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ZIMBABWE



Chalinzima Fodi is a 19-year-old girl who lives with her Aunty, Enestia Mudenda, near Lubu a village in Binga, Zimbabwe.

Chalinzima is severely disabled with multiple diagnoses. In the past she has attempted to go to school as she is physically able to get there. However, once there the teachers were not trained to cope with her needs. Her speech impairment means that she is not able to express herself and she gets very frustrated with change and different surroundings. Her mood changes rapidly when she is unsure or confronted by something new and she was removed from school when violent outbursts made it clear she was not coping with the challenges.

Chalinzima is the third child of five and as she is most comfortable and relaxed when she is on her own, she lives with her Aunt, who loves her and has cared for her since she was eight.

Enestia is an inspiring woman who has a large reserve of love and patience. Since Chalinzima came to live with her, she has been trying to teach her to fetch water and to manage her own personal care, unfortunately, both with no success.

Enestia asks for nothing, but prays for strength and that Chalinzima will one day be able to look after her own personal care and fetch water.

Story by Louise Whitelegg - CA Isle of Man Regional Coordinator following a self-funded trip to Zimbabwe

BANGLADESH

The lives of thousands of children who drown in [Bangladesh](#) every year could be saved by encouraging people to put aside superstitions that view the deaths as “God’s will”, a study has found. Drownings have become [the leading cause of death in children](#) under the age of 18, numbering around 18,000 a year since 2005, yet such deaths are preventable, according to researchers from the Centre for Injury Prevention and Research Bangladesh (CIPRB). A project, launched by The Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) and the George Institute for Global Health, in Sydney, is seeking to challenge these traditional ideas and inform the country’s first nationwide drowning-prevention strategy.

The first part of the four-year project has been a household survey aimed at providing a detailed picture of drowning deaths, to identify where the worst problems are and where the most effort is needed.

Despite drowning being flagged as the leading killer of children between the ages of one and 18 as far back as 2005, little has been done nationwide to tackle it. In 2015, the education ministry issued a circular calling for swimming to be taught in all educational institutions, but this is yet to make a dent in the number of deaths, due to a lack of training facilities.

Bangladesh is made up of 80% floodplain: water is everywhere, swelling rivers, filling ponds, ditches and deep wells. At least one deep pond sits next to each house which are used for bathing, fishing and swimming. They are rarely fenced off. Forty-three per cent of drownings in children under five in Bangladesh happen in ponds, and 80% occur within 20m of the home.

It was a pond that three years ago took the life of eight-year-old Limon. His parents, rice farmers from

Khanpura village, urged him to learn to swim but he was reluctant and fearful. It was harvest time when he died, a busy time for the family. His mother, Shahanas Ackter, 28, had asked him to bathe at the standpipe, but, instead he went to the pond behind the house, one of three deep ponds around their property, to play. When she went to look for him, she found only his slippers on the steps next to the water.

Ackter and her husband, Habibur Rahman, 43, are afraid of losing their second son, Yasin, four, who has nearly drowned three times in his short life. They feel helpless, they said, but are thinking about putting a fence around their house and, when he is old enough, teaching him to swim.

The survey has found that in 97% of drownings in Barisal, no one in the area had cardiopulmonary resuscitation training. Many locals believe that if anyone tries CPR and fails to save the life of a person, they are to blame for the death. A number of drowning prevention projects, already piloted by the CIPRB, have seen good results.

For example, a community creche to supervise young children while their mothers do the household chores has [reduced the drowning risk of those participating by 82%](#). Another project, to teach older children to swim, has reduced the chance of drowning by 90%.

The CIPRB and the RNLI, which will spend the next few months analysing the data from the Bhasa survey, are keen to develop a strategy based on a bottom-up response to the epidemic. They hope to be in a position to begin implementing prevention measures in June. Courtesy of Guardian News & Media Ltd. Can be reprinted in Church magazines

CENTRAL AMERICA

Increasing numbers of women and girls are fleeing El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras amid mounting evidence that criminal gangs are systematically targeting adolescent girls as sexual slaves.

Elena Cruz, 15, from San Salvador sat silently next to

her mother Barbara, 39, clutching a folder of documents to show Comar, (Mexico's refugee agency)

She told a familiar story: a tattooed gang leader took a liking to Cruz. He started following her to and from school, and sending her threatening messages via a classmate.

"It was always the same, 'if you don't go out with me, you won't go out with anyone'," said Cruz. "I want to be a doctor but I had to stop school. I was terrified to be in the house as he knows where we live."

Cruz's mother moved her four times to live with different relatives, but each time the gang tracked her down. "They would send me messages on Facebook telling me where I was, threatening to come and take me."

Too scared to go to the police in case the gang found out, mother and daughter packed two suitcases, and fled in the middle of the night, abandoning their home and Barbara's successful seafood market stall.

"We're seeking refuge because they'll take my daughter or kill us if we go back," said Barbara. "There's no future in El Salvador, it's now a crime for girls to be young and pretty." Courtesy of Guardian News & Media Ltd. Can be reprinted in Church magazines



The Big Shift Campaign.

Training sessions are happening around the country. Please contact your Christian Aid regional office for more details. You are encouraged to write or email your bank and tell them how important it is that they scale up their investment in renewables, to help fight climate. Resources are available on line including prayers, Bible study and sermon notes. There are also petition sheets and a campaign briefing.

<http://www.christianaid.org.uk/campaigns/climate-change/the-big-shift>

Stories for Change is produced by Commitment for Life: it seeks to inform and inspire. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the URC.