

AUTUMN 2022

# Walking **TOGETHER**

THE NEWSLETTER OF FOOD  
FOR THE HUNGRY UK





## A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity. Proverbs 17:17

FH staff working in their vulnerable local communities are our brothers and sisters in Christ. They do extraordinary work in this time of adversity, brought about by Covid, conflict and climate change. We are privileged to work with them to see lives and communities transformed.

I hope the articles in this newsletter give you a sense of the determination and commitment of FH staff to follow Jesus, fight the ravages of poverty and help bring transformation.

Northern Ethiopia is one of the areas in which we work. It is in crisis due to conflict and drought. Our Ethiopian country director, Trish Okenge writes...

*"Please take a moment to pray for these FH Ethiopia team members who have sacrificed so much, invested so deeply, and given so freely so that FH's response to human suffering can be visible. Many of our staff have not been paid for 5 months as a result of no cash access, yet they continue to forge on to do whatever they can. I am truly grateful and humbled by their service."*

We pray: "Lord, please protect and provide for the Ethiopia team as they seek to serve you in adversity."

*Ian Johnson*

**Food for the Hungry UK - 10 Chiltern Hills Road, Beaconsfield, HP9 1PJ**

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We are a Christian international development organisation that has been walking with the poor globally since 1971. We tackle the root causes in order to graduate communities out of poverty.

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## FH Ethiopia staff provide food in the mist of conflict

The conflict in northern Ethiopia has displaced nearly 2 million people, making an already dire food situation all the more precarious. The effects of drought and a changing climate only add to the pain and suffering. Supply routes have been cut, leaving people without any food access for more than a year. Almost 30 million people have been identified as needing humanitarian assistance.

But a daring team of members from Food for the Hungry (FH) and participants from our partner Catholic Relief Services and UN agencies worked behind the scenes with authorities from both sides of the conflict to ensure that food assistance could reach some of the most remote areas.

### A visitor to staff in Tigray writes:

*"As I visited our operational locations, I came across stories of staff dedication and commitment that broke my heart wide open. Despite FH not being up to date on its salary payments as a result of the frozen banking system and insufficient cash being carried into the region, FH staff consistently contributes a percentage of whatever they receive directly to our protection*



*project activities that have not been adequately funded. Because of budget cuts, two of the Women and Girls Friendly Spaces were closed yet instead of seeing these community members go without services, our ex-staff members continue to keep the centres open by volunteering their time and talents daily.*

*In all that they do, FH staff pursues beauty, goodness and truth, despite regularly being confronted by the ugly realities of suffering. They follow Jesus' example of meeting people's physical and spiritual needs."*

**Please pray for Ethiopia and FH staff in their work.**



# A trip to Burundi

*Hugh Suter and Reverend Margot Suter share their experience of visiting the Mwumba community in Burundi – a trip which was a personal pilgrimage but became so much more.*



## “Amazing, life changing, better than we could have hoped for!”

These are the words we found ourselves saying again and again on our return from Burundi when asked how the trip had been.

Definitely we were nervous before the trip. Despite a good briefing, and tips and advice a plenty we did not really know what to expect. The long aeroplane flights, climate, food and water, bugs, health and safety were big concerns but our worries were unfounded.

We coped and more importantly we fell in love with Africa; its sights, sounds and smells but most of all its people. From the

FH staff, to the inhabitants of Mwumba commune we were welcomed with joy and open heartedness. We were greeted with song and dance, smiles and waves. The two hotels and food were better than we imagined, the bugs and temperature less than we feared and the whole experience took over our hearts and minds. We pray that this is just the first of many more trips to this amazing continent.

We had a very personal reason to visit Burundi. Back in October 2014 when our son died suddenly, we nominated money raised in his name to go to FH Burundi. FH was the charity our son's church youth group had supported over the years and

it seemed fitting to us. Eight years on we felt strong enough to visit the school and the latrines that had been provided with the money raised in his memory.

What we gained from the trip was much more than our own personal pilgrimage. We were inspired visiting the many projects set up by FH to support those living in poverty in Mwumba. We were shown an extensive programme of activities which included cascade group teaching, savings groups, farming methods, compost heaps making and grain storage, sewing groups, schools, water projects and hygiene initiatives. There were personal witness stories of how the work of FH has changed the minds and attitudes of those who live in the commune. We were invited into people's homes and lives.

One of the surprises for me was how much I connected with the landscape from my childhood in the Caribbean; the banana trees and sugar cane, the red soil and green lush vegetation especially in the valley fed by a natural spring. Another was the amazing worship songs in church on the Sunday that were catchy enough for me to hum along to.

It was so obvious the Christian ethos underpinned all that is done here. FH sets out to redeem four broken relationships; with God, with each other, with ourselves, and with God's creation. All the projects addressed one or more of these goals. We have come home determined to continue to raise funds for FH Burundi particularly their newest project *Let's learn to read*, establishing community libraries where children can go and have access to reading material in Grades 1 to 3. We will spread the Good News about this marvellous charity hoping to inspire others to visit and get involved with transforming lives in Burundi.

**“What we gained from the trip was so much more than our own personal pilgrimage.”**



# Let's **L**earn to read

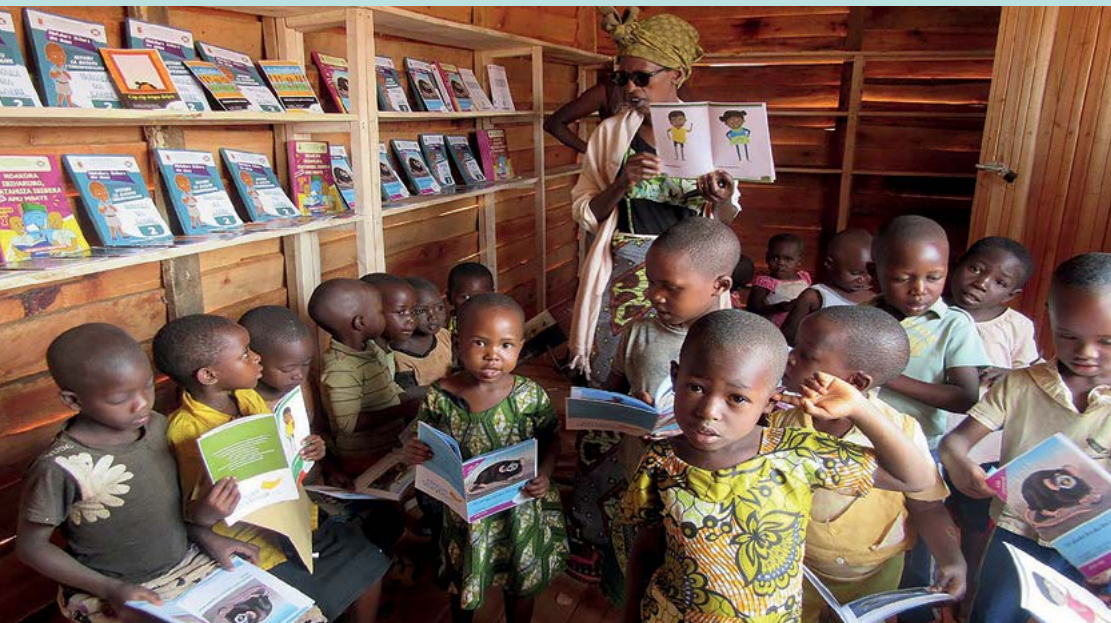
**I had to give them another text of my choice, because I did not believe what I was hearing'. Their reading was 'far better than that of our secondary school students'.**

Those were the words of Primary School Principal Cédar Sengoro from Muhuzu School, Burundi following the Let's Learn to Read pilot project in 2021. Reading levels of children in Grades 1 to 3 in his school had improved so much following the FH Burundi project, that he thought they were tricking him!

Unfortunately, not all children have access to quality teaching and books needed to acquire these foundational skills. And nowhere is this more evident than in Burundi, where FH Burundi found in a recent assessment that only 9% of 9 year-olds were able to read and correctly answer three questions about a short reading passage.

There is something that can be done. FH Burundi has piloted a 'Let's Learn to Read' programme in three Communes in Burundi, with excellent results demonstrating pupil improvement in reading skills within a short period of time. The project involves construction of community libraries, an increase in the availability of books and teacher training. 14% more children in Year 1 were able to read frequently used words, while 13% of children in Year 2 were able to read simple sentences after the pilot. FH UK is now planning to roll this project out in Mwumba Commune.

The budget for the project for a year is just under £50,000. We have raised almost £20,000 to date. We would really appreciate your support (see inside back page for how to give).



# Reconciliation and hope in Rwanda



A FACILITATOR DISCUSSING WITH SOME OF THE THIRTY PARTICIPATING CHURCH LEADERS

Following the Rwanda genocide in 1994, many people in Rwanda are still experiencing the very real impacts of trauma. Food for the Hungry have been implementing an important project working with church leaders to train them in ways they can support their congregations and communities through a process of reconciliation. A group of thirty church leaders came together to work through a process of healing and reconciliation, giving an opportunity for them to begin to work through their own trauma as well as learning Biblically based techniques for ministering to their congregations.

One pastor said *"It is my first time to have my tears out; before I thought I was going mad, but I realised that the seminar touched where I haven't been able to support myself. I feel relieved and don't want to stop here, I am committing to expand the same ministry across my geographical limit including my church."*

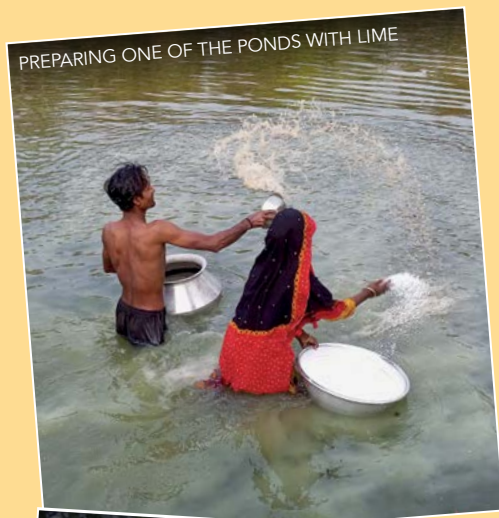
The process also gave some church leaders who were related to genocide perpetrators the opportunity to ask for and receive forgiveness from survivors.

Food for the Hungry will continue to support these church leaders as they go back to their communities and begin to work on healing and reconciliation in their churches.

After the workshop, one attendee said *"For long time, we have considered reconciliation as the responsibility of government only, we did not consider our role; but with this meeting, I am awakened, the church has to intervene, reconciliation is within the mission of the church, yet we were ignorant of it."*

Please pray for these church leaders as they begin the important task of walking with their congregations through this vital process, and for the FH staff in Rwanda as they explore possibilities to roll this work out to other churches in the country.

# Sustainable Fisheries project, Barinda, west-central Bangladesh



PREPARING ONE OF THE PONDS WITH LIME

January 2022 saw the start of a new Sustainable Fisheries project in two indigenous communities - Godagari and Tanore upazilas, Barinda town, Rajshahi Region, west-central Bangladesh. Funded by the Faroese Government, the aim of the two-year project is to improve the quality of life, health and economic status of 2,000 indigenous people, through livelihood diversification, improved nutrition and the empowerment of women.

For the first time in Godagari and Tanore upazilas, women and men have been given the opportunity to access ponds and start breeding fingerlings – mainly different types of carp, and monosex tilapia. Beneficiaries have been equipped with nets, bamboos, boats, bowls, plastic drums and cold boxes. Already this year, fish have been harvested, and beneficiary households have been able to consume fish, adding an essential source of protein to their otherwise somewhat bland diet of rice and lentils.

Rising inflation and commodity prices this year have meant those living on minimal daily wages, have been plunged into ever deepening poverty in countries like Bangladesh. In July 2022, Dr Khaleda Islam, the Director of the Institute of Nutrition and Food Science at Dhaka University stated that 'Protein is now the biggest deficit due to inconsistent price increases compared to income'. This 'protein poverty' renders this project as important as ever, and the extra fish protein, alongside vegetable



VEGETABLES WHICH ARE GROWN NEXT TO THE PONDS ARE REDUCING RATES OF MALNUTRITION

production next to the ponds, will be essential to reducing rates of malnutrition in Godagari and Tanore.

Women's empowerment through training in marketing and financial management is

also central to the project. This, together with improving access to local markets, and increasing production of fish-based foods such as fish rolls and fish fingers, will be the focus of Year 2, in 2023.

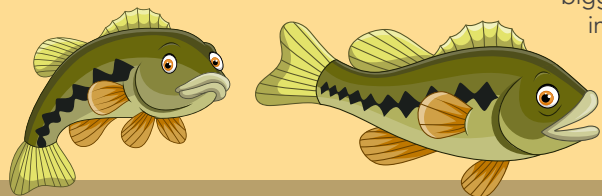


FEEDING THE FISH

WATER QUALITY IS REGULARLY TESTED



RELEASING THE FISH 'FRY'



# The hardest 100: the Chiltern Beast!

Many thanks to all sponsors who supported Giles Scott on his bike ride on 17 July. This raised a total of £1,536 for Food for the Hungry's "Let's Learn to Read" project in Burundi.

Giles was riding the Chiltern Beast - an organised event 108 miles long with more than 7,000 feet of ascent. Starting and finishing at Watlington, the route included numerous steep climbs along the edge of the Chiltern escarpment between Ivinghoe at the north end of the route and Whitchurch-on-Thames to the south. It took him 7 hours and 43 minutes, finishing in 30°C. It was a hot as well as tiring day!

We really appreciate all donations. Thank you once again.

Please do get in touch with Ian Johnson if you'd like to complete a sponsored event

Tel: **07527 058396**

Email: **ijohnson@fh.org**



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Cheques should be made payable to Food for the Hungry UK and sent to us at 10 Chiltern Hills Road, Beaconsfield, HP9 1PJ

If you would like to make a direct transfer, our bank details are;

Barclays Bank - Account name: FHUK Sort Code: 20-62-53 Account No: 40359173

Please also email us at [uk@fh.org](mailto:uk@fh.org) to let us know your donation is on its way.

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*giftaid it*

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