

Reaching Out to Displaced People

The **Trócaire 2009 Lenten campaign** is focused on the needs of people in the developing world who have been forced to leave their homes because of conflict to seek safety elsewhere.

Some people seek safety outside their own country (becoming refugees) while others remain within their country (known as internally displaced persons). Khalid and his sister Asma from **Somalia** who are featured on the Trócaire box share that experience.

Available information suggests that, at the end of 2007, there are 67 million people forcibly displaced from their homes. This figure includes 16 million refugees and 51 million internally displaced persons, some 25 million of whom were displaced by natural disasters while another 26 million of whom were displaced as a result of armed conflict.

Displacement and poverty go hand in hand. Displaced people have less or no access to employment, education and other facilities. People are not only forced to leave behind their livelihoods and homes but practically all their material possessions too. They often can take only what they can carry and even then these are often stolen on their journey to displacement camps.

The 2009 Lenten campaign is an opportunity to help rebuild the lives of the world's most vulnerable families.

Trócaire – our organisation

Trócaire (Irish word for "compassion") is the official overseas development agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland. It was set up by the Irish Catholic Bishops in 1973 to express the concern of the Irish Church for the suffering of the world's poorest and most oppressed people.

In a pastoral letter written in 1973 the Bishops of Ireland set out the aims of Trócaire as two-fold:

- 1. Abroad, it will give whatever help lies within its resources to the areas of greatest need among the developing countries.*
- 2. At home, it will try to make us all more aware of the needs of these countries and of our duties towards them. These duties are no longer a matter of charity but of simple justice.*

These aims and values still lie at the heart of Trócaire today and are underpinned by Catholic Social Teaching which stresses the dignity of each person and their inalienable human rights, along with their responsibilities, regardless of culture, ethnicity, gender or religion.

Kildare & Leighlin Diocese has a close working relationship with Trócaire. Along with promoting the Lenten collection within our diocese, we are also partners with Trócaire in the work of helping people become more familiar with Catholic Social Teaching.

Immediate and long-term needs

For over thirty five years Trócaire has been working on our behalf with communities and families forced to flee their homes.

Trócaire works with local partner organisations in over thirty countries to address people's basic needs by providing food, safe drinking water and healthcare until people can begin to get back on their feet.

Trócaire is also committed to putting long-term measures in place – like water conservation and irrigation.

Trócaire helps people to support themselves and their families – giving them the training in agricultural techniques as well as the necessary seeds, tools and even livestock to generate an income of their own and become less vulnerable in the future.

Trócaire recognises that the root causes of conflict must be addressed if people are to live in peace. In situations like **Gaza**, where hundreds of thousands of people remain displaced for decades, Trócaire supports human rights programmes designed to strengthen adherence to international humanitarian law.

For more information please visit - www.trocaire.org

Education

Education is very important to those who are displaced. It creates a feeling of stability, normality and structure in the lives of people forced from their homes due to conflict.

Among the challenges faced by displaced children is the fact that many of them are grown up and have missed out on an education. Even if they get into a school, it can be a very big adjustment. They may have been taught a different syllabus in a different language where they lived previously.

The school featured in the photo shows the girls section in a school in **Udici, Sudan**. The original school building was opened in the 1960s but was completely destroyed during the war. It reopened in May 2007 but the building needs a lot of repairs and currently has no windows.

There is a distinct difference between the boys' section of the school and that of the girls'. There are even less materials available to the girls and far less teachers per number of students in the school.

Thanks to your generosity, Trócaire is helping thousands of displaced people all across the developing world to get a better education.