

# Ivana's story



**Ivana**  
from Bolivia

Ten-year-old Ivana lives in Bolivia, a country in South America. Her home is in a very beautiful region, deep in the Amazon rainforest – with trees, birds and animals all around.

A more varied diet means that Ivana and her family have all the things their bodies need.

The rainforest is very important; it's important for Ivana because she grows her food there, and it's important for the world because the trees in the forest help to make oxygen, which we all need to breathe.

Ivana likes living in the rainforest: 'There are animals we can hunt, fruit we can eat, and when we need it we can use the

wood.' But life has been hard for Ivana and her family too – sometimes they have not had enough to eat, because the forest flooded or because it was too dry and fires destroyed the trees and their crops.

The charity Christian Aid and an organisation in Bolivia that it gives money to, called CIPC, work with families like Ivana's to find ways to make sure they have a supply of food all through the year. CIPC gives families hens and sheep and teaches them how to look after them. These animals provide the families with meat and eggs.

Ivana says: 'We eat lots of eggs. I like fried! Sometimes we swap eggs for sugar and bananas. It is better now we have hens because we can buy more to eat.'

The families have also been given seeds (so they can grow a wide range of fruit and vegetables) and shown how to look after the wild cocoa plants that grow around them.

Cocoa can be used to make chocolate which, like eggs, can also be sold or swapped for other things – like rice, oil and sugar.

Ivana says: 'Chocolate is important because we can sell it and buy the other food we need. I like hot chocolate, it's nice.'

Eggs and chocolate have helped Ivana's community make huge changes to their lives. A more varied diet means that Ivana and her family have all the things their bodies need to help them stay strong and healthy.

# Jeremiah's story



**Jeremiah**  
from Kenya

The capital of Kenya is Nairobi. Many people living there are without jobs and are very poor. In fact half of the people in Nairobi live in settlements – sometimes called 'slums'. In these settlements the houses are not well-built and there are no sewers.

The pipes that brought them drinking water ran along open drains.

Jeremiah Muli lives with his family in a settlement in Nairobi called Matopeni. In the Swahili language Matopeni means 'in the mud'. Three hundred families live in Matopeni. There are no roads, no proper buildings or schools, and until very recently there were no drains, showers or toilets.

Jeremiah is 12 years old. He likes football and supports Manchester United. Chapattis are his favourite food. They are a kind of flatbread made of flour, oil and water.

Life in Matopeni was very hard. There were no toilets, so people went to the toilet in a plastic bag. These bags were known as 'flying toilets' because people threw them out of the house into the street or onto roofs.

Jeremiah and his family often got ill. The pipes that brought them drinking water ran along open drains – and because the pipes were cracked the water became polluted.

An organisation called Maji na Ufanisi, supported by the charity Christian Aid, is helping people in the settlements. In some areas it has built toilets and showers and provided water tanks that store fresh water.

Maji na Ufanisi wanted to provide storage tanks, toilets and showers in Matopeni. Then Jeremiah and his family would have clean water. Jeremiah said: 'If I'm an engineer [when I grow up] I can help improve Matopeni.'

Jeremiah is already helping to improve his area! The community got together with Maji na Ufanisi to clear up their streets and build new drains. Some of them have even moved their homes to make way for the drains and walkways beside them. With work by the local government on the community's toilet block progressing well, Jeremiah can look forward to a healthier future.

# Bizwek's story



**Bizwek**  
from Malawi

This is Bizwek. He lives with his mum, dad, and five brothers and sisters! They live in a village called Nalingula 2.

Changes in weather patterns are making it difficult for farmers to grow their crops.

Bizwek enjoys playing football for his team called the Zango Rangers. But what Bizwek enjoys more than anything is working in his garden. 'I am a garden boy,' he says. 'I like to be in the garden, just like my father.'

Bizwek and his family grow many sorts of fruits and vegetables, including bananas, onions, tomatoes, maize, pumpkins, cocoa, sweet potatoes and beans. They also keep chickens.

In many countries, including Malawi, changes in weather patterns are making it difficult for farmers to grow their crops. This is causing food shortages. In some parts of Malawi the only things people have got to eat are mangoes and whatever other fruits and berries are growing that month. Fruit is good for you, but in a healthy diet you need other things too.

An organisation called Evangelical Lutheran Development Services (ELDS), which is supported by the charity Christian Aid, showed Bizwek's family different ways of farming and watering their crops. ELDS also gave some farming equipment to other local farmers, for them to share. Now Bizwek's family are growing twice as many crops.

The family not only has enough to eat, but is also able to sell some of the crops to pay for clothes and the children's school fees. Bizwek now has enough food to help him study hard. 'I would like to become a radio presenter and present the news and do journalism,' he says.



# Meriling's story



**Meriling**  
from Nicaragua

This is Meriling. She lives with her father and mother in a village called La Paz del Tuma. La Paz del Tuma is in the mountains, in a part of Nicaragua where lots of coffee grows and most people work as coffee farmers. Meriling goes to school in La Paz del Tuma.

If they work hard together, they will save enough money to build a proper school for the children.

There are not enough classrooms for all the children, so some of them have to work outside! The few classrooms there are don't have blackboards or proper floors. They don't have clean water or toilets either, so the children have to ask if they can use nearby houses.

The children have to do the cleaning themselves at the end of the day. And to make things worse, the school building used to store dangerous chemicals. Their parents are worried about this as they don't know if it might be damaging their children's health.

The children's teacher, Ivette, doesn't just look after one class, but has to race between classrooms, teaching two classes at the same time.

Christian Aid works with an organisation in Nicaragua called Soppexcca. Soppexcca lends the coffee farmers of La Paz del Tuma money so they can buy more coffee plants and fertiliser. Now they produce more and tastier coffee that they can sell for more money. It has also helped the coffee farmers to become a cooperative. This means that they all help each other and work together, sharing equipment and knowledge.

Meriling's dad Eladio is a member of the cooperative. The farmers in the cooperative are saving some of the money they make from selling their coffee at better prices. They are putting these savings together so that they can afford something very special. Eladio believes that, if they work hard together, they will save enough money to build a proper school for the children of La Paz del Tuma. He has even found the spot where he would like to have the new school built.

# Rajashekhar's story



**Rajashekhar**  
from India

In lots of places around the world, the weather and the temperatures that people are used to are now changing. It's because lots of the energy that we use harms the planet. In many places, it means there are more floods and storms. In other places, there's not enough water to drink any more.

Changes to the climate have meant that it doesn't rain as much as it used to, so often there's not enough water to grow food.

Rajashekhar and his friends go to an eco-club at their school where they learn about the effects of climate change. They also discover practical things they can do to help the planet. 'For children of my age in India, it is important that we learn about the environment... I learned the following in school and told my parents: don't waste water. Plant trees. Save electricity.'

Young people in India are trying hard to make changes to stop the effects of climate change, even though many countries like ours do more to cause the problem in the first place.

In Tamil Nadu, changes to the climate have meant that it doesn't rain as much as it used to, so often there's not enough water to grow food. That's why it's so important that everyone, from Rajashekhar in India to us in the UK, all work together to treat the planet better.

A local organisation called the Society for People's Education and Economic Change (SPEECH), which is supported by Christian Aid, helps to run around 300 eco-clubs, like the one Rajashekhar goes to, in Tamil Nadu. John Deveram, the man who started SPEECH, says, 'Children are the best agents of change.'

# Patricia's story



**Patricia**  
from Sierra Leone

This is Patricia Sawie. She is 12 years old and the youngest of eight children in her family. She lives in a town called Gbap (pronounced Bap).

The land around Gbap is ideal for growing food, with fertile soil and plenty of water, but many people in the area have found it hard to grow enough to eat. This is partly because Sierra Leone is recovering from a civil war.

During the war, many people were killed and many more had to flee their homes. Though the war ended in 2002, it has taken a long time to repair the damage that was done to homes and farmland – and perhaps even more time to repair trust between people who were caught up in the fighting.

In Gbap, people are hard at work dealing with the challenges they face. They've set up a village development committee – a group who work together to make

life better for everyone in the town. It's important that this committee listens to everyone, including the young people, so they can make decisions that improve life for the whole community.

Patricia knows exactly what she wants. She would like to study hard so that one day she might be able to become the first female president of Sierra Leone. She says, 'I would feel so proud to be the first woman president. I want to read enough so that I have the ability to be president.'

Young people with big plans need lots of energy and a safe place to study, so the village development committee is making sure the community works together to grow enough food to feed everyone. They are also making sure the town has a new school, where Patricia can study hard to achieve her dreams.

The old school was not safe: there were cracks in the walls, wooden beams hanging from the ceiling and termites nesting in the classroom. Everyone has come together to help the village development committee. They have been supported by the Methodist Church of Sierra Leone, a partner of Christian Aid, which provided some of the tools they needed.

Patricia is excited about her new school. She says, 'It will be very good because we will have new desks and benches in the new building. We are happy that, because the roof is new, the rafters will not fall on us again and the rain will not drop in our books. What we would like next is a school band!'



# Guljan's story



**Guljan**  
from Afghanistan

This is Guljan. Her name means 'heart of the flower'. Guljan is nine years old and the eldest of four children. She has a brother and two sisters. She lives in a village called Khanghozak.

'It is important for both boys and girls to go to school. I have learnt to read and write, and now I am teaching my brother at home as well.'

About 450 people live in Khanghozak. The village is not easy to get to. It is an hour's drive from the nearest paved road!

Everybody in the village has chores to do. Guljan helps her dad look after their animals. She says, 'I help with the goats and sheep, and take them to pasture to eat grass. I wash the dishes, sweep the floor and play with my baby sister. I also go and collect water because the water here is salty. Every day we have to go all the way to Dughi [two hours away] to get water. All the girls go together by donkey.'

Guljan's teacher is called Ferishta Ghafour. The village doesn't have its own school, but Guljan has been going to a special literacy class, and now she can read and write. The classes are run by a local organisation called Women's Activities and Social Services Association (WASSA), which is supported by the charity Christian Aid.

Guljan loves going to her class. She says, 'I want to be a teacher... and I want to teach a mixed class of girls and boys. It is important for both boys and girls to go to school. I have learnt to read and write, and now I am teaching my brother at home as well.'

# Edile's story



**Edile**  
from Colombia

This is Edile Beite Chavarra. He is nine years old.

He lives in Las Camelias, in north-west Colombia. There has been lots of fighting over land where he lives. Some people want to take land from the people that live there and use it to grow plants that make palm oil, which can be sold for lots of money. Hundreds of people, like Edile, had to leave their homes when they were attacked.

One of the Christian Aid's partners has helped to create a safe place for people to move to. Edile and his family live there now.

When Edile was only little, his father was killed in the fighting. The rest of the family were so frightened that they ran away from their home. They were too afraid to go back.

Christian Aid is helping people who have been affected by fighting in Colombia. One of the charity's partners (the Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace) has helped to create a safe place for people to move to. Edile and his family live there now.

This safe place is called Las Camelias. It is very special because no one is allowed to bring weapons there. This means that people can feel safe and live in peace, and are not afraid of being attacked or forced out of their homes.

The weather is warm and wet, so houses in Las Camelias are very airy and open. And they are all raised off the ground so that they don't get flooded.

Edile loves his new home. 'I am very happy here. It is a lot of fun, and I have many friends,' he says.

The whole family are thankful they can live in peace.