 2023, we told you about Dristy and her community in Bangladesh and their Eco-villages. These have the goal of ensuring that marginalised communities in Bangladesh are no longer experiencing climate vulnerabilities and live in prosperous, resilient and inclusive societies.

We are excited to report that food availability has already increased by almost 20%, access to drinking water has increased by 26%, and our partner Bangladesh Association for Sustainable Development (BASD) is still ongoing. The following are some of the key activities behind these changes:

Raising the profile of women as leaders in adapting to climate change

A total of 192 members of community self-help groups – all of them women – participated in leadership training with our partner. This has helped spread vital information directly to hundreds of households on topics such as:



Identifying safe areas to build on high terrain



Maintaining sources of fresh water



Finding shelter before a cyclone hits



Accessing healthcare services



Adapting homes to minimise damage in case of heavy rain



Dristy's house is raised above the ground to minimise damage from flooding. Through the project with BASD, another 48 families living in flood prone areas have had their houses adapted to climate risks - higher from the ground and fastened to strong trees. They have also learnt where and how to store emergency food supplies, medicines and important documents.

© CAFOD

Increasing food availability in the community

Local women have also participated in training in agro-ecology to learn techniques such as how to raise cultivation beds to keep crops safe from flood water, or how to prepare their own organic compost.

From the women who took part in the training, 72 are actively maintaining the “demonstration plots”, which are inspiring other local farmers to apply some of these techniques. The effectiveness and affordability of the organic compost and natural pesticides, for example, have been praised by farmers.

Some households are still experiencing food shortages for up to four months a year due to poor soil quality and lost harvests. Our partners continue to work with the women leaders and the local authorities to establish the use of saline tolerant seeds and earthworms to improve the quality of the soil. Their aim is to reduce the length of these shortages to no more than one month a year.



Sustaining income generation to ensure food security all year-round

The self-help groups and agro-ecology training are complemented with other activities that encourage women to diversify their income sources. For example, rearing livestock or preserving surplus vegetables to ensure they have a source of income when food is scarce in the village.

In the 24 eco-villages established so far, 69% of the women who are participating in the project are reporting that their income has increased around the year and 91% say that their household can now afford three meals a day.

Supporting women and their livelihoods 2: Women networks in Verapaz, Guatemala

Disseminating information through established community networks

Almost a year ago, we shared with you some examples of the work that our partner Pastoral Social Caritas Diocese of Verapaz is doing in Guatemala. Our ongoing project with this partner focuses on strengthening networks of indigenous women to help them improve and protect their livelihoods. The project also pays particular attention to women and young people living with HIV, as this issue is intrinsically linked to Gender-Based Violence, a pervasive problem among the communities we work with in Verapaz.

We are glad to report that 216 female leaders from 6 municipal networks across the diocese are taking part in training and developing solutions and adaptations for their communities. The topics covered so far include how to increase the yield of organic crops, manage small plots of land efficiently, raise healthy poultry and manage community savings. The women leaders are now replicating what they have learnt in their communities.

“ As a promoter of the poultry raising module, I check on the women who were given chicks to raise. I'm happy to see that many have improved their coops or even built new ones themselves. We are all making the most of the training. ”

Concepción Botzoc Cac
Senahú Women Network

Enhancing access to public services

In addition to the women's municipal networks, our partner is also working with the Regional Hospital in Cobán city and has reached out to 450 people living with HIV in the last year, most of whom live in rural areas far away from the hospital. This part of the project provides practical and psychosocial assistance to patients through links to support groups. Furthermore, we have helped our partner secure additional funding to cover travel bursaries, food parcels, and to provide individualised support to cases of extreme vulnerability.

On the advocacy side, our partner is currently providing legal counsel and accompaniment in 18 cases of gender-based discrimination and violence. As the project evolves, our partner's plan is to raise awareness and engage authorities around the need for better referral systems and services for victims; a goal we will be working on together throughout 2024 and 2025.



A workshop with the support group "Among Friends", where the participants focused on themes of self-esteem and gratitude.

© Pastoral Social Caritas Diocese of Verapaz

How we work in partnership

Climate change, poverty and insecurity are global problems that affect us in different ways depending on where and how we live. At CAFOD, as an agency that draws directly from the teachings of the Church, we recognise that we are all interconnected as part of Creation. For this reason, we cannot limit ourselves to work on each problem in isolation - we must tackle these complex issues from multiple angles.

For example, all our projects in Guatemala, as well as in Honduras and El Salvador, are designed around the four key approaches of our Central America Programme:



Agroecology

Promoting sustainable farming, strengthening of smallholder farmers...



Gender inclusion

Training, promoting equal gender roles, championing women-led movements...



Human rights

Fostering social dialogue to increase communities' access to common goods...

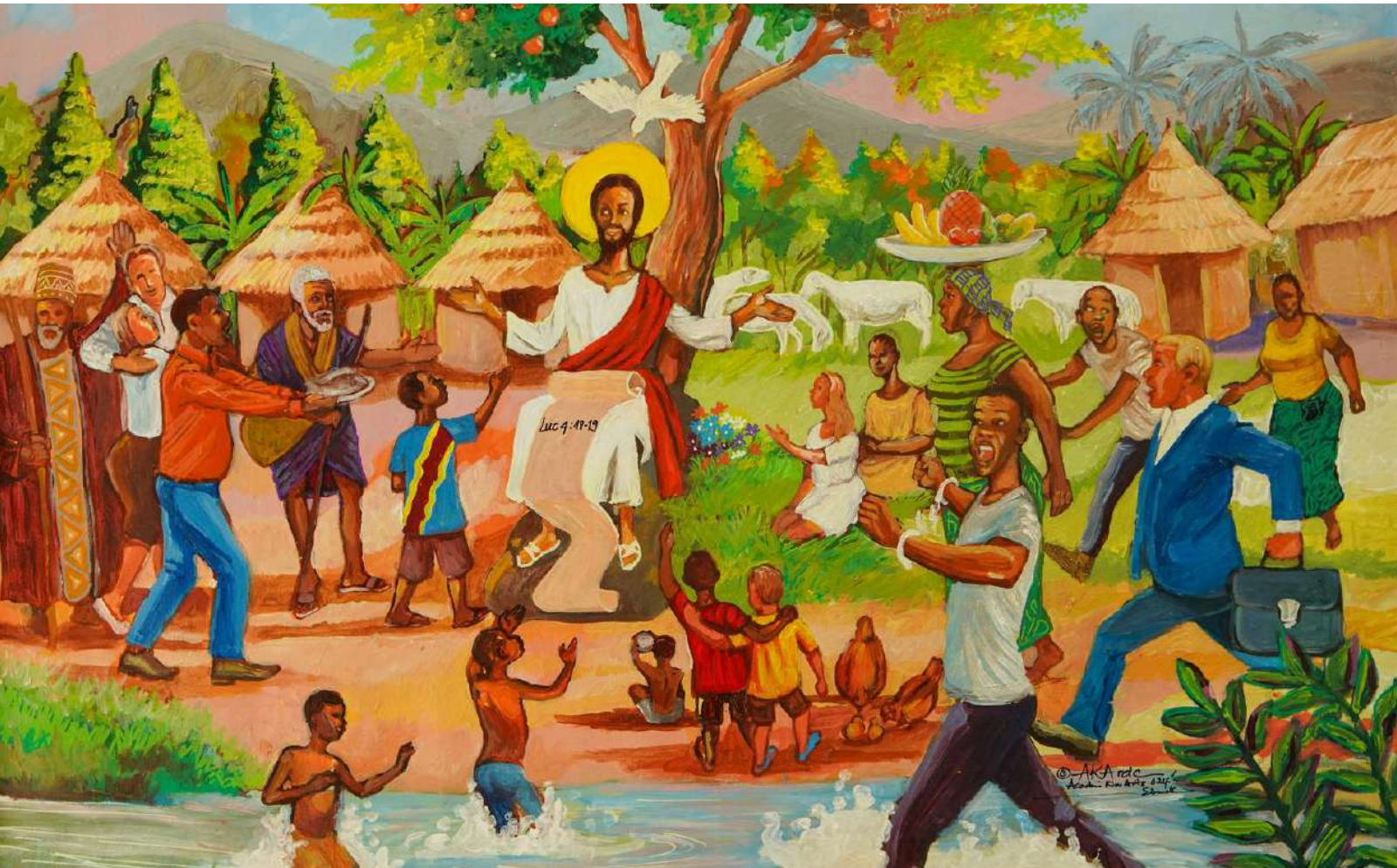


Emergency response

Helping communities prepare and become more resilient to climactic shocks...

We can make these different approaches work in tandem because our relationship with our partners is, and always has been, based on mutual learning and trust.

Each of our programmes is adapted to the needs and realities of each region; here we have presented you with examples to illustrate what this looks like in places like Guatemala, Bangladesh, Syria and more. If you would like to learn more about our programmes and the activities of our partners, please do not hesitate to reach out. We'll be delighted to have a conversation and help you dig deeper.



Christ the Liberator, a painting commissioned for the Jubilee Year 2025 from Académie Kivu Arts "AKA" in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo.

**None of our programmes would be possible without our supporters – from individuals at their parish, to families, companies or institutions, all of you keep this work in motion.
Thank you!**

Major Gifts and Philanthropy Team

If you'd like to know more about the best ways to support CAFOD with a major donation or grant, you can contact us at:

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☎ 020 7733 7900

**no one
beyond reach**