

Footsteps

Home and hospitality

- The importance of home
- From stranger to friend
- Nurturing children
- Journey to healing
- As born among us
- Resilient communities



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About *Footsteps*

Featuring practical solutions to development challenges, *Footsteps* magazine inspires and equips people to work with their local communities to bring positive change.

Footsteps is published by Tearfund, a Christian relief and development agency working with local partners and churches to meet basic needs and address injustice and poverty. *Footsteps* is free of charge.

📷 Cover photo: Indra, Alisha (eight) and Prakash (three) on the steps of their home in Nepal.
Photo: Tom Price/Tearfund

A note from the editor

For most of us, home is a place where we feel relaxed and safe. A place that we enjoy coming back to, and where we feel that we belong.

But, sadly, for many people in the world 'home' is not the safe refuge that it should be.

This edition of *Footsteps* explores how friendship and hospitality can change the lives of people who do not have a home, who are unsafe at home or who do not feel fully included in their communities. It also suggests some ideas for how to make communities less vulnerable to climate-related disasters, so people are less likely to have to leave their homes.

■ 'My people will live in peaceful dwelling-places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest.'

Isaiah 32:18



Jude Collins,
Editor

tearfund

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The importance of home

By Emmanuel Murangira



📍 Telesphore and Primitive welcome guests to their home in Rwanda. Photo: Marcus Perkins/Tearfund

Watching the opening ceremony of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, I could not hold back my tears as a team of refugees marched along with other athletes of the world. It reminded me of my own past, when I was a young athlete growing up as a refugee.

Like so many refugees today, we did not have a home. We felt like we belonged to no one and nowhere. We were seen as intruders, and many host communities and individuals were hostile and unwelcoming. We only felt safe in places where people did not know who we were.

‘Like so many refugees today, we did not have a home. We felt like we belonged to no one and nowhere.’

As an athlete, I had to be the best to get a chance at competing, and even then it depended on the prejudices and biases of the coaches. Unlike the

athletes at Tokyo, I often felt that my talents and abilities only mattered if they could be exploited and used to benefit others. I felt invisible and as if I did not matter.

The need to belong

We all need shelter and somewhere to sleep safely at night, but the human desire for a home goes much deeper than this. It is rooted in our need to belong, and our need to be loved, accepted and appreciated for who we are.

The Bible’s beginning and end – creation (Genesis) and new creation (Revelation) – give us insight into what it means to belong and flourish in the home God has made and placed us in.

The Bible describes Eden, our original home, as a beautiful garden, planted by God with all kinds of plants. In the garden humans lived in harmony with God, with each other and with wider creation. Eden was more than a place to live. It was a place of peace, worship, loving relationship and sufficiency. ▶



📍 Geovanna and her family had to leave Venezuela but they have found a new home and community in Colombia.
Photo: Ferley Ospina/Tearfund

Genesis 3 describes how Adam and Eve's disobedience broke up this home. They were removed from Eden and had to make their home in a broken world.

The rest of the Bible tells the story of God's mission to redeem and restore his creation. In the book of Revelation we are given a glimpse of what this will look like: a place where once again there will be strong relationships and no pain or unmet needs (Revelation 7:16; 21:4).

Hospitality

Armed conflict, natural disasters and climate change force millions of people to leave their homes each year in search of somewhere safer. For countless others, instead of being a place of peace, home is where they experience pain, neglect or abuse.

Through the practice of hospitality, we can all help to provide places where people feel accepted and part of a loving community, no matter their background or current situation. The Bible makes it very clear that this is an important and transformational role of the church (Matthew 25:34-40; Hebrews 13:2).

I was a refugee at a time when there was little information about the causes and difficulties of displacement. It is no surprise, though, that the most welcoming were churches and believers. They gave shelter, food and clothing and allowed their buildings to be used as schools. Above all, they were kind. They provided us with a home.

Discrimination and prejudice have no place in our communities. Instead, we should show the love and compassion that Jesus spoke about when he explained to us what it means to love our neighbours as ourselves (Luke 10:25-37).

Emmanuel Murangira is Tearfund's Country Director in Rwanda.

Bible study

Migrant journey

By Dr Sas Conradie

The theme of the curtains in my room is 'Home sweet home'. There is a specific line on the curtains that says 'Home is where the heart is'. But as a migrant, where is my heart? And therefore where is my home? Is my home South Africa, where I grew up, or is my home the UK where I am currently living?

Strangers

Hebrews 11 says that the ancient 'heroes of the faith' (eg Abraham) realised that they were 'foreigners and strangers on earth' (Hebrews 11:13). The writer goes on to say, 'People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead they were longing for a better country – a heavenly one' (Hebrews 11:14–16).

As followers of Jesus it is good to look forward to our heavenly home – eternal life with God. But what about our lives here on earth? Jesus taught his disciples to pray: 'Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.' So what



Discussion questions

- What does it mean to be 'one of God's migrant people'?
- What does the phrase 'heaven on earth' mean to you?
- How can we help people to flourish in all areas of their lives?



📷 Wherever we live, good friends help us to feel at home.
Photo: Tom Price – Ecce Opus/Tearfund

does it mean to be at home, in the kingdom of heaven, while on earth?

Restored relationships

The Bible teaches that, through Christ, the kingdom of heaven is a place where relationships with God, with ourselves, with each other and with creation are restored (Revelation 7:9; 21:7), and where there are no unmet needs (Revelation 7:16; 21:4).

If we want to see God's kingdom come here on earth – for people to experience 'home' as God desires – then we will want to see a rebuilding of relationships and people flourishing in all areas of their lives.

On a journey

As a follower of Jesus, neither South Africa nor the UK is my real home. As one of God's migrant people I am still on a journey. But every step I take on that journey – and every step you take on yours – matters.

Dr Sas Conradie is Tearfund's Theology and Networking Manager for Africa.

From stranger to friend

By Heidi Damon

In my country of origin, Sri Lanka, it is considered an honour to welcome someone into your home and to offer them food and drink. By accepting these refreshments the guest shows their appreciation for the host's generosity and honours them in return. This simple act of giving and receiving deepens the relationship between them.

Hospitality is the act of opening our homes, lives, churches and communities to friends, neighbours and strangers. Warm and generous hospitality creates an environment where people are welcomed and included, and where strangers become friends.

Isaiah 58:7 reminds us that it is an act of worship to 'share our food with the hungry and provide the wanderer with shelter', and throughout his

ministry Jesus emphasised the importance of this (eg Luke 10:25–37; Matthew 25:34–40).

When we practise hospitality we are responding to God's generous love and acceptance of us, by loving and accepting the people around us.

Welcome

Here are some key aspects of hospitality that can help us to warmly welcome everyone, whatever their ethnicity, religion, background or current situation.

- **Gratitude.** Hospitality can be challenging, especially when we do not know the person or people we are welcoming. Approaching hospitality from a place of gratitude to God can help us to share God's love and blessings with others.

📷 One of the best ways to get to know people is to share a meal with them. Photo: Andrew Philip/Tearfund





📍 Friends greet each other warmly in South Sudan. Photo: Tom Price/Tearfund

- **Humility.** We should welcome people in humility and respect – not seeking to change them, but offering acceptance and a safe environment in which they can grow and thrive.
- **Listening.** It is a privilege to experience the richness, vulnerability and courage of someone’s story. Listening builds relationships and shows respect. It is a way of honouring the guest.
- **Celebration and mourning.** Hospitality provides the opportunity for us to ‘rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn’ (Romans 12:15). As we share the ups and downs of life with others, understanding grows and relationships are strengthened.

We all need to feel loved and accepted, and hospitality helps to meet this need. It deepens existing relationships and creates the space for new ones to flourish. It promotes peace, understanding and reconciliation and provides an environment in which all backgrounds and nationalities are welcomed, valued and celebrated.

Heidi Damon leads Tearfund’s global church engagement work.

Discussion questions

- How do you help people feel loved and accepted in your home, church and community?
- Are there people in your community who might not always feel included? If so, why is this?
- What could you or your church do to make people feel more welcome?

Embracing difference

By Muna Suhail AbuGhazaleh

For many children and adults with disabilities, our homes, churches and communities are not places where we feel able to flourish. We may have limited opportunities to go to school, work for a living, enjoy family life and participate as equals in society.

This lack of accessibility is often not because of our impairment, but because of the stigma, discrimination and misunderstanding we face. Too often our voices are not heard, and our needs, aspirations, skills and abilities are not seen and embraced.

Here are three ways to help change this situation.

1 Make new friends

Get to know people with disabilities and their carers by inviting them to your home and sharing meals and time together. Acts of hospitality such as this transform vulnerability into communion and friendship.

📍 Haniya in Pakistan is a successful entrepreneur and a respected member of her community. Photo: Tearfund partner



2 Welcome everyone

When organising events of any kind, including church services, be especially aware of the needs of people with disabilities. Ensure that measures are put in place to make it possible for everyone to get involved. For example, people with disabilities should be:

- specifically invited to events, otherwise they might not hear about them or might assume that they are not invited
- physically helped to attend events if necessary
- able to access the same information as everyone else (eg audio messages for people with sight loss, visual messages for people who are deaf)
- encouraged to speak, contribute and take on roles and responsibilities, recognising and valuing their skills and abilities
- listened to and respected.

3 Speak up

Learn to recognise when the needs of people with different impairments are not being taken into account by organisations, governments, law enforcers and others. Support people with disabilities to make their voices heard and stand up for their rights.

Muna Suhail AbuGhazaleh is Tearfund's Administrative, Liaison and Communication Support Officer for Eurasia and North Africa. Muna lives with multiple disabilities and has recently completed a Masters dissertation on the inclusion of people with disabilities in the Jordanian Church of Nazarene (University of Manchester, UK).



Living with disability – Footsteps 108

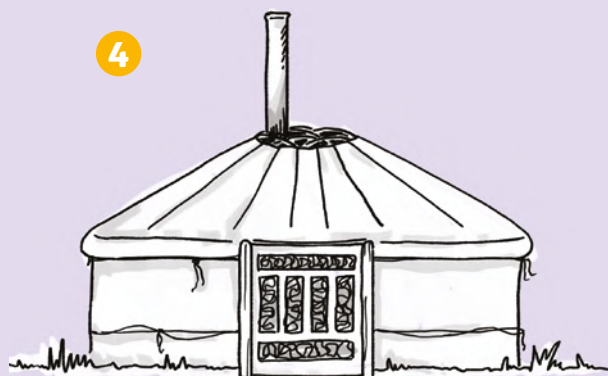
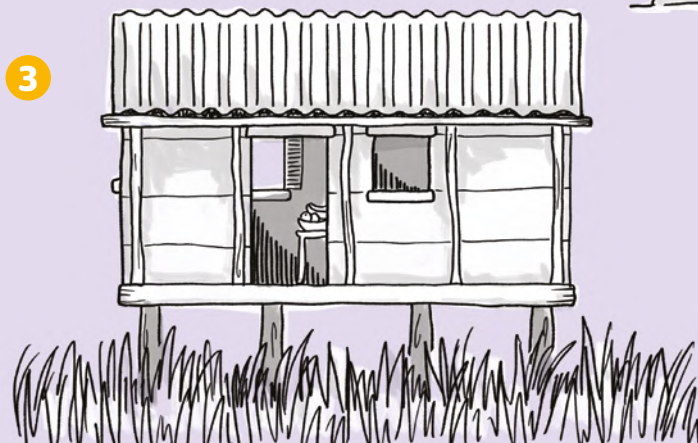
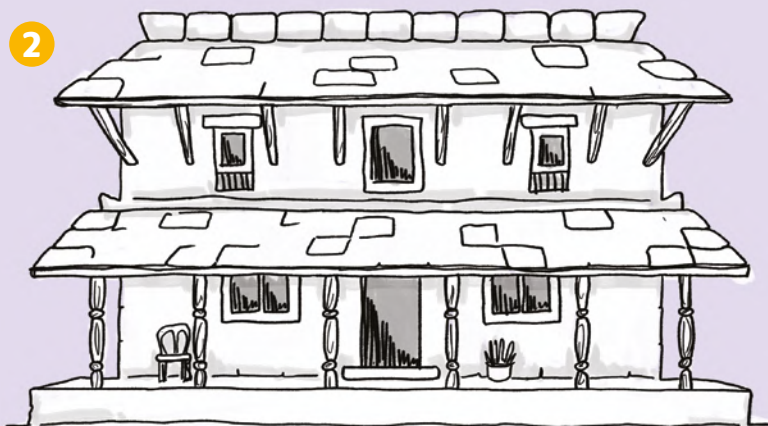
Children's zone

My house



People live in many different types of houses. Can you guess which part of the world these houses are from?

The answers are at the bottom of the page.



Bible verse memory challenge!

When people visit our homes it is important that we make them feel welcome.

Can you learn this Bible verse?

'They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.'

Acts 2:46

Spend some time thanking God for the home you live in, and the people you live with.

Think about your house

- What does it look like?
- What does it smell like?
- What can you hear when you are at home?
- How do you feel when you are at home?
- If you were in a different place, which food would remind you most of home?

Nurturing children

By Juliet Mukisa

Children are not meant to be alone. They should be in loving, nurturing families where they can learn important life skills and feel a sense of belonging.

However, many children across the world find themselves alone for different reasons. Some are separated from their families by war, natural disasters, domestic violence or human trafficking. Others are orphaned. Children without a home are particularly vulnerable to illness, emotional distress, hunger and abuse.

How to help

The first step is to provide for children's basic needs: safe shelter, nutritious food, clothing and healthcare. Children must be protected from abuse, neglect and exposure to violence.

The following are also very important if children are to flourish, both physically and emotionally.

Love

The unconditional love of a parent or carer helps children to feel a sense of security and belonging, even if other things in their lives are less constant. Children need to know that the love they receive is not dependent on their achievements, but that they are valued and loved for who they are.

Availability

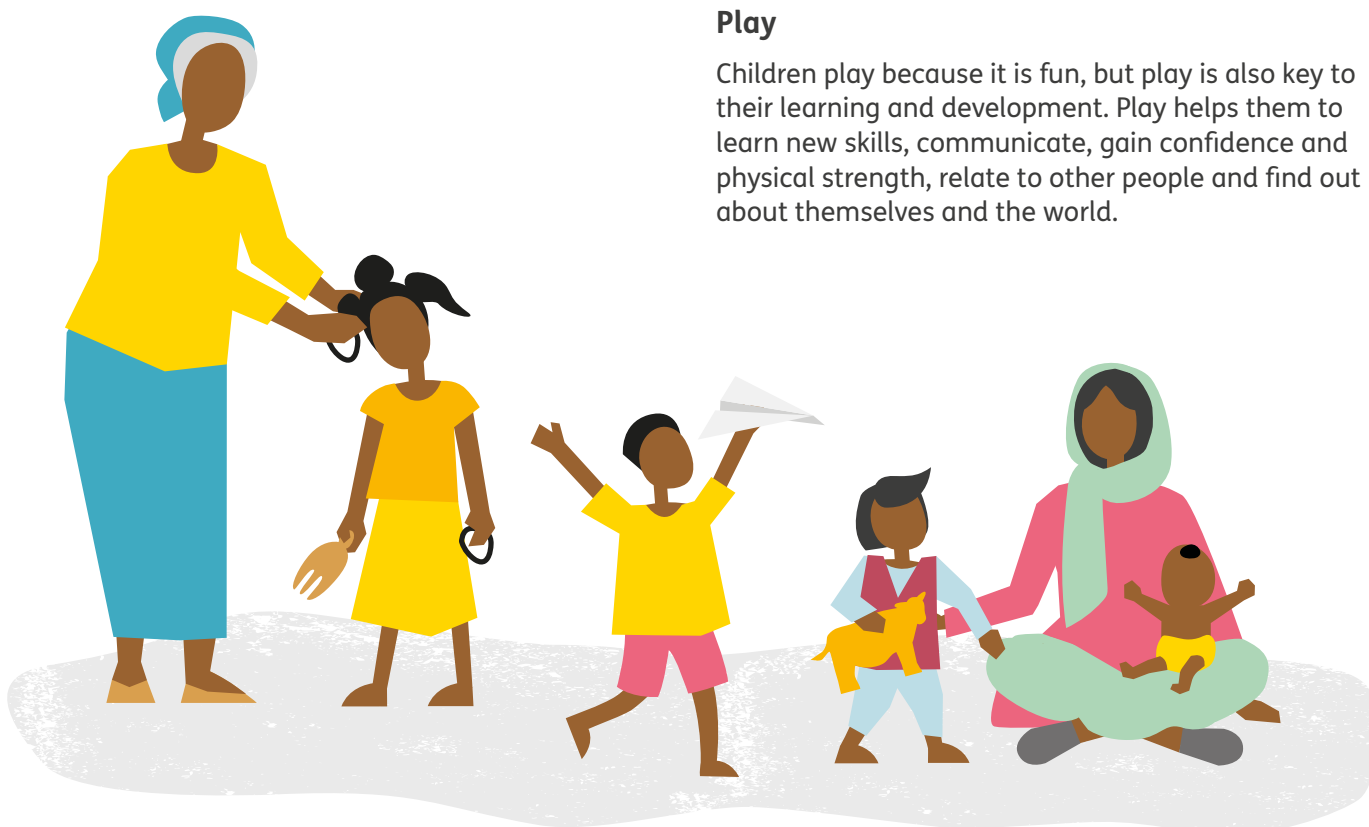
Children need to feel that they are being listened to, and that they have someone to turn to when they face challenges in life. Time is one of the best gifts that caregivers can give to children.

Patience

Children's behaviour can sometimes be very challenging, but it is important for caregivers to control their anger and try to respond in a measured, appropriate way. Clear boundaries allow children to develop and reach their full potential safely. When children step outside these boundaries, carers need to provide a calm and consistent response.

Play

Children play because it is fun, but play is also key to their learning and development. Play helps them to learn new skills, communicate, gain confidence and physical strength, relate to other people and find out about themselves and the world.



Playtime!

As well as being a lot of fun, these two simple games help children to develop concentration, determination, speed, skill and sportsmanship. Place the children in teams and encourage them to take it in turns to complete the activities.

Bottle-filling

Fill a container with water a short distance from a row of bottles. Challenge the children to fill up the bottles as quickly as possible using spoons.

Treasure hunt

Hide wrapped sweets and other prizes in plates of flour and encourage the children to quickly find the 'treasure' using only their mouths (use one plate per child). To avoid the risk of choking, do not use treats that could easily be swallowed by mistake.



📷 This bottle-filling game needs skill and patience!
Photo: Juliet Mukisa/Project Shalom

Encouragement

When possible, caregivers should respond to a child's emerging abilities by encouraging new skills and hobbies. It is important to praise children for what they manage to do, not to criticise.

Opportunity

All children should have the opportunity to go to school and learn the skills they need to succeed as independent adults.

Act of worship

The Bible talks of God's desire to 'set the lonely in families' (Psalm 68:6) and reminds us that 'religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress' (James 1:27). It is an act of worship to open up our homes to vulnerable people in response to God's love and grace in our lives.

Juliet Mukisa is the founder and director of Project Shalom in Uganda.

Project Shalom aims to provide orphans and other vulnerable children with a place of hope, happiness and contentment. Some children in their care live as an extended family group in the centre itself, but the majority are supported to live with family members or foster carers in the community.

Further reading

- Caring for orphans – *Footsteps* 101
- Human trafficking – *Footsteps* 96
- Family life – *Footsteps* 72

Download from learn.tearfund.org or write to us to receive printed copies. *Footsteps* is available in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese.

Child protection

People have different views on how best to look after the interests of children and protect them from harm. These views are often shaped by culture, background, knowledge and experience.

Use this activity to help community groups begin to discuss these views and agree basic child protection standards.

Step 1

In the local language, write the words 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' on four separate pieces of paper. Place the signs in a row on the floor or in different parts of the room.

Step 2

Give each person a copy of the statements on the page opposite, translated into the local language. Ask them to read each statement and tick the box that best describes their feelings (strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree). Please note: these statements are discussion-starters, not right or wrong answers.

Step 3

Once everyone has finished, read out one of the statements and ask people to stand by the sign that has their answer on it for that particular statement.

Online child protection resources

[unicef.org/protection](https://www.unicef.org/protection)

Available in multiple languages

[keepingchildrensafe.global](https://www.keepingchildrensafe.global)

Available in English, Spanish and Dutch

learn.viva.org/equip/cpassessment

Available in English and Spanish



Step 4

Ask people to explain why they chose their answers. As they discuss their views, encourage them to think about the impact on children of the different situations mentioned. Remind people to take it in turns to speak and to be respectful of each other.

Step 5

Repeat the exercise for each statement.

Step 6

At the end of the activity, ask participants what they have learnt. Use this as a starting point for the development or improvement of a group child protection policy.



Please note: this activity might be difficult for people who have experienced abuse in the past. Make sure they can speak to someone about how they are feeling, and be ready to refer them to support services available in your local area.

Statements

Read the following statements.

Tick the box that best describes your feelings.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Hitting children is always wrong and is a form of child abuse.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Sexual abuse of children is not a problem in this country.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Using a stick as a way of disciplining children in school is OK.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Reporting abuse is likely to make things worse for the child so it is better not to do or say anything.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Children should be seen and not heard.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. It is never acceptable to leave a child alone in the house, even if they are well behaved.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Children’s ideas cannot be taken seriously.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. It is not normal for children to cry once they are old enough to go to school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Children with disabilities are more at risk of being abused than other children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Staff employed to teach or care for children are unlikely to abuse them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Children often make up stories about being abused.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Boys are less likely to be sexually abused than girls.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. A faith leader would never abuse a child.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Women are less likely to abuse children than men.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Journey to healing

Please be aware that this article contains reference to sexual and gender-based violence.

When Ella* was growing up in a small village in rural Liberia, her father insisted that sending her to school would be a waste of time and money. Instead, when she was just eight years old, Ella was sent to a secret female society aimed at preparing young girls for marriage.

Ella experienced female genital mutilation/cutting as part of the initiation into the society. She then stayed with the society for two years and was trained in household tasks.

When Ella returned to her village, her family held a celebration to welcome her home.

However, after the party Ella was attacked and raped by a man from her village. When she confided in her parents, they told her she would now have to marry her attacker.

Fleeing violence

Traumatised, Ella ran away into the nearby forest. Scared and alone she had no safe place to go. After a few days, Ella met a hunter who took her in and let her stay with his family. But before long she was forced to marry the hunter's son: she was 12, and he was 25.

Over the years, Ella had seven children. The family lived in extreme poverty. Ella would go to a nearby creek to catch fish for food while her husband worked as a day labourer cutting grass.

After a lifetime of abuse and trauma, Ella was worn down and losing hope. She began to turn to alcohol to escape feeling helpless and worthless.



Further reading

- Tearfund's Transforming Masculinities approach aims to change harmful concepts of gender and masculinities and promote gender equality. The training manuals can be downloaded, free of charge, from learn.tearfund.org in English, French and Portuguese.
- Sexual and gender-based violence – *Footsteps* 106



Finding healing

Then Ella was invited to a Journey to Healing workshop run by Tearfund's local partner. There she met other women who had similar stories of suffering and abuse, and she was finally able to talk about her childhood trauma for the first time.

As Ella and the women shared their stories, they found love and care within the group. They also began to save money and work on projects together to help them earn an income. Ella now grows rice and groundnuts close to her house, and her children have enough food to eat each day.

For the first time in her life, Ella is starting to know her true worth and is positive about the future. 'Now I have a family that cares,' she says, speaking about her Journey to Healing support group. Ella is also helping to protect and support other women by facilitating a support group herself. She says, 'I never thought that I could do this, that others would listen to me... I hope I can do more for other people in the future.'

**Name changed*

The Journey to Healing process

During the Journey to Healing process, survivors of sexual and gender-based violence are invited to share their stories without stigma in peer support groups, and begin to speak out against the abuse they have experienced. By speaking about their pain in an atmosphere of acceptance, survivors can begin the process of healing.

The women are also advised how to recognise and report sexual and gender-based violence in their communities.

Over time, many of the groups begin savings schemes and other activities to help them move forward in their lives. In addition, group members often see the needs in their wider community and develop activities to help in some way. For example, in one group there were many women who had been raped at an early age while their parents were out at work. They realised that a lot of children in their community were similarly vulnerable, so they set up a homework club to ensure the children did not have to be home alone.

Journey to Healing is a successful model that can easily be adapted to different contexts. For more information, and to download the training manuals, visit learn.tearfund.org and search for 'Journey to Healing', or write to us using the address on page 2.

As born among us

By Loida Carriel

In recent years, millions of people across Latin America have been forced to abandon their homes due to political, economic and social turmoil in their countries. As they arrive in neighbouring countries, many face discrimination, racism and abuse.

In 2019, Tearfund founded the campaign *Como nacido entre nosotros* ('As born among us'), which takes its name from God's call for foreigners to be treated as native-born (Leviticus 19:33–34). The campaign encourages churches to welcome migrants and provide them with practical, spiritual and emotional support.

God of love

Training has been offered to hundreds of church leaders across Latin America and the Caribbean, including Pastor Jaime from Cúcuta in Colombia. He says, 'Through the training, we found a God of love, a God who loves the migrant. The teachings that inspire us the most are compassion, mercy, the love

of Christ – to know that Christ himself, as a child, was a foreigner.

'The church must open its doors because they find in us a place of refuge and protection for all their rights. We give them psychosocial support, counselling and medical care.'

Yalitza had to beg for food when she and her family first arrived in Colombia after a difficult and dangerous journey from Venezuela. She says, 'It is very, very hard to leave your country and go to another place... It is too hard... It is as if a little piece was torn away from you.'

'The church has supported me especially spiritually... and they have supported me with food. My son had no way to study, and they also supported me in that. I thank God.'

Mobile application (app)

Como nacido entre nosotros has launched a free-of-charge mobile phone app, in Spanish and

❏ Many people are making the dangerous journey from Venezuela into Colombia on foot. Photo: Ferley Ospina/Tearfund



Portuguese, that aims to connect migrants with churches and other organisations able to provide support.

Three core elements make this app different from others. The app:

- works across all the countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region providing content for the entire migrant journey, including information on legal rights in each country
- provides access to support offered by churches, alongside that of civil society and public organisations
- addresses both the practical and spiritual needs of people who are migrating, including spiritual encouragement through Bible reflections and audio clips.

One user of the app said, ‘When I arrived in Ecuador I did not know where to go, and when I got in touch with you through your website, you recommended the mobile phone app. I immediately made contact with a church in Quito and they supported me. I am now telling other people about this app.’

Advocacy

The churches and other organisations involved in the campaign are advocating for the rights of migrants and speaking up against racism, discrimination and exploitation.

In February 2021, a crucial public immigration policy was approved by the President of Colombia. The policy allows more than 1 million Venezuelans to legalise their status in Colombia, giving them access to healthcare, work, education and other rights. *Como nacido entre nosotros* played a key role in shaping this policy through working groups and promotion of the law.

Pastor Jaime says, ‘Our hope for the migrant population in our church is that they will find a better quality of life in all areas, which is what they long for.’

Loida Carriel is Tearfund’s Regional Advocacy Advisor for Latin America and the Caribbean.

comonacidoentrenosotros.org



📍 Pastor Jaime’s church is supporting families who have fled to Colombia from neighbouring countries.
Photo: Ferley Ospina/Tearfund

Diploma

Tearfund, the Fuller Theological Seminary of the United States and *Como nacido entre nosotros* are offering Christian leaders in Latin America the opportunity to complete an accredited diploma in ‘Response of the church to the migration crisis in Latin America and the Caribbean’.

The purpose of the course is to strengthen the church’s ability to influence and mobilise communities of faith in favour of migrants. The course is made up of six modules and is being taught remotely.

For more information email loida.carriel@tearfund.org

diplomadoscentrolatino.org

Case study

Tamam's story

Tamam lived a quiet and comfortable life in northern Syria with her family. They had a home in the countryside where they reared goats and cultivated fruit, olives, vegetables and herbs. Tamam remembers 'a big land where we used to walk. We would just walk and not worry.'

When conflict came to her village, everything changed. There was no electricity or running water, the crops failed and the family became hungry as food prices rose. Eventually, Tamam and her children fled, making the difficult and dangerous journey to Beirut in neighbouring Lebanon.

All gone

'This is the garden in front of my home,' says Tamam, holding up a photograph. 'It was a beautiful day and everything around us was nice. It was a happy moment. All that is left of that moment is this photo and me. Everything else has gone. My husband (who died in a car accident), the garden, my home... they are all gone but I remain.'



📷 Tamam holds up a photo of her late husband and the home she left behind in Syria. Photo: Ruth Towell/Tearfund

Tamam's family now live in two rooms in the middle of Beirut. Their home is cramped and dangerous. The buildings are badly constructed and the roofs often leak and collapse. The neighbourhood is not safe for her traumatised children and finding enough money to pay the rent is a constant struggle.

Tamam is devastated that she and her children live in such conditions. 'In Syria we did not have financial pressure,' she says. 'We did not have to worry about making ends meet. We did not have

📷 Tamam with two of her children. Photo: Ruth Towell/Tearfund





❏ Tamam (centre) has found home and community with the other women learning to sew at Tahaddi's education centre.
Photo: Ruth Towell/Tearfund

to pay rent, we had our own home. We were more comfortable and life was easier. Here we have faced economic pressure: paying for rent, paying for the children and all of their needs.'

Welcome and friendship

Tearfund's partner, Tahaddi (which means 'challenge' in Arabic), has an education centre right in the heart of the community where Tamam now lives. Staff from the centre helped Tamam to set up her new home when she first arrived, giving her mattresses and financial support.

Later, Tamam was delighted to join Tahaddi's sewing programme. There she has learnt a new skill in tailoring, which provides essential income. Just as importantly, Tamam has found a warm welcome and friendship.

To Tamam, the Tahaddi centre is a home where she can recover her self-worth, dignity and health while her children receive trauma support and an education.

'I would like to thank the Tahaddi centre,' says Tamam. 'But I would also like to thank the other women who are with me in the sewing programme. They have become like sisters to me. They are very caring, very kind.'

Daring to dream

Tamam's new skills have helped her to be more positive about the future, and allowed her to dream of returning to Syria. 'When I think about going back to my home one day, I feel happy. Because now I will be able to open a sewing shop and teach my children the same skills.'

'It is hard to explain what home means to me... Home is the feeling of having all my family and holding them dear in my heart. Without them, my heart would be empty.'

Tahaddi has been supporting Syrian families in Lebanon since 2011 offering free medical care, trauma counselling, home visits and material assistance. They run an education programme for children, and literacy and skills classes for adults.

Resilient communities

Every year, millions of people are forced to leave their homes and communities because of unpredictable weather caused, or made worse, by climate change.

Some experience violent storms and floods that destroy their houses, crops and businesses. Others have to move because there is no longer enough water where they live. Environmental degradation caused by deforestation and unsustainable farming practices often makes these problems worse.

Use the following steps to help your community decide how best to adapt to current changes in the weather, and prepare for future changes. Make sure everyone has the opportunity to participate including young people, older people and people with disabilities.

Steps

- 1** Invite all community members to gather together on a day that works well for the majority of people. Ask the community to select a small group of volunteers (men and women) who will be responsible for planning and monitoring activities, as well as organising future discussions.
- 2** Use participatory approaches such as mapping (see box opposite) to identify observed changes in the local weather over the last ten years, and the impact of these changes.

☐ Communities in the dry north-east of Brazil are struggling to cope with drought conditions made worse by climate change.
Photo: Tom Price – Ecce Opus/Tearfund

- 3** Discuss what might happen if the weather continues to change.
- 4** Agree on a few key activities that will help the community adapt to the changes and reduce the risk of disaster – ideally ones that can be implemented using local labour and resources.

For example, communities prone to flooding might decide to:

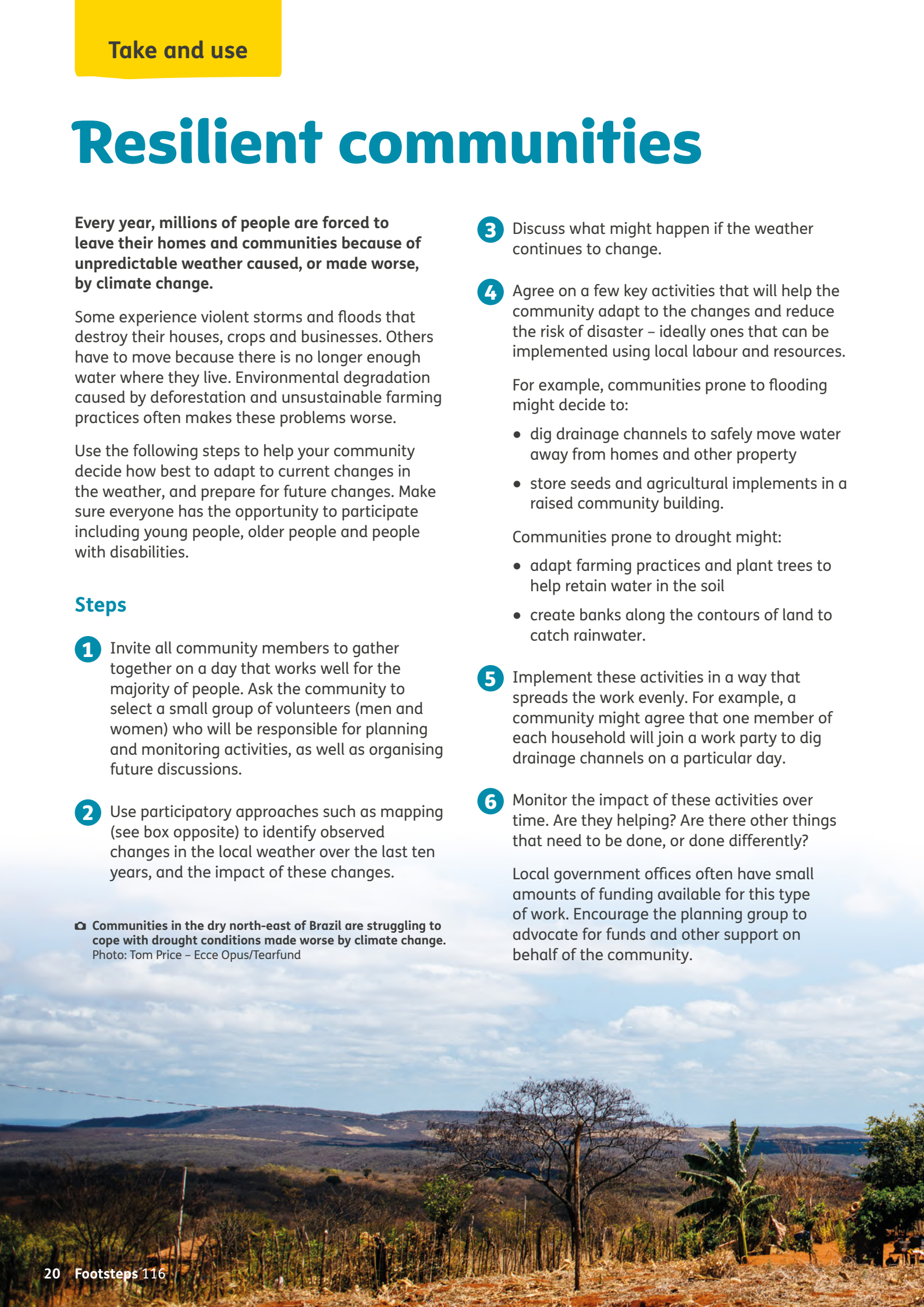
- dig drainage channels to safely move water away from homes and other property
- store seeds and agricultural implements in a raised community building.

Communities prone to drought might:

- adapt farming practices and plant trees to help retain water in the soil
- create banks along the contours of land to catch rainwater.

- 5** Implement these activities in a way that spreads the work evenly. For example, a community might agree that one member of each household will join a work party to dig drainage channels on a particular day.
- 6** Monitor the impact of these activities over time. Are they helping? Are there other things that need to be done, or done differently?

Local government offices often have small amounts of funding available for this type of work. Encourage the planning group to advocate for funds and other support on behalf of the community.





📍 Carrying out a mapping exercise in Malawi. Photo: Alex Baker/Tearfund

Mapping

Mapping is a participatory tool that can be used to aid community discussions about the effects of climate change in their area. The exercise often leads to helpful conversations about both problems and solutions.

1. In groups of four to six people, draw maps of the main features and landmarks of the community. The maps should include houses, community facilities, roads, bridges, agricultural land and natural resources such as trees and water sources.

It can be helpful for groups of children, young women, young men, older women and older men to create separate maps, as their opinions about risks and priorities may be different.

Maps can be drawn on the ground with sticks, stones and leaves, with chalk on a blackboard or with marker pens on large sheets of paper.

2. In the same groups, mark on the maps any areas affected by changes in the climate. Make a note of the types of impacts, frequency and scale. Are some households more vulnerable than others? Why is this?
3. Look at each other's maps and discuss the similarities and differences.
4. Discuss what the community might look like in five or ten years' time if action is not taken now to reduce the impact of climate change.
5. Discuss, agree and prioritise what the community can do to adapt to changes in the climate and reduce the risk of disaster.

Case study and further reading ▶



Case study A wonder!

Alzira lives in north-eastern Brazil where long periods of drought are causing many people to migrate to other parts of the country.

She says, 'I always had problems with the lack of water. It was very difficult. I had to carry it on my back, on my head. We had to fetch water for everything. There were even situations when we needed to get up at midnight to wait for the *cacimbão* (a small well) to fill a can of water. Whoever arrived first would take it.'

'Now that I have water here very close to my house, I have extra time to work at home.'

Local organisation Ação Evangélica (ACEV), in partnership with Alzira's church, began working with the community to identify the changes they were experiencing, and to help them address their water and agricultural needs.



📷 Alzira lovingly looks after her new vegetable garden. Photo: ACEV

Alzira's family participated in the discussions and then helped to drill and set up a well near to their house. ACEV provided training in maintenance of the well, sustainable agriculture and environmental management.

Alzira says, 'The project helped me a lot and I learnt a lot of things. I liked the guidelines for taking better care of the environment. I learnt how to save water and how to manage waste better.'

'Now that I have water here very close to my house, I have extra time to work at home. I really wanted to have a vegetable garden and now I have one in my yard, all fresh and without pesticides. It is a wonder!'

Further reading

Roots guides

- **Reducing risk of disaster in our communities** Contains details of a participatory approach to help communities identify and reduce risk.
- **Project cycle management** Explains the different phases in the project cycle and suggests practical tools to use in each phase.
- **Advocacy toolkit** Includes advice on how to ask for funds for community projects from local government offices.

Previous editions of *Footsteps*

- Insects – *Footsteps* 115
- Farming for the future – *Footsteps* 110
- Managing disasters – *Footsteps* 88
- Agriculture and climate change – *Footsteps* 70

Download these resources from learn.tearfund.org or use the address on page 2 to request paper copies. Available in multiple languages.



📍 **Organically grown fruit in Brazil.**
Photo: Tom Price – Ecce Opus/Tearfund

Footsteps bearing fruit in Brazil

Pastor Cristiane Villela Rodrigues and her husband are both Baptist pastors in Brazil. They live in a rural area, and to supplement their income they grow fruit and vegetables organically.

Pastor Cristiane says, 'Like any small farmer, we needed to learn more in order to increase our productivity and our sales. Back in 2019, we were introduced to *Footsteps* magazine by the organisation FEPAS. We benefited greatly from edition 103 (Entrepreneurship) and, as a result of implementing its practical ideas, including the

development of a business plan, we were invited to go on an exchange visit abroad.

The visit enabled us to present our organic farming work to another organisation, which decided to support us financially and provide additional technical support. This has helped us to become financially sustainable.

We have really embraced organic farming and today we are certified and registered with ABIO, an organic farmers' association from Rio de Janeiro.'

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Footsteps ISSN 0962 28619

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Design Wingfinger Graphics, Leeds

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Interview

Returning home

Trintawat Thuraworn (known as Dr Chi) is from the Karen ethnic group in northern Thailand. Dr Chi grew up in rural Chiang Rai, but after leaving the area to study he did not return for more than 40 years. Here he tells us why he decided to go back, and what he is doing now.

Why did you leave Chiang Rai?

‘When I was young a lot of us left the area because we were attracted by the cities and did not want to work as farmers. I gained a PhD on the subject of non-formal education and worked as a professor for many years.’

What made you return?

‘My father, just before he passed away, gave me a vision for the future. He encouraged me to return home and start farming.’

‘I realised that I wanted to restore the land given to me, live a self-sufficient life and become a role model for the people of my home town and area. I also want my land to serve as a learning centre to inspire people in Thailand and other countries.’

How are you working towards this vision?

‘I am applying self-sufficiency principles that fit with the social and environmental setting in my home area. My farm includes a “five-layer forest” where each layer contains edible crops. For example: fruit trees, shrubs with berries, vegetables, herbs and a variety of root crops.’

‘By looking at how forests grow and maintain themselves in nature, we can copy the overall pattern and apply it to how we grow food.’



📷 Dr Chi makes a healthy tea from homegrown herbs for his visitors.
Photo: Mon Hug Karen farm stay

‘My father encouraged me to return home and start farming.’

‘I am always conducting research and looking for new options for value-added products. For example, health treatments using local wisdom and herbs. I am also networking with other people with a similar vision so we can share ideas and learn together.’

What advice do you have for others?

‘Do not turn your back on your ancestral lands. Find your abilities and preferences based on resources in your home area. Find your own clear vision and goals. Develop your potential both in knowledge and skills. Take action and persevere.’

Dr Chi runs Mon Hug Karen farm stay.
[facebook.com/chiangraikarenfarmstay](https://www.facebook.com/chiangraikarenfarmstay)

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