

# Act on Poverty

## Transcript from Act on Poverty session three: Generous

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My name is Steven Amusala. I am the Director, or Chief Executive Officer, of the ADS Western. ADS Western stands for Anglican Development Services-Western. [It's] a faith-based development organisation, operating largely in Western Kenya [and it's] the social transformation arm of the Anglican Church.

In our context here we are seeing, you know, high temperatures. We are seeing very, very unpredictable rainfall patterns. Now we are talking about a country that relies on farming at more than 90%. Many, many are rural households, and you know everybody has to eat, production has to happen [but] households are having less and less to eat. Households do not have as much income as high cost of living, and especially as we work with poor and vulnerable populations, it's something that we cannot escape from. And there have been many angles to it and one of the things that has you know come up time and again is you know the negative impact of climate change.

There was siltation [(pollution)] of Lake Victoria and when there is siltation that means that water levels rise. So, when the water levels rose so many of those villagers were actually displaced from their residences. We had situations where a school you know experienced submerging. Many of these communities, many of them don't have money to buy another piece of land elsewhere, so they would only then be displaced [and] live in tented camps, hoping that then when the water subsides they can go back to their former homes. For many of them that has not happened. But when you visit and look at the life of families in those tented camps you cannot, you know, be OK [with the situation]. In the sense of appreciating the level of indignity, to a great extent many people live in despair. If tomorrow comes, let it come. If it doesn't, well, is there any good to be alive? So, there's quite a bit of that level of discouragement and all that, but also social poverty, people are cut off. People are not able to lead more meaningful lives. Sometimes people want to ask, does God love us? How is the love of God manifested in this situation? We sometimes can feel quite overwhelmed because of our own sense of vulnerability, even internal vulnerabilities. But also, just sometimes feeling like can I make a difference? And many, many times [when] we have seen, you know, through joint action responses from, you know, peer responses, I mean within the communities, support from partners, mobilisation from the church, then many in the communities are able to say, WOW, I mean this is truly God at work.

We embarked to try and, do I use the word challenge, or to try and engage with our local governments to develop policy that is responsive to the situation at hand. I am very glad that we were able to, from a lot of effort, conversations, give and take, achieve you know a situation where three of our county governments have been able to, you know, put in place legislation in terms of an act of the local government, the county assembly. So that, then we have a framework for, you know, climate change intervention. It enables local climate actions to be achievable. Sometimes when you talk about climate action, it may sound [like] some big, big things that need to be done. Yes, there are big things to be done, but also for us really [there] is the small things to be [done]- that planting and growing of that tree, it may seem small, but it's such a huge thing.

Many times God comes, [God] steps in through people. We realise we are not in isolation. There's someone who cares. Many times, it's not necessarily material. I think, there are many, many situations, where it's that I am praying with you, that we are praying together with you. There are many times that it's about an encouraging and lifting [a] message [together], walking into, you know, that pain and just saying, you know, could we bear this together? Jesus says that by this will you be known to be my disciple. You know, love for one another. John Chapter 10, verse 10 is very central to the work of ADS Western- 'The enemy comes to kill, to steal and to destroy but I have come so that you may have life and have it in abundance.' [It's] really a statement of hope. A statement that then you know brings life, speaks life in itself. That for us as we step out to meet with God's people, as we step out to meet with the communities, we step out then with a message of abundant life. It's not all lost. Despite of these vulnerabilities, despite these difficulties, despite what we may be facing as individuals, as households, as whole communities, even as nation, that it's not all lost that we have assurance of life, abundant life through God and through Christ.