

Tearfund Seek Pembrokeshire's Support as Millions going hungry in East Africa

Tearfund seek Pembrokeshire's support as around ten million people in East Africa are facing severe hunger in the worst drought in 60 years destroying crops and livestock.

South east Ethiopia is the hardest hit region, with 3.2 million farming-dependent people experiencing a food crisis, while 3.2 million others are affected in northern Kenya and 2.5 million in Somalia.

This is another blow to a region that has been hit by a succession of climatic challenges, notably in 2009, when years of failed rains and harvests left 20 million people facing life-threatening food and water shortages.

Across the eastern Horn of Africa, people have experienced two consecutive poor rainy seasons, with widespread loss of crops and livestock and the impact of the drought has been worsened by high food prices and in some areas, conflict. There is a high risk of this crisis becoming critical, if rains remain erratic.

Robert Schofield, Tearfund's Disaster Management Director, said, 'For several months Tearfund has been actively monitoring the growing global food crisis, which as we are seeing in East Africa is being intensified by drought conditions. We are continuing to support our partners in Ethiopia and Kenya who are bolstering the resilience of local communities to cope with adverse weather conditions.'

Although the situation is serious, work by Tearfund partners to prepare communities to better withstand drought has been going on for many years and this has helped lessen the impact for many. Projects undertaken to boost people's resilience have included earth dams being built to store water, distribution of drought-resistant seeds, introduction of rainwater harvesting, food-for-work programmes being started to support the most vulnerable households and projects launched to tackle soil erosion.

Adding pressure on struggling families, food prices have rocketed: yellow maize prices in the Ethiopian Jiiga grain market have risen by 117 per cent, while white maize at the Mandera market in Kenya rose by nearly 60 per cent.

Tearfund has been lobbying the G20 leaders recently to tackle high global food prices by protecting the most vulnerable with cash transfers and nutrition interventions, and to build long term resilience through investment in small-scale agriculture.

"We in Pembrokeshire can help by praying supporting and raising funds for Tearfund's Disaster response work. Why not hold an event this summer?"

Together we can make a difference.” says Sharron Hardwick, Tearfund’s Voluntary Media Officer.

To donate to Tearfunds disaster response work and for more information visit:

www.tearfund.org/get_involved/give/give_main/one-off_donations/disaster_fund/
or call 0845 355 8355.

—