



Effectiveness Report 2021



The sound of Jubilee

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Tearfund would like to thank our partners not only for their wonderful work in communities over the past year, but also in collecting the key information for this report. We would also like to thank Tracy Douglas, a volunteer intern with our International Program Team in 2021, who collated and analysed the data, and wrote a significant amount of this report.



Key numbers

We are pleased to report the numbers of people that have been impacted by the work of our partners over the past financial year, while acknowledging the limitations of this form of measurement alone. We hope that the case studies in this report bring some of the numbers to life, and that through these stories from our project areas and partners we can see God at work.

There are challenges in calculating the exact number of people involved in projects implemented by Tearfund's partners. Many people who are involved in our partners' projects aren't formally counted, and others may be involved in different aspects of the same project. We also recognise that knowing the number of people impacted by our partners' work doesn't mean we understand the quality or effectiveness of the work. Nevertheless, it does provide an indication of the scale of

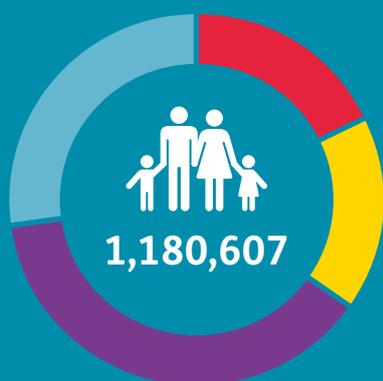
the work that Tearfund supports, and this is useful to provide context within which further assessments of effectiveness can be analysed and explored.

The numbers we present are provided by Tearfund partners in their annual progress reports. As much as possible, we have sought to assess areas of possible duplication, or figures in which the indirectness of an impact or involvement was too great to include.

Over the 2020-21 year the following people were directly involved in, or impacted by, the projects supported by Tearfund and implemented by Tearfund's partner organisations:



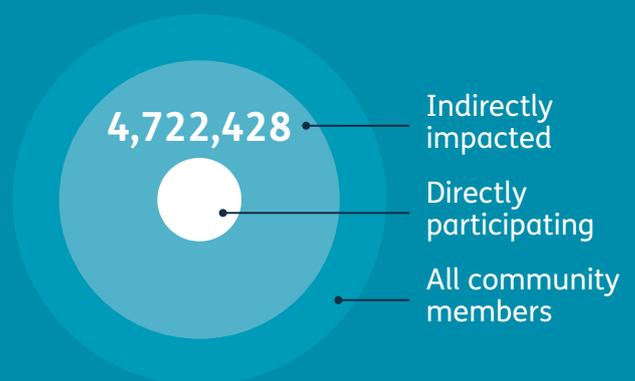
Total direct project participants:



- Men: 320,897
- Women: 453,493
- Boys: 197,295
- Girls: 208,922

People with disabilities: 13,339

Estimated number of people indirectly impacted by our partners' work:

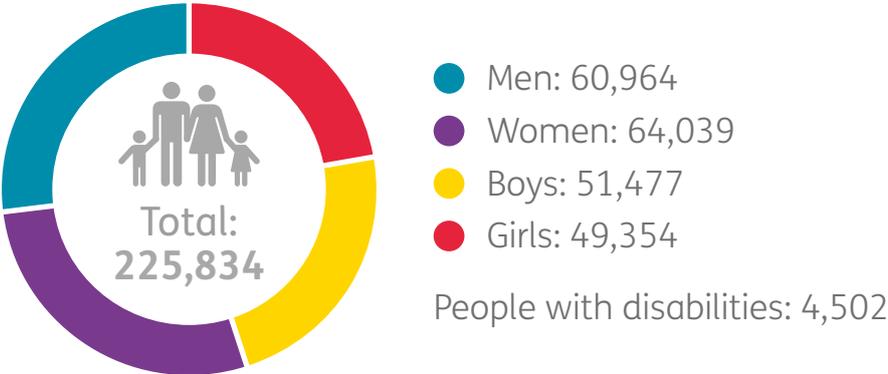


In addition to each person directly impacted or involved in the work, it is estimated that at least a further four people are impacted, either through being household or family members, or through the links within the communities that are developed through project activities.



Reflection on COVID-19

The number of people directly involved in projects supporting COVID-19 mitigation and recovery:



The COVID-19 pandemic has turned the world upside down, disrupting the ways people work, learn, play, worship and socialise. For people living in poor and disadvantaged communities, the disruption of COVID-19 has been devastating. The pandemic has exacerbated inequalities, disproportionately impacting the world’s most vulnerable people and communities. For the first time in over 20 years, global poverty is rising.

This past year has seen Tearfund’s partners continuing to work among some of the poorest and most marginalised communities in the world, many of which are not only dealing with the pandemic’s effects but are also being impacted by ongoing or worsening conflict, and climate disasters. Partners share stories of increasing poverty and exploitation, as well as pain, loss, and grief, both in their communities and personally. Some partners have been directly affected by the pandemic, with staff and their family members ill and, in some cases, dying

from COVID-19. Yet, by God’s grace, partners also tell stories of hope, life, and new opportunities.

Despite the challenges, Tearfund’s partners have faithfully continued their life-changing work. Many projects have been disrupted by both the pandemic itself and by government responses in the form of lockdowns and travel restrictions. Overall, Tearfund’s partners have adapted to these challenges, with many being proactive in initiating COVID-19 awareness and prevention activities in their communities. Longer-term development work within communities has been adapted with COVID-safe practices or to include an element of COVID-19 response within their activities. In countries such as India, Nepal and Somalia, partners have been directly invited to participate in governments’ COVID-19 responses, reflecting the overwhelming challenges faced by governments as well as the important role of civil society in addressing the pandemic and other disasters.



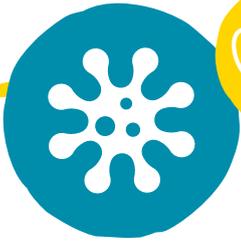
Produce for market, Cachar District, North East India. Photo credit: NEICORD Staff

Tearfund's partners have demonstrated adaptive leadership, pulling together their knowledge of the communities in which they work with their own organisational strengths to offer creative solutions to the complex problems presented by COVID-19. For example:

In Afghanistan, one of Tearfund's partners identified that families who contracted COVID-19 were not coping with the illness and related stressors. They utilised their existing mental health program to provide online counselling services to these families (a total of 3,029 people). Because the counselling was moved online it was significantly cheaper, and people who would normally not be able to afford these services were able to access vital mental health support. Similarly, CMC Nepal implemented tele-psychiatry and tele-counselling for its clients with mental health conditions when COVID-19 restrictions limited physical contact.

In India, when self-help group (SHG) members were unable to sell their produce due to travel restrictions, our partner North East India Committee on Relief and Development (NEICORD) advocated to the Agriculture Officer and Deputy Commissioner who arranged a buyer to collect the products from the villages. This enabled the produce to be sold at market, securing an income for the SHG members throughout the lockdown.

Emmanuel Hospital Association (EHA) in India started a tailoring centre for 12 students as part of an income-generating project. In response to COVID-19, the students and other volunteers were taught to make cloth masks. So far, 1,100 masks have been sold to NGOs and government departments, meeting a need for PPE for these workers while providing income to the project participants.



Community awareness campaign on COVID-19 prevention, in the district of Govuro, Mozambique. Photo credit: RCHS staff

Reformed Open Community Schools (ROCS) in Zambia integrated COVID-19 training into health counselling. For example, almost 2,000 women received nutrition and infectious disease counselling on topics such as malnutrition, diarrhoea, malaria, HIV and AIDS and COVID-19 to promote healthy growth for their children. ROCS also utilised their radio series to disseminate information about COVID-19.

In Mozambique, partner Rede Cristã Contra HIV e Sida (RCHS) reactivated 21 members of their disaster risk reduction committees to conduct COVID-19 awareness raising activities in local communities to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Tearfund's partners were also creative on social media to spread COVID-19 awareness messaging:

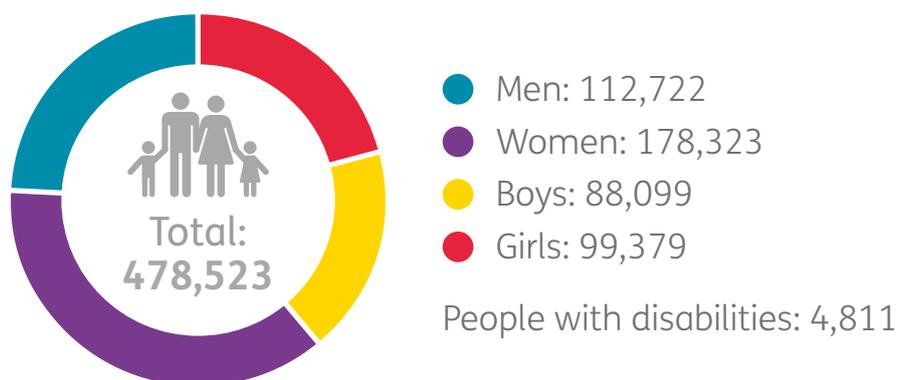
In Ethiopia, a partner conducted a creative social media campaign asking church leaders to share a photo of themselves wearing a face mask to promote this as a COVID-19 prevention practice in their local communities. Cambodian Hope Organisation (CHO) also added COVID-19 prevention to its climate change, gender equality, disability, anti-trafficking, and anti-domestic violence training to increase awareness in the villages it serves. In India, our partner EFICOR utilised WhatsApp to disseminate COVID-19 prevention information to project participants.

Sustainable Development Goal 1



End Poverty

The number of people directly involved in projects targeting SDG 1:



According to the United Nations, 2020 saw the number of people living in extreme poverty¹ increase by up to 124 million people, due mainly to the COVID-19 pandemic². COVID-19 restrictions have left communities facing high rates of unemployment, particularly for people working in the informal economy who have been left without food and basic necessities. Under extremely challenging circumstances, Tearfund's partners have continued to work towards the SDG1 goal of ending poverty. Key projects have included facilitating access to livelihoods and savings schemes, as well as building community resilience to mitigate the impacts of climate change and other natural disasters. COVID-19 has tested community resilience and, for some partners, has provided a neat alignment with existing

resilience-building and disaster preparedness programs. For many partners, projects have been disrupted or suspended by the pandemic, and partners have pivoted to provide urgent support in the form of COVID-19 awareness and education, provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as face masks, and emergency food and supplies. Many partners have demonstrated creativity and adaptive leadership, continuing to facilitate community-led development alongside emergency response activities as they balance the urgent short-term needs with the crucial long-term change required to address root causes of poverty.

¹ Extreme poverty is defined as living on less than US\$1.90 per day.

² United Nations 2021, The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021



Case study, India: **Challenges of the pandemic**

Tearfund's partner Emmanuel Hospital Association (EHA) works in 10 rural villages in Fatehpur District of Uttar Pradesh, India, strengthening the capacity of women's groups and health workers, and improving livelihoods through skills training.

COVID-19 has presented significant challenges in the villages where EHA works, with increasing unemployment due to lockdowns, exacerbated by the mass return migration of community members after losing jobs in urban areas. As schools have closed and family incomes dwindled, many families have been forced to send their children to work as labourers. School closures have also resulted in numbers of adolescent girls being married as the prospects of continuing their education reduced. Rates of domestic violence, gambling and other

addictions have increased, and there is concern about rising debt as families borrow funds to purchase food and other necessities.

COVID-19 restrictions have hampered the group meetings that are essential for EHA's capacity strengthening work. As COVID-19 restrictions eased, EHA focused on the formation of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) to facilitate capacity building and skills training. 584 participants learned about health issues, while mothers' groups were formed and trained 658 women about maternal and child health. 14 girls received training in tailoring to provide new income-generating opportunities. Although impeded by the pandemic, EHA is continuing its work to strengthen community resilience in line with the SDG 1 goal to end extreme poverty in these villages.



Mothers' Group members putting up a COVID banner at the hospital gate, Dakamela Hiospital. Photo credit: HEFO

Case study, Zimbabwe: Community resilience

Working with rural communities in Nkayi District, Zimbabwe, Tearfund's partner Health Education and Food Security Organisation (HEFO) is strengthening families and communities through training in conservation agriculture and livestock management, and the provision of reliable water through local boreholes. Food and income insecurity are consistent challenges faced by these communities and have been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent restrictions. 2020 also saw cyclones Eloise and Chalane leave a trail of destruction in the area.

Immediate needs in the community have prompted HEFO to reallocate some of its

funding from farming inputs to COVID-19 interventions such as the provision of personal protective equipment, hand sanitiser and face masks, as well as 20-litre water containers for health centres and community leaders. Women are being empowered to advocate for their rights through women's groups, with some groups engaging in discussions with Ministry of Health officials to advocate for the safety of vulnerable community members in light of COVID-19. HEFO has also set up an innovative work-for-assets scheme where farmers receive face masks, hand sanitiser and soap in exchange for work such as repairing fences around vegetable gardens.



Mrs Devi serving a customer at her grocery shop, Bihar State India. Photo credit: EFICOR Staff

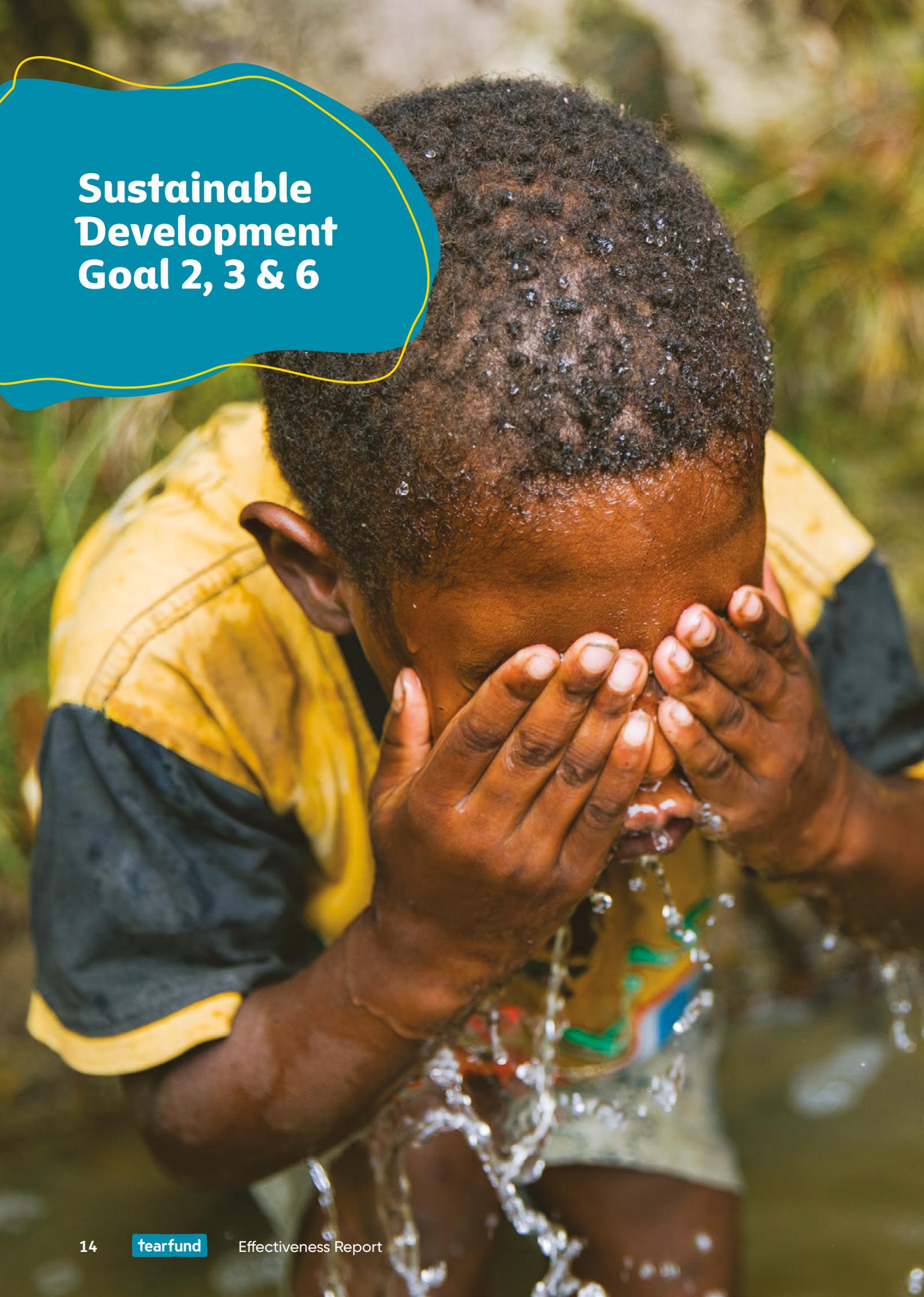
Case study, India: **Strengthening resilience – personal story**

Ramday Devi lives in Madhepur District, Madhubani, India with her four children. Her husband had to find work in Gujarat and Delhi, while Ramday worked as a daily agricultural labourer and maintained her kitchen garden to provide food for the family. However, COVID-19 left them destitute when her husband lost his job and their savings were used to survive lockdowns.

Tearfund's partner EFICOR works in Ramday Devi's district helping communities develop disaster preparedness programs in this flood-prone region. Disaster risk reduction funds have provided crucial support to families during the devastating 2020 floods and COVID-19.

Ramday Devi was provided with support to start a grocery shop in her village, and a commitment from her local Disaster Management Committee members to buy from her helped ensure the viability of this new enterprise. Her business has produced sufficient income to provide for her family even during subsequent lockdowns. Her husband has been able to remain in the village, supporting the business and undertaking agricultural labour. Ramday Devi's family is now more resilient against emergencies thanks to the commitment of EFICOR to invest in local women.

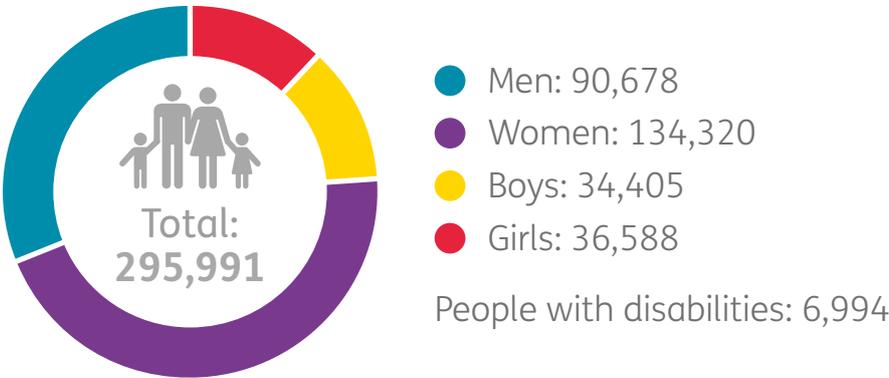




**Sustainable
Development
Goal 2, 3 & 6**

Health, Hunger & Sanitation

The number of people directly involved in projects targeting SDGs 2, 3 & 6:



At the time of printing, in November 2021, over 250 million people have been infected with COVID-19 globally, with the death toll passing 5 million people. Many health programs have been suspended as resources are diverted to address the pandemic, causing significant disruption to services for maternal and child health, HIV and AIDs, childhood vaccinations and others. While sanitation programs have been prioritised due to the pandemic, over 2 billion people still lack basic hand washing facilities and 1.7 billion lack basic sanitation¹. Meanwhile, almost a third of the world's population (2.37 billion people) experienced food insecurity in 2020², with increases attributed to the economic impacts of COVID-19.

Tearfund's partners have experienced significant loss, including illness and deaths from COVID-19 amongst their staff and families and in the communities where they work. COVID-19 has stretched resources but also fuelled innovation to adapt programs to ensure both the urgent and ongoing health, hunger and sanitation needs of communities are addressed. Partners have described lessons they have learned around adapting to changing needs in communities, upskilling staff such as in the use of digital platforms for communication, and the importance of empowering people to access their rights to reduce their dependence on outside support. Relationships have been strengthened between partners, government and community leaders as they collaborate to confront substantial challenges in line with SDGs 2, 3 and 6.

² United Nations 2021, The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021

³ United Nations 2021, The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021



Case study, Afghanistan: **Community development project – key learning**

One of Tearfund's partners in Afghanistan works in Ghor, Lal, Afghanistan providing support to local communities to address problems related to unsafe water, poor hygiene and sanitation, food insecurity and pregnancy complications. The outbreak of COVID-19 has hindered significant aspects of their work, forcing them to scale back some projects and adjust others to the new conditions.

Despite the challenges, there have been some significant learnings for Tearfund's partner. For example, the BLISS (Birth Life Saving Skills) and nutrition courses were conducted in smaller groups in line with social distancing and other COVID-19 prevention requirements. The local women teachers found the smaller class sizes enriched the quality of the courses and now plan to conduct this training with smaller groups in the future.

The partner's relationship with line agencies, local NGOs and community leaders has been also strengthened as they have collaborated to raise awareness about COVID-19, distributing information posters to people in 65 villages,

and encouraging people to wear masks, wash their hands and maintain social distancing. They also collaborated to provide COVID-19 children's booklets to 483 children, hygiene kits to 231 families impacted by poverty, and personal protective equipment kits to all public and private health facilities and pharmacies in Lal district.

Sadly, the pandemic has meant some areas of the partner's program were unable to continue, including the follow-up of pregnant women and children who had been identified as malnourished, leaving them at risk. While the agricultural training was also disrupted, some previous participants continued to purchase seeds and grow vegetables themselves. The partner's staff were encouraged to see people taking the initiative to apply the practices they had learned.

Many of the partner's staff and their families contracted COVID-19. Thankfully, they have recovered, but it is a timely reminder of the challenges faced by Tearfund's partners as they continue their work in hard places.

Case study, Pakistan: **Behavioural change**

Tearfund partner Rural Emerging Approach to Community Health (REACH) works amongst poor and marginalised communities in 45 villages in Sindh province, Pakistan. Integrating COVID-19 prevention strategies into their existing water, sanitation and hygiene awareness training proved an effective way to continue their work on preventing the spread of communicable diseases, including COVID-19. In all, 90% of women and children, and 60% of men in the villages attended these sessions.

Fear of COVID-19 motivated many community members to install tippy taps (for hand washing), with village women and children also teaching neighbouring villages how to install tippy taps and wash their hands with soap. The 45 water groups established by REACH have actively addressed water shortages, installing hand pumps, water filters and water storage tanks, while community members have built latrines and fuel-efficient stoves to improve community health.

Sadly, this region was devastated by severe floods due to heavy monsoon rains in 2020, with all of the project participants displaced, livelihoods lost and risk of communicable disease such as malaria increased. REACH staff delivered urgent food relief to needy households during lockdowns and during the floods, despite the risks to themselves.

Many communities had to rebuild homes, tippy taps, and latrines. Significantly, REACH has seen changes in these communities' behaviours to promote healthy practices (clean water, hand washing, use of latrines and smoke-free stoves) as well as resilient leadership of community members to rebuild and to share their knowledge and skills with neighbouring villages for sustainable change.



Case Study, Somalia: Mental health and psychosocial support

The prevalence of distress and/or mental illness in Somalia is high. Insecurity, displacement, trauma, poverty, unemployment, and substance abuse are some of the determinants. Mental health services and supports in Somalia are insufficient and often seen as specialist, however increasing evidence shows that mental health should be integrated into primary health care as well as other sectors such as education, gender, livelihoods, protection and human rights. Tearfund's partner Medair has recently incorporated mental health and psychosocial support services into their health programs.

Medair has a multi-layered approach which involves both delivering basic mental health services at clinics and strengthening community level supports. Medair's trained staff and volunteers support communities through their network of Care Groups. Psychological first aid and supportive communication skills are facilitated in order to raise awareness of mental health and encourage healthy coping skills. People who need further support are referred to health centres.

Ongoing discussions with communities help to increase understanding about mental health, which also helps in reducing stigma. The Care Groups provide safe social spaces where women are able to share their experiences and support each other.

Halima* says: "I fled the war in 2017; I lost everything and left some of my belongings. Before the war... I used to provide for my family and I had livestock, but the war made me the poorest person; I never thought I would need to borrow food for my children. We have passed a lot of sad situations in life and if we don't talk about it, everything sad that happens remains in our heart and causes stress and mental illness. We are very grateful to Medair and also the community volunteers who provide us with support and information. It will not bring our life back to normal but at least we can cope with the current situation."

**name changed*

SDG 2, 3 & 6
**Health, Hunger
and Sanitation**

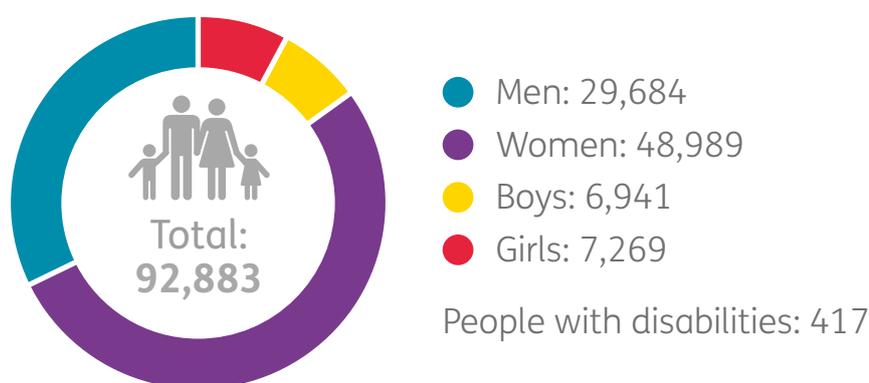


Sustainable Development Goal 5



Gender Equality

The number of people directly involved in projects targeting SDG 5:



Tearfund has long supported the empowerment of women, recognising the significant changes that occur in communities when women find their voice and advocate for their rights and the rights of others. COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted women, who are over-represented in informal work, have greater care responsibilities for children and the elderly, and represent the majority of the healthcare workforce, placing them at greater risk of contracting COVID-19. Restrictions such as lockdowns have increased rates of violence against women, and girls are at greater risk of exploitation and early marriage due to school closures¹.

Women's empowerment remains a key focus for many of Tearfund's partners who continue to train women in understanding and advocating for their rights in their homes and communities.

In some cases, COVID-19 has presented an opportunity for women to speak up and bring about change as they work together in self-help groups (SHGs) and community based organisations (CBOs). For others, SHGs have struggled to survive lockdowns and social gathering restrictions, while SHG savings have depleted due to urgent needs, jeopardising future economic opportunities. Where lockdowns and restrictions have prevented SHGs from meeting, many women have missed the opportunity to meet together for support and encouragement. The aim of SHG approaches is to build sustainable and strong community-level groups that can be led and directed by the participants and members themselves, so it is expected that as restrictions ease, groups will meet again and continue to use the skills and knowledge that they have learned together.

¹ United Nations 2021, The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021



Case study, Myanmar: **Women's empowerment**

Tearfund's partner Precious Stones focuses its work in Myanmar on empowering women through social and economic development within self-help groups (SHGs). These SHGs benefit women in many ways. For example, women develop confidence to raise issues of concern in their communities and identify solutions; they can receive training in health, rights, vocational skills and leadership skills; and they can participate in group savings plans to provide loans for income-generating activities or funds to support families through hardship.

For the people of Myanmar, the outbreak of COVID-19 has been complicated by ongoing conflict and instability, increasing poverty and disruptions to everyday life. Through these challenges, Precious Stones has continued to provide training to SHG leaders on subjects such as gender-based violence prevention, disaster risk reduction and reproductive awareness. As COVID-19 increasingly impacted local communities, Precious Stones identified and responded to a need to include COVID-19 prevention training, as well as training on using mobile technologies to communicate effectively during lockdowns. As such, 43 SHG leaders were trained. These women leaders then mobilised

365 women to lead awareness-raising activities to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in their local communities at a time when Precious Stones and other NGOs could not access the area due to COVID-19 restrictions.

These local women's groups became a focal point for community COVID-19 responses as they worked alongside local authorities and community leaders to provide information to community members and used their group savings to distribute emergency food relief. Some even received training to make hand sanitiser gel. Through this challenging time, the response and leadership of women in the SHGs has demonstrated the value of investing in empowering women for change in their communities. However, significant challenges remain. The pandemic continues to sweep through Myanmar with increasing COVID-19 illnesses and deaths, including family members of Precious Stones staff. Women's small businesses, started through SHG loans, have closed, and many SHGs have used up their savings and emergency funds as they have provided basic food and support for health care for affected families. The situation in Myanmar remains dire.

Case study, Ethiopia: Impact of COVID-19 on self-help groups

Tearfund Ireland partners with Tearfund Australia to empower vulnerable rural communities in southern Ethiopia to build sustainable livelihoods through climate-smart agriculture, diversified income sources, and self-help groups (SHGs). The SHGs each comprise 15 to 20 women, and provide opportunity for them to jointly save, receive loans to invest in new business enterprises, and join together to advocate for their rights.

The arrival of COVID-19 to the region had significant repercussions for the SHGs. Social distancing requirements limited the ability of some groups to gather, while others had to meet in smaller groups, often outside, to comply with COVID-19 restrictions. Many of the women's small businesses struggled with lack of customers and falling incomes, resulting in some business failures. At the same time, food prices escalated and additional items such as soap and face masks were needed, further straining family finances. As a result, group members were unable to maintain their savings contributions and SHGs were providing additional loans for members to purchase food for their families, rather than investing in income-generating activities. This period saw a decline in SHG members as people relocated looking for work

or cheaper accommodation and, sadly, some members became ill and died from COVID-19. Nearly 40 SHGs closed due to an inability of members to save because of COVID-19.

Regardless, most SHGs are continuing, with some members successfully diversifying their income streams thanks to the capacity strengthening training they received through the project. Other groups have created social funds in addition to the usual weekly savings to serve as insurance against emergencies. This access to loans makes SHG members more resilient to shocks compared with other community members.

Meanwhile, the fight against COVID-19 has been challenged by lack of information exacerbated by poor literacy, language diversity, low internet coverage, and political instability. SHG members were intentionally trained in COVID-19 prevention and involved in sharing this with neighbours and other community members. Every SHG member was expected to convey COVID-19 messages to at least five people in their community. Overall, COVID-19 has tested the strength of the SHG network to manage emergencies and has demonstrated the resilience of the women who make up these groups.

Sustainable Development Goal 13



Climate Action

Renew Our World: the global church advocating together

Renew Our World is a global Christian movement and campaign that has a vision for a fair and sustainable world in which love for neighbour and care of Creation go hand in hand.

The strategic aim of Renew Our World is to help the church join the climate and environment movement. The church is the world's biggest network: in many countries it's a majority, in many others it's an influential minority, and in many strategic countries the evangelical church is more likely to support leaders who block action on climate and the environment than leaders who support them. Therefore we seek to make evangelical Christians aware of the urgency and importance of the climate and environmental crises, to understand the aspects of their faith that impel them to take action, and to build their ability to change lifestyles, social norms, and political space for change.

A good range of groups have joined the campaign, with international networks the World Evangelical Alliance, the Anglican Alliance, and A Rocha International, and national expressions in 20 countries north and south, and in each continent. They were attracted by international solidarity, speaking

to evangelical Christians in terms of their faith, combining care for the environment with overcoming poverty and injustice, mobilising activists – particularly young people – in a movement with momentum of its own, persuading Christian influencers to give a lead to reach many people, a decentralised structure, and sharing ideas, resources, and support to build each other up and increase our impact.

Tearfund Australia leads Renew Our World in Australia and has been part of the movement since its inception. Renew Our World and climate justice is a Tearfund strategic driver and is the focus of our work on SDG13. Tearfund Australia is active in leadership in the Renew Our World global movement, which now extends across 20 countries and includes a growing number of Tearfund family members, as well as our partner EFICOR in India.



Since March 2017 Renew Our World as a global movement have succeeded in:

- engaging people in many countries to take nearly 350,000 lifestyle and political actions
- setting up national expressions in 20 countries
- engaging 400 Christian influencers to speak up on climate and the environment
- equipping 2,334 activists to organise others to take action
- winning 43 policy and practice changes.

We plan to keep building the strength and size of our movement over the next three years, with:

- more training, resources and support for national expressions
- more national expressions
- more engagement with evangelical Christian leaders and influencers to speak up

- more theological and practical support for the next generation of evangelical Christian leaders and influencers
- more mobilising, connecting and equipping young people to raise their voices and tell their stories, with growing international links and unity
- more lifestyle and political impact.

The global campaign has responded to the pandemic and focused this year on the intersection between COVID-19 and climate change. This has been expressed in different forms in various country contexts, and a lobbying delegation represented the global church policy asks at the UN Climate talks, COP26 in Glasgow. 2021 saw a wonderful global collaboration between Renew Our World global and The Justice Conference global to bring together teaching and resources around these two themes that are so pressing in our world today.

Visit renewourworld.net



Students campaigning for climate action.
Photo credit: Renew Our World

In Australia, Renew Our World's twin focus on COVID and climate justice has been expressed in Tearfund's For All Creation Campaign, including Christians Together for Climate lobbying and advocacy on rebuilding aid, holding to Australia's Paris Agreement promises and End COVID For All campaign.

Tearfund's For All Creation campaign invited to sign the Call For All Creation petition to urge Australia's leaders to stand with our most vulnerable neighbours to end and recover from the pandemic; reset the path to end poverty; and build a sustainable future for all creation.

The campaign toolkit contains resources to help supporters to learn more and engage others in prayer and action For All Creation. The campaign has also mobilised Christians to take action by providing resources and webinars on how to have helpful conversations about climate change, and the launch of the For All Creation Leadership Cohort, a year-long learning and action community to empower grassroots leaders with the skills they need to lead climate justice action within their faith community.

Visit tearfund.org.au/forallcreation

Case study, Malawi: Campaigning against plastic

In 2019 Renew Our World Malawi won a Supreme Court case to keep Malawi's plastic ban. This ruling followed two injunctions imposed on the ban after plastic manufacturers appealed to the high court, citing "infringement of business rights." We campaigned hard with petitions, marches and campaign litter-picks drawing attention to the problem of plastic

waste, got good media coverage from radio and newspapers, and also hired a private lawyer to supplement the government legal team.

Following the ban we campaigned for the government to uphold it, and visited supermarkets giving them certificates of compliance.



Core Humanitarian Standard self-assessment

In 2021, Tearfund Australia was proud to be the first Australian-based NGO to achieve a validated self-assessment against the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS).

Tearfund signed on as a full member of the CHS Alliance in 2016. The CHS Alliance is a global movement of organisations committed to making aid work better for people, putting people at the centre of humanitarian and development action.

The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability is a set of nine commitments to people affected by crisis, stating what they can expect from organisations and individuals delivering humanitarian assistance. The CHS facilitates greater accountability to people affected by crisis: knowing what humanitarian organisations have committed to enables people to hold organisations to account.





Self-assessment process

Tearfund Australia commenced our first CHS self-assessment in late 2020, starting with all staff education on the CHS commitments and the verification process. Following this we did a comprehensive documentation review of our policies and procedures and engaged staff in surveys:

- 26 Tearfund and partner staff across 9 countries (including Australia)

The community responses included:

- 96 community members
- in 4 countries
- with 4 partner organisations

Important learnings

The Core Humanitarian Standard self-assessment has been an important learning tool to help Tearfund Australia understand our strengths and weaknesses in our development

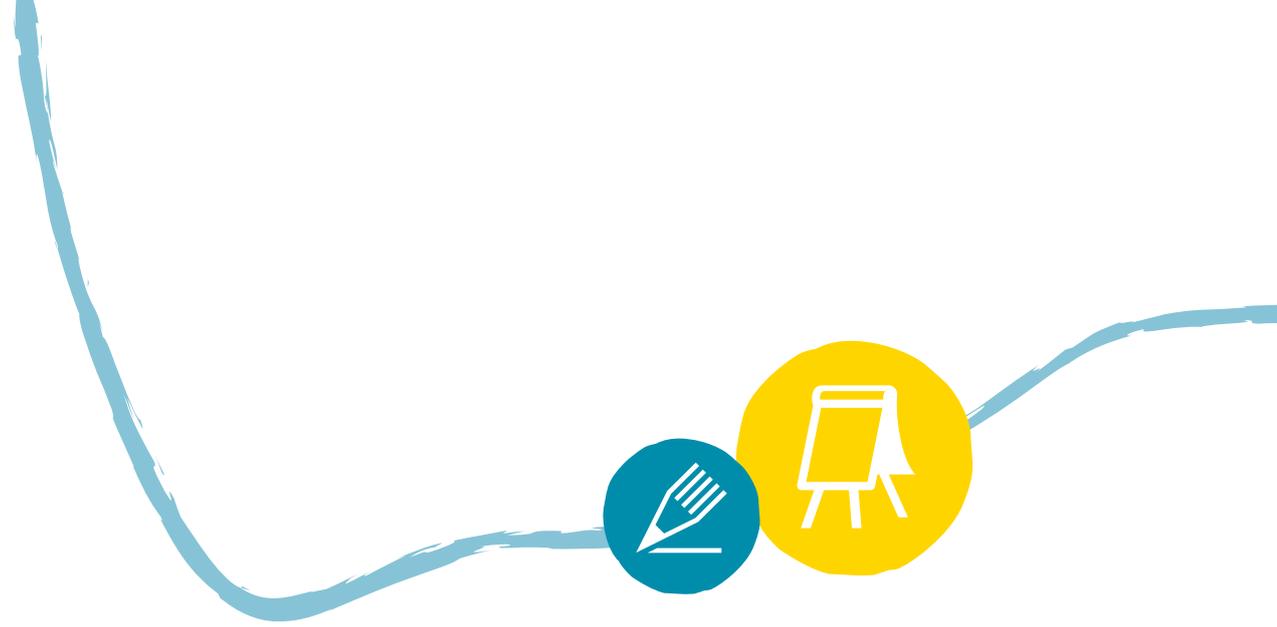
and humanitarian response, see how partners and communities see us and help us understand how we score against a well-recognised global standard.

Strengths

Tearfund Australia exceeded the global benchmark for seven out of the nine commitments, against the existing results of 109 organisations to have completed the verification.

- Tearfund's scores reflected strengths in providing a timely and sufficient response to humanitarian concerns, as well as strengths in monitoring, evaluation and learning around effectiveness.
- Tearfund showed strengths in developing local capacity and empowering local leadership to increase resilience.
- The performance indicators highlight strengths in protection mainstreaming, which includes protections for people receiving aid.
- Scores reflected great results around sharing of learning within partner networks and within the sector from Tearfund Australia.
- Commitment Eight was Tearfund's strongest result, reflecting a capable and effective workforce supported by high-quality policies which have been implemented throughout the organisation.
- Commitment Nine was the second highest result for Tearfund, reflecting strong processes within our management system to ensure that resources are managed efficiently.





Weaknesses

Tearfund's weaknesses were most reflected in our scores around documentation of policy. The gaps in documentation do not appear to impact the quality of Tearfund's work, but rather indicate that common understanding about the way we operate is held within staff, partners and the relationships between them. There is a high reliance on a small number of key documents that have served us well in the past, but with increased program and operating complexity, we recognise the need to expand our policies and guidelines in certain areas to better document our processes and understanding.

- Commitment Four was Tearfund's overall lowest scoring commitment, reflecting

weakness and gaps in policy around information sharing with communities to demonstrate a culture of open communication. The lack of policy or documentary guidance doesn't appear to be evident at a project or community level, with strong scores in the three performance indicators for this commitment.

- Commitment Five is focused on complaints and feedback mechanisms within communities. While Tearfund has these in place at an organisational level, we will continue to work with our partners to see these in use and accessible to communities our partners are working with.

Improvement Plan

To seek improvements in key areas, Tearfund has created a two-year improvement plan. The plan outlines how we will work towards applying the CHS Commitments in an exemplary way across the organisation

and organisational systems. Many of the improvement tasks scheduled for 2021-22 fulfil the dual purpose of strengthening processes for both our DFAT accreditation process and improved CHS compliance.



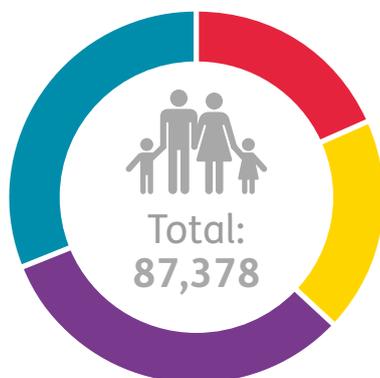
CHS SELF-ASSESSMENT

VALID FROM MAY 2021 UNTIL MAY 2023

Tearfund Australia

Tearfund Australia's Validated CHS Self-Assessment Stamp 2021

Tearfund's Humanitarian Response and Organisational Capacity Strengthening in 2020-21



- Men: 26,850
- Women: 27,823
- Boys: 16,373
- Girls: 16,332

People with disabilities: 1,117



What Tearfund has learned through COVID-19

Just as Tearfund's partners have had to adapt and respond to the changing context and environment that COVID-19 has brought, Tearfund itself has also had to consider new ways of working. Initially, as COVID-19 forced the end of travel and brought in lockdowns in different countries, including Australia, activities such as evaluations and project monitoring were put on hold. As the period of travel restrictions extended and it became apparent that the situation was not going to change for the foreseeable future, there was a need for creativity and adaptation of usual practices.

A commitment to building strong and enduring relationships with partners has been core to Tearfund's way of working since its foundation in 1971. The strength of those relationships became critical in providing an environment of trust and confidence that enabled partners to manage, plan and adapt their projects as COVID-19 demanded new ways of working, and new and changing needs within communities.

It has been an interesting exercise to reflect on the role of Tearfund in the development process as the opportunity to be more directly engaged in the projects and spend time with partners face-to-face has been limited. One of the areas of value that Tearfund has considered to be relevant is to be a facilitator of networks and a connector between partners. This has resulted in initiatives to enable partners to listen and learn from one another.

Enabling networks and communities of practice involving partners has brought about mutual support, some collaboration, and real learning beyond what could have been imagined. Examples of such initiatives include:

- Learning forums
- Mental Health Community of Practice
- Africa regional catch-ups



Mental health awareness and advocacy materials from our partner SaCHA, Pakistan

Mental health community of practice

Since Tearfund published research on mental health and development in 2016, based on a lived experience PhotoVoice study with three partners in South Asia, there has been a steady increase in interest from partners on the importance of mental health in development. COVID-19 has exacerbated that, as many communities, families and individuals are experiencing increased stress from many layers of adversity.

As more partners sought to adapt their programming to include mental health considerations, there was an opportunity for a learning group around Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS). The purpose of the group is to promote learning and good practice in the implementation of MHPSS in development programs in low and middle-

income settings. Through a series of online meetings, partners have been able to:

- Consider ways to provide contextual MHPSS
- Share information and practice wisdom with other organisations
- Learn and reflect across a range of relevant areas
- Receive technical training from specialists on trauma-informed care and psychological first aid
- Network with like-minded peers
- Discuss opportunities to share learning more broadly in the development sector – through documenting learning, collaborative research, and producing awareness and advocacy materials.

Learning forums

A series of remote learning forums were run to enable partners to share areas of technical expertise and experience. It was felt that it was important that these weren't training sessions led by Tearfund staff, but rather opportunities for partners to share their own learning and practice.

Sessions were held on the following topics:

- Remote Monitoring
- Remote Evaluations
- Adaptive Planning
- Adaptive Management
- Staff care and well-being

Africa regional catch-ups

The final event that was held by Tearfund before the full impact of COVID-19 and the ensuing restrictions were felt was an Africa Regional Workshop in Nairobi in March 2020. As a follow-up to the workshop the participants were invited to meet online in July 2020 to discuss how they had been able to apply what had been discussed in the workshop, and also to share

about their experiences of COVID-19 in the African context. The participants appreciated the opportunity to do this, and additional less formal "catch-ups" were arranged through 2020 and 2021 to provide a forum for partners to discuss COVID-19, changes that were happening in their work as a result, and to share, encourage and support one another.





Remote monitoring and evaluations

One of the challenges that COVID-19 brought to the work of Tearfund was how to effectively monitor and understand the work of our partners when visiting in-person wasn't an option. Similarly, if people weren't able to visit communities, how could evaluations be carried out effectively?

Creative use of technology, good preparation, and time spent talking with partners in planning have enabled effective virtual visits to become a regular part of Program Officers' schedules during 2021. The medium and the extent to which it approximates a "real" visit depends on the quality of connectivity within communities, and a certain ability to ignore the real distance between the people at each end of the connection. Visits have varied from walking tours through villages and sitting in a group meeting, all while being carried on a phone, to online discussions and questions that are then taken to communities, discussed and written answers returned to the Program Officer. Responses from communities, and the achievements and challenges in the work are analysed together with partners to inform planning and future approaches. Time with partner staff is also scheduled to include discussion about organisational issues.

While virtual visits are not as effective at building and strengthening relationships, they have enabled Tearfund staff to keep updated with projects and to hear from communities.

Regular project monitoring continued to be carried out by partner organisations. Tearfund staff became increasingly dependent on the monitoring carried out by partners for all their understanding of the project and the situation in communities. Useful discussions were had with partners on how monitoring could be made more effective. A strength of remote monitoring is that it places responsibility for the monitoring with individuals and organisations closest to communities, who have deeper understanding of the context and factors contributing to the project and its implementation.

Evaluations used a combination of some of the same methods as virtual visits, with some evaluations being led by an evaluator remotely, relating to a local team who was able to conduct interviews and focus groups. The teams would meet up online each evening to review the days' data collection and preview the following day. Such evaluations required considerable organisation from the teams and the lead evaluator, lots of communication, and more time than expected for the evaluation teams to debrief properly.

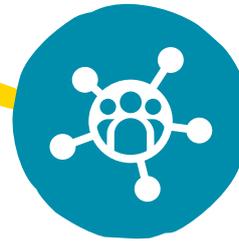
What Tearfund has learned through COVID-19



Photo: Monitoring with a self help group, Oasis Mozambique. Photo credit: Oasis Mozambique staff

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, some evaluations used telephone surveys instead of face-to-face interviews. This possibly led to some selection bias as it included only those who could afford telephones, and if partner staff were not able to contact the people beforehand, they may not have understood the purpose of the call, or may not have been available to take the call when it was made.

Overall, partners showed flexibility and creativity in the ways that they implemented their regular monitoring and evaluations. As COVID-19 restrictions ease, it will be important that Tearfund and its partners continue to think creatively about how monitoring and evaluations are done involving local people, and provide opportunities for direct feedback from communities to partner organisations.



Additional reflections

As COVID-19 restrictions started to significantly impact normal operations, Tearfund's partners quickly showed their adaptability and capability to work in complex situations. Projects were quickly adjusted to incorporate COVID-19 response activities or were modified in their implementation to be COVID-safe. Many partners also showed flexible responses to staff well-being and care as COVID-19 started to impact their own staff and families. Staff care packages, working from home arrangements, well-being surveys, additional working flexibility, and initiatives to strengthen staff morale and connection were examples of different ways that partners demonstrated and modelled staff care.

As projects had to be adjusted quickly, flexible funding was highly valued by partners to enable them to respond appropriately in their own contexts. Tearfund reworked its funding approvals mechanism to provide efficient approval for modified projects. Tearfund's fundraising team also quickly promoted the COVID-response work of Tearfund's partners, and significant funds were made available for additional response activities. The Australian Government, through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) was also very

flexible and allowed for ANCP-funded projects to modify previously approved plans to incorporate COVID-19 related activities. This flexibility was also extended to Tearfund and other Australian NGOs to enable agencies to maximise the funding that was available for partners in their COVID-19 work.

Even though Tearfund staff have not been able to travel or physically sit with partners since March 2020, the increased use and acceptance of technology has meant that there has been more formal and informal communication between partners and Tearfund Programs staff than ever before. This has reinforced the importance of listening to partners, hearing what they are doing to adapt to their own situations, and being perceptive about the issues that are common or are generating interest among them.

Understanding the needs and issues of interest across partners has enabled Tearfund to provide space for partners to share and discuss technical, management and leadership topics with each other. It is recognised that this provides far more relevant and useful learning for both partners and Tearfund, than training that is led by a western NGO or "expert".

What Tearfund has learned through COVID-19



Tearfund Australia

We are Tearfund. We're working in partnership to end poverty, challenge inequality and build sustainable communities. Following Jesus, we go where the need is greatest, acting with courage to tackle injustice so that all may experience fullness of life.

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