

Lent Carbon Fast 2014

OVERSEAS STORIES ON THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

How climate change is impacting our partners the Diocese of Thika, Kenya (linked with Exeter Diocese)

40 years ago, in Kenya, you could set your calendar by the date the rain started. The long rains started 15th March and the short rains 15th October. Now our friends in Thika Diocese tell us they never know when the rains will come or how long they will last so it is very hard to know when to plant crops or whether they will reach harvest.

Action: If it's a short journey, leave the car at home and walk or cycle instead. 'I'm making this journey for Thika'

In Ithanga parish, in Thika, Rev Joseph Muriithi says most of the men are away in the city trying to find work. Their wives are left at home struggling to grow food for the family. But nowadays the rain is not usually sufficient to grow maize and the children often go to bed hungry. Church and Community Mobilisation (Umoja) could empower such families to find a sustainable future with better farming methods and drought tolerant crops.

Action: Google 'Devon Thika' and follow 'Umoja project'

The Njunu Tea Factory in Thika District has met all the standards for certification by the Ethical Tea Partnership which include welfare and working conditions of its workers, environmental sustainability and tea quality. This would qualify for Fairtrade certification which would ensure a fair and stable price plus a premium for the growers. But the Fairtrade market is not big enough to buy their tea so it has to be sold on the world market with fluctuating prices.

Action: When you have a cup of tea pray for the people who grew, picked, processed, blended and packed the tea you are drinking.

Before he retired, Bishop Gideon of Thika diocese said the people of Ithanga Deanery were asking him, 'What can we do to sustain ourselves?' The Umoja programme will enable them to answer this question for themselves. For the price of a litre of petrol each month for three years 5 people could be empowered to work their way out of poverty for life.

Action: Book a speaker to come and talk about how climate change is affecting Thika and what Umoja can do to help

Bangladesh

What's happening today:

'We do not get enough rain in time. It is coming late and the last three years there was almost no rain, then last year rain came later and caused an unbearable flood.'

Sunil Raphael Boiragi, Salvation Army

And in 2005:

'Frequency of flooding is increasing, due to water coming from surrounding countries. This brings heavy siltation to the country's rivers and river bank erosion not experienced ten years ago.'

Salvation Army

Pacific Islands

Solomon Star <http://www.solomonstarnews.com/features/religion/21517-climate-change-washingaway-pacific-villages>

Melanesia & Devon

A story of Global Warming - Simply Living at Feniton School - YouTube

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dcZramr0pn4>

Climate Change in Melanesia

Women are bearing the brunt of climate change in the Pacific, and they are bearing it right now. “We know that the poorest communities are most vulnerable to climate change, we know poverty in the Pacific is bade and getting worse and we know that women and girls account for 70% of people living in poverty, and we have been hearing about Pacific communities that are sinking under sea level rises”, Ms Coleman, CEO of Anglicord, said.

Women are responsible for growing crops for food and income in Solomon Islands, which has one of the highest rates of sea level rises in the world. This is putting pressure on crops through land loss and salinity. Communities are beginning to report food shortages.

“In Solomon Islands, women already experience high levels of poverty and family violence”, Ms Coleman said. “Women and families are under terrible pressure right across the Pacific and we can’t just shrug our shoulders while their burden gets heavier and heavier.

“We have a lot of work to do on this issue. Women in the Pacific have the lowest participation rate in parliaments in the world and until women are properly represented on these bodies, women’s interests in the region will never be addressed. If women’s livelihoods are threatened by climate change, they are in an even worse position to be involved in making decisions about their communities”.

Ms Coleman pointed out that the Asia Pacific region loses around S16-S30 billion per year because of gender gaps in education, and in excess of S40 billion a year because of restrictions on women’s access to employment.

“When women have access to employment and education, they increase their ability to adapt to environmental change”, she said, “through exploring alternative ways of earning income other than growing crops, or encouraging solar power to avoid the cost of kerosene, on which many Pacific communities rely for lighting and cooking.”

The Anglican Church solar programme in Solomon Islands assists young women to sell solar lamps in their communities, providing them with an income while encouraging solar power which frees women from the burden of growing crops to pay for kerosene.

“This is a great example of how smart development can help reduce pressure on women and their families.”