

Our Work

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SCIAF helps families in poor countries to grow enough food to eat, to get an education and to recover when disaster strikes.

SCIAF (the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund) draws on the example Jesus sets in the Gospels as a foundation for how to act. We are nourished by the Scripture that we hear and inspired to help the poorest free themselves from poverty by equipping them with the tools they need to survive and thrive. Here in Scotland we put pressure on governments and big business to change the political and social systems that keep people in poverty.

We began our work in 1965, and it has taken a lot of patience to see some of the seeds that God has planted grow to fulfilment!

In 2018 we helped over 2.7 million people in 26 countries across 4 continents. Together with our partners, we are working to help families in need improve their lives.

- We help families free themselves from hunger by providing seeds, tools and training to help people grow enough food to eat and have extra to sell at market.
- We help people learn new skills like dressmaking to earn an income.
- We support people to stand up for their human rights.
- We provide emergency response when disaster strikes.

David Munyindeyi



David Munyindeyi and his family live in Mongu, a remote area in western Zambia where they grow their own food to survive. David received seeds, tools and training that have helped him adapt to the impact of climate change and to improve the quality of his soil. He now grows a larger variety of vegetables and nuts, and his family eat the food they grow and are able to sell extra produce to earn a little money. David said:

“Before we were helped I lacked farming knowledge. I grew very little and didn’t have enough food. I only grew enough to last for four months. It made me sad that my children went hungry”.

With SCIAF’s help, David’s harvests now help him to feed his family all year round. David told us that he takes his children to their land so that they learn the skills that have changed their lives.

David told us: “It’s changed our lives. Hunger isn’t such a big problem now. I feel delighted to be able to provide for my family. I hope my children have a better life, starting from now. I’d love them to make use of the skills we’ve learned so that they can be independent and won’t have to struggle the way we did.”

Emberá Tribe-Maria



This is Maria, a member of the Emberá tribe. The Emberá people are native (or indigenous) to Chocó, Colombia. This means that they were the first people to live there. The land is very important to the Emberá people and they look after it well because they survive off what their land provides for them, especially the vital Atrato River.

However, the Emberá way of life is being threatened as rich landowners, big companies and armed groups destroy the land and pollute the rivers. Maria told us:

“For the Emberá, our territory is our mother land. It gives us everything we need. We have our own culture, our own language, our own dances and songs but I’m worried that it will soon be lost.”

“Little by little, our land is being taken over by people who don’t care about it in the way that we do. They want to use it for keeping cattle. They’re cutting down the trees and their animals eat most of the things we’re growing leaving very little left for us.”

SCIAF and our partners have been working to protect the Atrato River and help the Emberá tribe defend their human rights. In 2016, we helped achieve an important ruling that recognized the river as having rights and identified the rights of communities to physical, cultural and spiritual survival. This guarantees protection for traditional livelihoods on the Atrato, like those practiced by the Emberá tribe.