



Canadian Lutheran
World Relief

partnership

Your generosity
in action

Winter 2024



INSIDE: Doxa, a Bernese Mountain Dog, is part of a therapy program for Ukrainian children displaced by the war.

***Year in review:
Your impact in 2023***

PHOTO: SIMON CHAMBERS/ACT ALLIANCE



Dear friends,

As 2024 begins, I'm happy to write and share some brief stories from around the world that demonstrate the impact of your gifts to CLWR last year. These stories span the globe and I hope also represent the spectrum of CLWR's mission.

You'll find examples here of your support arriving immediately after disaster, perhaps with a warm blanket around someone's shoulders and a simple tarp over their heads for the first nights after losing their homes.

As crisis drags on, you'll find new clean water sources set up and protection for those at risk of violence. You'll find the seeds and farming tools provided for families to grow new crops, and new irrigation schemes where the land is drier than it used to be.

As families who have been through disaster try to build again, you'll see new

income sources, with business start-ups, education, and skills training.

As families' physical needs are met but the emotional and psychological impact of war and disaster lingers, you'll find trauma care helping people heal. And where people have no safe place to turn, you'll find the life-saving work of resettling refugees in Canada. All of this work happens through CLWR, carried out by our partners around the world, and all of it is only possible because of you.

Thank you for your commitment to this mission and to sharing God's love for the world by responding where people are suffering, and challenging the root causes of the injustices they face. I am honoured to call you a partner in this work.

Karin Achtelstetter, Executive Director

We're always ready to tell you more about how your gift is making a difference!

Contact our office any time at **1-800-661-2597** or email clwr@clwr.org

COVER STORY Ukraine | Helping children cope with trauma

The conflict in Ukraine has been traumatic for millions of Ukrainian civilians forced to flee their homes for safer parts of the country or as refugees into surrounding countries. While adults have an understanding of the conflict, the trauma is much worse for children whose worlds have been turned upside down, often in the course of a few hours.

Barbara Körozsi is a therapy dog trainer in Berehove, Ukraine. She brings her therapy dog Doxa to work with children at a shelter for internally displaced people in Berehove. The children play with Doxa, who is helping to bring them comfort, build self confidence and teach them to trust again.

Many of the children have lost all sense of control over their surroundings. Deciding what Doxa will do and directing her with commands provides them

with a sense of control in a safe space.

Barbara recalls one family with two children: "When they arrived, the children were afraid of any noise that sounded like the war. Thunder caused them anxiety. A psychologist from Kyiv tried to help but couldn't get very far. They wouldn't go anywhere without their mother. But when they started to interact with Doxa, they began to open up more and more. They now come without their mom. They don't cry but play and have fun."

Your support is helping the children in Ukraine recover from trauma and reclaim their childhood. Thank you!

Cover image: Therapy dog Doxa with children at the shelter in Berehove. (Photo: Simon Chambers/ACT Alliance)



Virginia standing next to her crops in San Josecito, El Salvador (Photo: LWF Central America)

El Salvador | Climate insurance for small-scale farmers

Virginia Escobar is a small-scale farmer living in the "Dry Corridor" in El Salvador. She cultivates basic grains as well as fruit trees on her farmland.

In the past, Virginia used to be able to sow twice in the rainy season. The first harvest was sold to pay back loans while the second was for the family's subsistence. But due to irregular droughts in recent years, she was able to plant only once. The cost of agricultural inputs was also on the rise.

Virginia participated in a crop insurance program launched by CLWR and partners, aimed at strengthening the climate resilience of small-scale producers of basic grains.

The insurance has smaller requirements and coverage than traditional insurance and is automatically activated when drought, excess rainfall or seismic movements are recorded in a given territory using real-time satellite data and have affected the farmers' crops.

The project also provided training and education on climate change resilience to the farmers.

The climate project allowed Virginia and many farmers like her to continue farming through challenging times and be better prepared and resilient to future challenges.

Thank you for supporting small-scale farming families in El Salvador!

Haiti | Humanitarian assistance in response to disaster

In 2023, as Haiti was struggling to recover from heavy flooding and landslides, it was hit by two massive earthquakes. The back-to-back disasters complicated the lives of many people, like Mickens Pierre, whose situation was already precarious.

Mickens and his family of five live in a two-room house with a thatched roof that is susceptible to rain. He is a small-scale farmer who raises livestock and also works as a day-labourer to support his family.

The floods and earthquakes damaged Mickens' home and washed away his crop of beans and corn. With your support, our partners in Haiti are providing families like Mickens' with emergency cash support to cope with these disasters.

"This money comes at the right time for us. The bean crop harvesting process was a disaster, I lost it all. I didn't know what to do, where I would find a way to replant the beans. Now my family can breathe since we have something to eat," says Mickens. "The money I received will not only provide food for the family during this period but will also help me to acquire plantains to grow in my plot in the future."

Thank you for helping families like Mickens' get through this crisis and begin to rebuild their lives!

Mickens standing in front of his home, which was damaged in the floods and earthquakes. (Photo: LWF/Fondation Nouvelle Grand'Anse)



Canadian Lutheran World Relief

2023 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



You are making a difference in the lives of thousands of people around the world! **Thank you!**

Your support in 2023 was critically valuable.

Your gifts are:

- Providing emergency food and shelter for people displaced by conflict or disaster
- Connecting communities with sustainable sources of clean water
- Improving food security and building resilience to climate change
- Helping refugees resettle and find new homes in Canada

We take good care of your generosity. **Thank you for your trust!**



Hadija (not her real name) standing in front of the temporary shelter provided for her family at the camp in Kismayu, Somalia. (Photo: LWF Somalia)

Somalia | Emergency support for displaced families

The population of Somalia relies heavily on agriculture and livestock farming. However, years of inadequate rainfall have led to prolonged drought, resulting in poor harvests, the death of animals, and the destruction of livelihoods. Many once-thriving families have been forced to the brink of survival, compelled to abandon their traditional livelihoods, and seek refuge in urban centres or camps for the internally displaced.

Families like Hadija's were getting by comfortably with their herds of goats, sheep, and cows. The drought wiped out their livestock and forced them from their home to a camp in search of aid.

With your support, our partners are providing food, shelter, water, healthcare and sanitation services at the camps and helping build community resilience to climatic and other shocks.

"I had about 115 goats, 57 cows and two sheep before the drought took them away," says Hadija. "My children almost died of hunger. We left home to look for help. When we arrived at the camp, we received many items that helped us settle. We were given a temporary shelter made of tarpaulin, soap, and other household items."

Your support is helping to meet the urgent needs of displaced families like Hadija's. Thank you!

Chad | Shelter and supplies for families fleeing conflict

In April 2023, a war broke out between two factions in Sudan, which led to the displacement of thousands of people to Chad and other neighbouring countries.

Alia Mahamat Saleh Youssouf is a 50-year-old Sudanese refugee living in a camp in Chad. In her previous life, she was a teacher in her village and lived with her husband and four other family members. The conflict forced the family to flee to Chad for safety.

Your generous gifts enabled our partners to provide emergency shelter and food, sanitation facilities and clean water to hundreds of families like Alia's.

"I live in the shelter built by LWF with my children and my husband. It is separated from the others, which allows us to light a fire in a stove made of three stones," Alia said. "My environment is quite good thanks to the awareness-raising on hygiene and sanitation. It'll be difficult for us to get back to how we used to live, but we have hope."

Thank you for your compassion and generosity in responding to the needs of families like Alia's!

Alia Mahamat Saleh Youssouf cooking in front of her shelter in Ourang camp. (Photo: Idriss Adji/LWF Chad)



Birhan sitting in front of her bee boxes. (Photo: Danial Zemchal/LWF)

Ethiopia | Supporting families to earn their own income

Birhan Desta used to provide for her family of six through her small business of making and selling a local beverage in Tigray, Ethiopia. When conflict broke out in 2020, the family was forced to flee for their lives, leaving their home and livelihood behind.

Upon their eventual return, Birhan found that her home had been ransacked and all her supplies looted. The family was left with no means of earning. They were able to obtain some food relief, but Birhan was anxious to restart her own livelihood. "I am here to work for myself, not to passively wait for someone to provide me food," she said.

Tigray is known for white honey and Birhan had always been interested in beekeeping. Our partner, LWF Ethiopia, provided conflict-affected households with beekeeping training and beehive facilities as a means of earning income. "Now I am confident that I have some skills to shape my future," Birhan said. "Beekeeping doesn't demand much space, what it needs is continuous follow-up, which I am trained for."

We're inspired by Birhan's determination and drive, but none of this would have been possible without your partnership. Thank you!

Refugee Resettlement | Helping families find safety

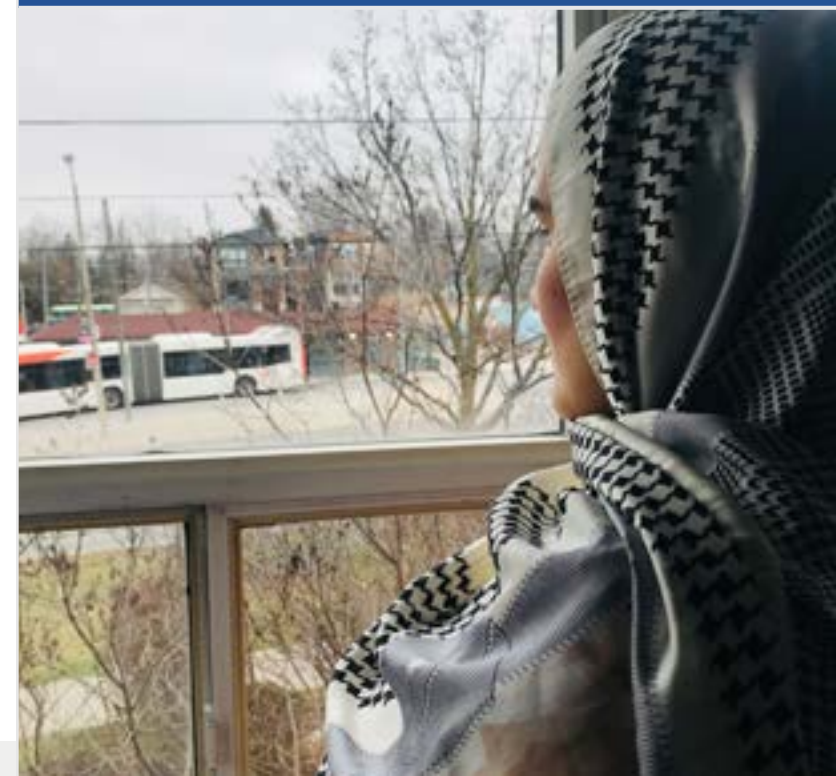
Before the Taliban took over Afghanistan, Aisha and her husband Umar (names changed for safety) were journalists and storytellers. The couple had three children.

When the Taliban took over their province, the family's lives were at risk because of their work. They fled to a relative's home in Kabul. After Umar was recognized on the street and badly beaten along with one of their children, they knew they had to leave Afghanistan. The family made a perilous journey by road to Pakistan. While there, St. Philip's Lutheran Church in Ontario sponsored the family to Canada with the support of CLWR.

CLWR has facilitated the sponsorship of 100 refugees under the Canadian government's special immigration measures and humanitarian program (Operation Afghan Safety) to protect some of the most vulnerable refugees from Afghanistan.

Aisha, Umar, and their children, along with many other refugee families, are finally safe and can begin to rebuild their lives thanks to the support of Lutheran congregations like yours all across Canada. Thank you!

Aisha stands at the window of her new home in Canada. She and Umar look forward to a brighter future for their children. (Photo: Aisha & Umar)



Your Stories | The Bethesda Sharecropper Project



Church council chair Don Capotosto and owner of Galten Farms Arthur Schickedanz presenting a cheque to CLWR's Karin Achtelstetter. (Photo: Lorne Smith)

“A little church doing big things.” That’s what Henry Reinders, Ontario and Quebec representative for Canadian Foodgrains Bank, calls Bethesda Evangelical Lutheran Church in Unionville, Ontario. Since 2000, the church has run the Sharecropper Growing Project to raise funds for CLWR’s account in the Foodgrains Bank. Over the past 24 years, the church has raised \$583,000 by growing crops, including \$30,000 this year from a 51-acre crop of corn. The large amount the project has raised is thanks to a four-to-one match from the Canadian government—each \$100 raised results in \$500 of food assistance for people in the developing world.

The project was founded by church members Lorne Smith, and by the late Gerhard Schickedanz and his son, Arthur, owners of Galten Farms.

Smith, 86, said he was inspired to start the project after being involved in other Foodgrains Bank growing projects in the region. “I felt we could start our own as a church,” he said, adding, “It wasn’t a hard thing to do. People came right on board.”

They called it the Sharecropper Project because non-farming members of the church are also invited to take part by sharing donations to help defray the costs of growing the crops—paying for things like seed and fertilizer. “We want them to share in the production of the crop and then in sharing with those who need food in the developing world,” said Smith.

The project holds two fundraising events a year where church members can donate towards the costs. Support also comes from the St. John’s United Church in nearby Oakville, which raises money from their congregation for the project. In addition to raising funds for global hunger, the project is also a great way for the congregation to be connected to the church’s farming roots. “We were originally an agricultural congregation,” Smith said, adding that the area is now a busy and bustling suburb of Toronto. “There are only two farmers in the church now.” Members of the congregation have a chance to learn what it is like to be a farmer through the project. “They get to know what it’s like to farm and share the risks farmers take when planting a crop,” Smith said.

For Schickedanz, involvement in the project is a way to put into practice what his parents taught him when he was young. “I was raised to help those less fortunate,” he said, adding it is also a way for him to bring together his gifts and skills as a farmer to help people in need. What stands out for Schickedanz, who farms a total of 800 acres of land, is how the piece of property where the project is located is one of the most productive pieces of land they farm. “We don’t treat it any differently from the other land, but the good Lord has always blessed it. We’ve never had a crop failure on it.”

Bethesda pastor Roy Thakurdial sees the project as a way for a small congregation to make a big difference in the world. “We get to be involved in global mission as a small local congregation,” he said of the church, which averages 30 to 40 people on a Sunday. The project also enables the congregation to build inter-denominational relations with St. John’s United Church.

For CLWR’s Executive Director Karin Achtelstetter, the Sharecropper Project is inspiring. “Their generosity for so many years in supporting our work with Canadian Foodgrains Bank has no doubt saved thousands of lives and made a real difference for families who didn’t know where the next meal was coming from,” she said. “In a time when things can feel a bit hopeless, Bethesda is such an amazing example of how even one congregation working together really can make a difference.”