Addressing extreme hunger in conflict-affected communities
Join us to help people facing hunger in conflict-affected communities

Your support today will be multiplied 50 times, reaching families with essential food aid and assistance.

War tears people’s lives apart and forces them from their homes. This means they lose their land and have no way to grow food or earn money for their most basic needs. They face extreme hunger, and children and mothers are disproportionately affected. Christian Aid is working to support people in these dangerous situations.

At Christian Aid, we know we are stronger when we stand together. When we work in partnership, we achieve the greatest impact. One of our long-standing partners is the World Food Programme (WFP), the world’s leading humanitarian agency improving food security. We are currently working with the WFP to tackle the needs of displaced people in three countries.

It is an ambitious partnership, aiming to make a lifesaving difference to displaced people. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Nigeria, two of the worst food crises in the world are being exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, worsening a dangerous and desperate situation. More than one million Rohingya refugees from Myanmar currently live in Bangladesh. Life in the camps is difficult, although people are supplied with the basic necessities. Parents have no way to earn money to pay for their children’s education. We are helping families who are far from home and facing an uncertain future.

‘Christian Aid Bangladesh, in partnership with the WFP, has been delivering a crucial and much-needed crisis response. We are directly implementing this project in two of the most critical Rohingya camps’

- Himangshu D Dutta Roy, Project Manager, Christian Aid Bangladesh
DRC
Covid-19, regular Ebola outbreaks and a vicious cycle of violence means many people need urgent humanitarian interventions. As well as emergency food aid, we support and empower communities to develop the skills to cope with future threats and start to build a peaceful society.

Nigeria
The ongoing violence has led to millions of people becoming displaced and losing their homes and livelihoods. We have built partnerships in the north-east that have enabled us to help more than 400,000 displaced people in the conflict areas since 2016.

Bangladesh
Nearly 870,000 people who have fled Myanmar are crowded into refugee camps in Bangladesh. There are few facilities, and the camps are vulnerable to the dual threats of Covid-19 and flooding. We are working to improve the hygiene facilities and infrastructure with a cash-for-work programme, allowing people to earn money.

Based on partnership figures in 2021.

Across the world, Christian Aid and the WFP are helping to save the lives of people in the most dangerous situations and are working to give them a more secure future. Urgent action is needed to reach these people before it’s too late.

Christian Aid and the World Food Programme are standing together

We partner with the WFP because it has the operational ability, scale and resources to deliver assistance to those in greatest need. Christian Aid has deep connections with local communities, so our teams on the ground are able to direct aid where it is needed the most. Our experienced workers also develop and implement vital distribution plans, coordinating the supplies and arranging delivery schedules for communities.

Christian Aid’s approach involves working in partnership with communities. People are at the heart of all we do. We ensure that they participate fully in this work and tell us what is most needed in their homes and communities. Standing together, we are providing a lifeline for the families who need this support so urgently.

The support we supply through this partnership is flexible and adaptable to local contexts, giving us the ability to deliver what communities really need, and to change as their requirements evolve over time. That enables us to provide a range of interventions to help people in the ways that are of most use to them.

We start with emergency assistance, supplying food and healthcare. People are then given cash or vouchers to enable them to make their own food choices and support local markets. We teach people new skills so that they can set up small businesses for themselves and work as a team to improve the infrastructure in their communities.

Our programme aims to break the cycle of food insecurity and support people to re-establish their self-reliance.
A humanitarian crisis in Bangladesh

Escalating violence in Myanmar forced hundreds of thousands of people from their homes, including many Rohingya refugees who fled to Bangladesh. As civil conflict erupts once again in Myanmar this year, many more people have been forced to leave. The Bangladesh Government and aid agencies are struggling to cope with the needs of the thousands of people in the camps. Floods caused people to lose what little they had, damaged the camps’ infrastructure and placed further pressure on scarce resources.

Christian Aid Bangladesh has been working in the camps to implement a multi-agency project designed to improve infrastructure and make the camps safer. The WFP has an engineering team working in the camps, designing bridges, roads, pathways and drainage systems. Camp residents earn money by working on construction. This employment enables them to start to change their lives – for example, they can pay for school books and education, buy animals and set up vegetable gardens.

Earning money through the cash-for-work programme has enabled Shomsu Alam to buy school books for his children.

It is also good for wellbeing, as people become engaged in the projects and gain dignity and respect for their environment.

Cash-for-work schemes have many benefits for individuals and communities, including:

Community infrastructure improvements: Not only do these programmes repair or improve community infrastructure, but they also maintain people’s dignity through community engagement in the selection and implementation of projects.

Economic stimulus: Cash for work creates employment for individuals, who then spend that money locally; it also supports local businesses through the purchase of construction materials.

Short-term employment: Short-term employment opportunities help provide economically vulnerable people with the means to sustain themselves. They can also avoid selling assets or going into debt.

Community empowerment: Communities are involved in the selection, design and implementation of the work and have ownership of projects.

Earning an income has been transformative for Shomsu Alam and his family. He and his wife can now pay for informal schooling and books for their four children. They have also been able to buy goats and chickens and set up a garden, so they now have nutritional meals and an income. Shomsu worries about his children’s lack of formal education and his only wish in life is to ensure they have a future. He adds: ‘We don’t want [our children] to identify themselves as refugees anymore.’

Decade-long conflict in Nigeria

In the north-east of Nigeria, conflict has raged for over a decade and the humanitarian crisis has become one of the most severe in the world. The WFP estimates that 2.1 million people are displaced. But a dangerous situation has worsened, with the numbers of people facing food insecurity more than tripling from 2.89 million a year ago to 9.2 million people in April this year. Covid-19 disrupted supply chains and caused food prices to soar, and millions of workers have lost their income.

We supply emergency life-saving food as well as additional nutrition support for malnourished children under two years old, pregnant women and nursing mothers. This is a project that truly invests in the future of Nigeria’s children, giving them the supplementary food they need to get the best nutritional start in life and avoid the life-long consequences of malnutrition in early childhood. Malnutrition causes stunted growth and developmental delays in childhood, and also leads to health problems in adulthood. But interventions like ours head off these problems and give children the best start possible. Our programme also trains community nutrition workers, so that families and children in these areas will have long-term support for years to come.

The Covid-19 crisis has made our investments in sanitation and clean water more important than ever. We teach communities about the importance of good hygiene for preventing illness and then help them to make a difference to their environment. People earn money working together on community sanitation projects, such as building latrines and installing taps for clean water, and forming village cleaning groups.

People in communities with working markets are given cash and vouchers to buy food, allowing them to make choices for themselves and their families and helping keep markets running. Cash also helps to build livelihoods. People invest in their own businesses and earn a steady income.
Returning home in DRC

In the eastern DRC, decades of civil war have left millions of people far from home. The government is encouraging people to return to villages that are safe once more, but when people arrive home, there is little left there for them. The number of people who are facing food shortages has doubled in the last year, with 27.3 million in desperate need of food support, and 3.3 million children are acutely malnourished.

Returning home has been a struggle for pregnant Maria Mbelu Mbelu, her husband and 18-month-old toddler. She talks about the gruesome atrocities she has witnessed and the killing of her husband’s little brother. When armed rebels took over her village, she and her family escaped to the bush and survived by scavenging what they could. While Maria is happy to be back, she is sad to have lost her little kitchen and everything they owned, including their animals.

Our programme has supplied Maria with flour and oil, and infant supplementary food. She is deeply grateful, saying: ‘Christian Aid has helped me, because I see the change in my body and my child.’ She adds: ‘Your project is good because it is already helping us to recover our health. God be with you.’

Food aid addresses urgent, immediate needs, helping more people to move back to their home villages without fear of hunger. The supplementary food will help the most vulnerable young children and pregnant women.

Christian Aid’s wider work in DRC aims to tackle the root causes of violence and to build sustainable peace, now that people are returning home.

We also teach communities how to set up village savings and loan schemes, so people can save money. Long-term recovery and resilience activities like these provide lasting solutions to address food insecurity and malnutrition. They are a way for people to move from humanitarian support to self-sufficiency, and take the next steps to a more settled and secure life.

Your support will make a world of difference to people like Yagana Arim, who fled the insurgents with her family and was struggling to earn enough to feed her family. Our programme supplied Yagana with a monthly food voucher, enabling her family to eat nutritious, regular meals. We have also helped her set up a grain milling business, so she can make flour. ‘I am so much grateful to WFP/Christian Aid for making my life better,’ says Yagana.

‘Your project is good because it is already helping us to recover our health. God be with you.’ Maria Mbelu Mbelu
A gift with an incredible impact

The nature of this crucial partnership means that for every £1 invested the WFP contributes aid worth £50, amplifying the impact of the initial investment many times over. However, we need the help of supporters to enable us to continue to carry out this vital work.

Project name: Addressing extreme hunger in conflict-affected communities.

Project partner: World Food Programme (WFP).

Project location: Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria.

Target: People who have been affected by conflict and face extreme hunger.

Target numbers: Aim to reach 2,195,275 individuals in 439,055 households.

Cost per person: £5.54 per person.

Shomsu Alam and his family have lived in a refugee camp in Bangladesh since leaving Myanmar in 2017. Earning money through cash for work means he can support his children’s education.