

Caritas News

CHANGE STARTS WITH YOU

#168 | WINTER 2022



RECONCILIATION IN ACTION 2022

FROM AFRICA:

A+ Program snapshot and fighting child marriage in Malawi.

TYPHOON RECOVERY:

How vulnerable communities in the Philippines have recovered from Typhoon Rai.

NAIDOC WEEK:

Shining a spotlight on First Australian communities.

SITA'S STORY:

How Sita's life in Nepal has transformed through your support.

THANK YOU

This year's Project Compassion brought you the stories of five incredibly resilient and inspiring people. There was young Anatercia from Mozambique, Biru from India, Rosalie from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Shaniella from the Solomon Islands, and Janice from Australia's Northern Territory.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for supporting Project Compassion 2022, and for helping to create a better tomorrow for all future generations. Without your generosity and kindness, these stories of hope and strength would simply not be possible.

This winter edition of Caritas News coincides with NAIDOC Week – an incredibly important observance in the history of our nation's Indigenous communities. It celebrates the richness of Indigenous cultures and traditions, and commemorates the hardships faced by First Australians throughout our shared histories.

Despite all the challenges we have faced throughout the past two years, we have also achieved so much.

Your generosity has helped provide assistance to the most vulnerable people in the world and those currently going through war and conflict. Thanks to you, we have lent a hand to our sisters and brothers in Ukraine through their worst crisis yet. We have stood in solidarity with the people of Tonga who were affected by the underground volcanic eruption that struck their nation earlier this year, helping them address their most urgent needs. And finally, we have also supported our partners in Africa to provide lifesaving essentials to families who have been displaced and communities that have been impacted by crippling food insecurity.

Your compassion has been pivotal in supporting these vulnerable communities through dark times. I once again thank you for your ongoing support and compassion, and hope that you enjoy this winter 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: Present Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation Directors – Aunties, Jenny Ebsworth, Elaine Gordon, Margaret Farrell and Daisy Barker.
Photo: Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation.
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IMPROVING AWARENESS OF GENDER RIGHTS

COMBATting CHILD MARRIAGE IN MALAWI



About the program

The A+ Program, which is supported by Caritas Australia's local partners, Diocese of Mbulu Development Department (DMDD) and Karonga Diocese' Caritas Commission, helps marginalised communities in Malawi and Tanzania to improve access to water, hygiene, sanitation and resources to boost food security. The program encourages communities to envision their goals, and identify the skills and resources they can use to reach their objectives. Importantly, the program also focuses on child protection and gender awareness, particularly ensuring that the most marginalised groups can access basic services and that they are involved in the decisions that affect their lives.

More than 27,000 people across Tanzania and Malawi have participated in the program so far:



14,395 people, are now able to access clean water, through approximately 30 new or rehabilitated waterpoints



18,627 people, have improved access to sufficient food



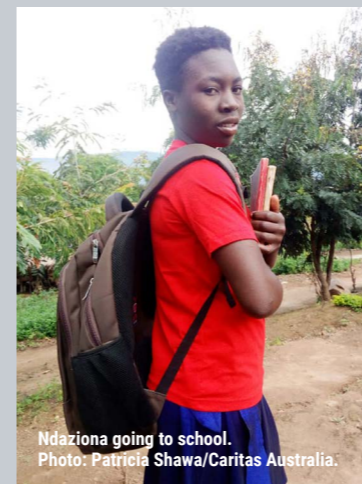
8,375 people, including **5,200 women**, have increased their income



20,085 people, have improved understanding of hygiene and sanitation practices



17,045 people, including **10,651 women**, participated in gender awareness and women's rights training



Ndazona going to school.
Photo: Patricia Shawa/Caritas Australia.

Ndazona's story

Child marriage is a widespread issue in Malawi, with an estimated 46% of girls entering marriage before they turn 18.

The A+ Program has trained and provided support to child protection clubs in schools, as well as child protection committees in villages. This helps safeguard the rights of children in schools and communities, and reduce cases of abuse within communities.

Ndazona, 16, lives rural Malawi. She comes from a family of five, which relies heavily on farming for income. Child marriage is common in her community and Ndazona entered into a marriage when she was just 15-years-old.

Your support has helped the child protection committees establish a child protection club to raise awareness about children's rights and help combat child marriage.

Thanks to the work of our partners, Ndazona has been able to go back to school and is proud of the education she is receiving. She is living back home with her mother again and focusing on learning and fulfilling her dream of becoming a nurse to support vulnerable girls.

THE PHILIPPINES

ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

Your generous support is helping communities in the Philippines recover and rebuild from the worst typhoon in nearly a decade.

On 17 December 2021, the Philippines was struck by Typhoon Rai, leaving thousands in urgent need of humanitarian support. The typhoon brought torrential rain, wind gusts over 200 km/h, flash floods, landslides and extensively damaged homes and livelihoods across five regions in Philippines.

Thirty-eight provinces were affected by the typhoon, with at least 375 lives lost and approximately 1.8 million people directly impacted. As a result, the typhoon has been named the worst to hit the nation since the destructive Typhoon Haiyan in 2013.

Approximately 600,000 people needed to be evacuated from their homes, and roads were impassable due to extreme flooding and fallen trees. Typhoon Rai also left many local communities stranded without power, telecommunications and access to clean water.

Caritas Australia's partner, Caritas Philippines, has been responding to help meet the most urgent needs by providing shelter, water, food, sanitation and hygiene. They are also helping vulnerable communities recover from the damage caused by the typhoon, providing housing to those who lost their homes

Marlo, along with his wife Marilyn and their two children, were assisted with shelter after their home was destroyed by Typhoon Rai.

Prior to the typhoon, Marlo worked as a labourer in the sugar mill, while his wife worked in the sugar cane plantations in their village to supplement the family's income. He and his wife are married civilly, and before disaster struck, he was planning to marry Marilyn in the Catholic Church. Marlo had been saving up for the important day, but all that was forgotten when Typhoon Rai struck his home.

Their house was turned upside-down due to very strong winds and devastating rains. To make matters worse, Marlo was laid off from the mill three months after the typhoon, leaving him and his family without a steady income to support themselves.

Thanks to your generosity and the support of our local partners Caritas Philippines and Caritas Dumagete, Marlo and his family received shelter and support to rebuild their lives after Typhoon Rai. Caritas Philippines has also set up a donation drive of 50,000 pesos to help Marlo and Marilyn have their wedding, which is scheduled to take place 'in the coming months.



Marlo and his family received shelter after Typhoon Rai. Photo: Caritas Philippines.

UNFOLDING CRISIS IN UKRAINE

UPDATE FROM UKRAINE

At the time of publication, the number of displaced people in Ukraine had surpassed the 12-million mark. Over 4.9 million people have crossed international borders and at least 7.1 million have been displaced internally since February.

Additionally, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), over 24 million people – more than half of Ukraine's population, will need humanitarian assistance in the months ahead. This is about 8 million more than what was estimated less than two months ago.

Though most of the fighting is currently taking place in the eastern and southern parts of the country, several other regions within Ukraine have been affected by missile strikes, including L'viv and Kyiv.

Damage to infrastructure and civilian casualties were also reported in Dnipropetrovska, Kirovohradska, Kyivska, Lvivska, Mykolaivska and Poltavska.


This humanitarian crisis is being further exacerbated by the prices of basic food commodities, which have sky-rocketed since the conflict began earlier in the year. According to the Ukrainian Minister of Agriculture, Mykola Soskyi, even if the fighting ended tomorrow, the wave of high prices for food would still be felt globally for another three-to-five years.

Thanks to your ongoing generosity, Caritas Australia is working closely with Caritas Ukraine and other partners on the ground in Ukraine and neighbouring countries to provide assistance in the form of food, water, shelter, medical attention and sanitation. To date, Caritas Ukraine has supported more than 800,000 people since February.

You can support people facing disaster and fleeing violence today by visiting www.caritas.org.au/donate/emergency-appeals/ukraine/.



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

 **You can support more people like Marlo and Marilyn to rebuild their lives after Typhoon Rai. Make a donation at www.caritas.org.au/donate/emergency-appeals/philippines/**

CELEBRATING FIRST AUSTRALIANS



Weaving pandanus leaves collected from a forest near Djilpin Arts. Photo: Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia.

National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week, celebrated from 3 to 10 July, provides an opportunity for all Australians to learn about Indigenous cultures and our shared histories, and to participate in celebrating one of the oldest cultures on Earth. This year, we are invited to **Get Up! Stand Up! Show Up!** for change and to keep rallying around our mob, our Elders and our communities.

“NAIDOC Week is an opportunity for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians to build positive, respectful relationships and celebrate the culture of our First Australians”, said Christine Rhazi, First Australians Associate Director at Caritas Australia.

With your support, Caritas Australia works in close partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and First Australian-led organisations to support programs that focus on intergenerational healing, strengthening cultural identity and spirituality, livelihood opportunities, and advocacy.

This NAIDOC Week, we celebrate our First Australian partners who we have been able to support, thanks to your generosity.



Survivors of Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation. Photo: Caritas Australia.

Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation

Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation (KBHAC) was formed by the survivors of Kinchela Boys Home in Kempsey, New South Wales, who were forcibly removed from their families during childhood, part of the Stolen Generations.

It aims to support these Aboriginal men, their families and communities in developing healing programs to restore and reconstruct their identity, dignity and integrity.

KBHAC takes a survivor-led approach to its governance and healing, and is committed to encouraging healthy peer support models that enable greater social inclusion in community life.



Janice poses for a picture in the shop at Djilpin Arts. Photo: Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia.

Djilpin Arts

Djilpin Arts is an art centre and social enterprise, designed and led by First Australians in a remote community in the Northern Territory.

Established in 2002 by the celebrated actor and musician and beloved community member, the late Balang T. E. Lewis, the centre provides employment, training, income, cultural healing and intergenerational connection.

It maintains and promotes traditional and contemporary visual and performing arts and provides cultural tours and tourist accommodation, whilst helping the younger generation to connect with culture.



Baabayn Aunties at NAIDOC Week event. Photo: Jessica Stone/Caritas Australia.

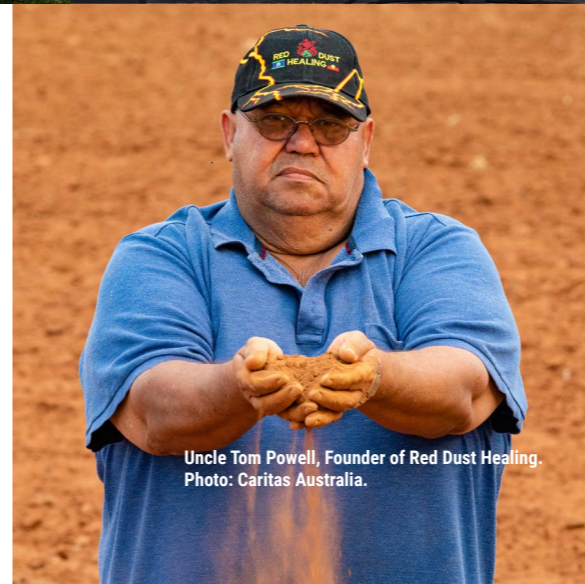
Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation

Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation was founded by five Aboriginal elders from Western Sydney - home to one of the largest urban First Australian populations in Australia.

The work of Baabayn (which means 'ancestral woman') involves initiatives such as a Family Group gathering, Healing circles, Homework Club, a Mums and Bubs group and a youth group for young First Australians to connect with their culture. They also provide advocacy, counselling services and links to government departments.

Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation hosted an early celebration of NAIDOC Week. On Thursday, 21 April, they co-hosted the Get up! Stand up! Show up! event in Western Sydney, with Kimberwalli and Holy Family Parish, Mt Druitt.

The event opened with a double act: a Welcome to Country from ten-year-old Emma Hoskins, Blacktown's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young Achiever of the Year, followed by a Smoking Ceremony from the nearly 100-year-old Uncle Wes Marne. Uncle Wes Marne regaled the crowd with the history and context of the Smoking Ceremony before inviting the audience to participate themselves by walking through the fragrant eucalyptus smoke.



Uncle Tom Powell, Founder of Red Dust Healing. Photo: Caritas Australia.

Red Dust Healing

Red Dust Healing is a unique cultural healing and mental health program, written from an Indigenous perspective - aimed at men, women, families and community service providers.

Through training workshops, Uncle Tom Powell, the Founder of the program, helps participants to target issues affecting their lives and to pursue personal journeys of growth and wellbeing.

With your help, Caritas Australia is able to provide support to this award-winning First Australian-led program which has already helped over 17,000 people in Australia and overseas.

SITA'S STORY

Sita lives in the Bagmati province in Nepal with her four children. After her husband passed away, she found it difficult to support her children's education. Sita worked as a labourer for 20 years to supplement her family's income. She faced the additional pressure of being the breadwinner for her family, as being a widow can often lead to stigma and discrimination.

"If my husband had been alive then half of my problems would not have even existed. He would have taken care of the house, and people would not have humiliated and talked ill of me for being a single woman," Sita said.

Determined to forge a brighter future for her children, Sita joined the Livelihoods and Resilience Program supported by Caritas Australia and our partner, Caritas Nepal.

Through the program, Sita joined the Lalupate Women Agriculture Cooperative and was able to access a low interest loan to purchase cows. The cows produce milk that Sita can then sell at the market.

Caritas Nepal facilitated Sita and her fellow cooperative members to participate in animal husbandry training so that they could learn how to care and raise their livestock. They also participated in agricultural training to care for and to learn new techniques to improve their farming.

Sita learnt to use her cows' dung and urine as fertiliser in her vegetable farm to produce cauliflowers and spinach. Now, she no longer needs to purchase vegetables from the market as she can rely on her own home-grown produce.

This Program helps people like Sita to improve their food security and livelihoods while also providing training in COVID-19 awareness, human rights, disaster risk reduction, environmental conservation and gender equality.



1,995 participants have diversified livelihoods and reported increased income.



3,221 people increased their food security



9,799 people, mostly farmers, are aware of their rights and have been able to leverage government schemes and social safety net opportunities.

Thanks to your support and generosity, and the work of our partners, Sita's livestock business is now thriving and, with a sustainable source of income, she can send her children to school. She has become a respected member of her community and a role model for other single women living in a patriarchal society.



"The program has helped me improve my relationship with other people in the community. I feel part of the community now and the way they praise me for standing on my feet and taking care of my children makes me happy."

- Sita

Sita sitting outside her cow shed. Photo: Caritas Nepal/Caritas Australia.

OUR COMMUNITY



Together in solidarity with Ukraine

As the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine continues to unfold, leaving thousands in need for support, Caritas Australia's community from across the country joined forces to help provide much-needed assistance to the nation as it battles this crisis.

In Attadale, Western Australia, two Year 4 students from Mel Maria Catholic Primary School started their own fundraisers to raise funds for Ukraine.

One student, Ivy sold fabric origami cranes and called her business 'Cranes for Ukraine'. Another student Alannah, raised \$500 by making mask straps.

"The school raised \$2738. Of which, \$2650 were raised by two Year 4 classes at our St Joseph Pignatelli Campus," said Mr Michael Corrie, a teacher at the school.

Students also did chores around the house for a month to help raise funds.

Gilroy Catholic College in Parramatta, New South Wales, ran an event to stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

The students shared message of support for the people of Ukraine. The messages were collated and sent to the community of St Andrew Ukrainian Church in Lidcombe, Sydney.

Additionally, students also created their own online donation page and wore badges on their uniforms to show their support for Ukraine.



Ivy with her Cranes for Ukraine. Photo: Mel Maria Catholic Primary School.



Students standing in solidarity with Ukraine. Photo: Gilroy Catholic College.

Kirsty and Richard's Cycling Adventure

Caritas Australia CEO, Kirsty Robertson, and Director of Advancement, Richard Landels, completed a nine-day cycling journey, raising more than **\$50,000 for Project Compassion 2022**.

Kirsty and Richard rode the bikes approximately 900km over nine days from Sydney to Melbourne to help break the cycle of poverty.

They were inspired by the story of Biru from India, a bicycle repair mechanic who is featured in this year's Project Compassion.

Kirsty and Richard's ride crossed over difficult and challenging terrain as they put their minds and bodies to the test to fundraise for vulnerable communities.

Throughout their travels, they made numerous stops to meet with local schools and parish communities, concluding their journey at St Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne.



Kirsty Robertson and Richard Landels cycle to end poverty. Photo: Claire Deakin/Caritas Australia.

Walking with God program

The 'Walking with God' program developed by Caritas Australia launched in Adelaide earlier this year.

A group of ten young adults gathered in the city for prayer and reflection, walking from Victoria Square to the River Torrens, where the Chair of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council, Mr John Lochowiak, gave a Welcome to Country.

The program invites participants to connect with creation in their local areas. Walking with God is based on Ignatian Spirituality, challenging participants to encounter God in all things by incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander spirituality, to provide a different perspective on connecting with our common home.

"In the Walking with God program, I get to share my relationship with creation from both my cultural heritage and my faith background," said Caritas Australia Youth Coordinator and Kuku Yalanji and Yidinji woman, Sabrina Stevens.



Walking with God participants in Adelaide. Photo: Caritas Australia



Sabrina Stevens, Youth Coordinator at Caritas Australia, and John Lochowiak, Chair of NATSICC. Photo: Caritas Australia.



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.

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