



SCI AF

Scotland's aid agency

Review

Spring 2011

Famous faces
back SCI AF

Helping Pakistan
Recover

Staying Positive
with HIV

School News

Haiti:

How your
WEE BOX
can make a
difference
this Lent

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Inspired by the Gospel call to build a just world, SCIAF challenges injustice by strengthening poor and oppressed people and by stimulating the Scottish public to share in our common struggle for human dignity.

News

Cardinal O'Brien in Haiti for Earthquake Anniversary

Cardinal Keith O'Brien has marked the first anniversary of the Haiti earthquake by visiting the devastated capital city Port-au-Prince with SCIAF's Chief Executive Paul Chitnis.

Twelve months after the earthquake killed more than 230,000 people and left 1.5 million homeless, SCIAF's Chairman Cardinal O'Brien spoke of his deep sadness at the loss of life and concern for the many thousands of people still living in temporary camps.

SCIAF is continuing to work with local partners and has provided vital aid to thousands of people including clean water, hygiene kits, and toilets and showers to people living in the many makeshift camps around Port-au-Prince. Responding to the cholera infections SCIAF partner Caritas Haiti is also distributing medicines, hand sanitisers and information leaflets on the precautions people should take to prevent further infection. Supporters from across Scotland donated a staggering £1.2 million pounds to the SCIAF Haiti Earthquake Appeal.



A boy walks through the rubble of the destroyed cathedral.

Photo: reuters/www.alertnet/
Katie Orlinsky

In addition to providing immediate aid this money will be used to help ordinary Haitian people rebuild their lives and return to work.

During his visit Cardinal O'Brien met with Archbishop Auza, Papal Nuncio for Haiti, visited several SCIAF projects and attended a national commemoration ceremony marking the first anniversary of the earthquake.

Messages of Love

A BIG thank you to everyone who donated to our Christmas appeal and sent loving messages to people living with the effects of HIV and AIDS in Uganda. Your messages provided hope and comfort. Florence, Director of the Comboni Samaritans in Gulu, Uganda told us, "This is a sign of love. We and our clients are grateful to receive these cards. God bless you."

UN Climate Change Progress, But...

SCIAF has welcomed the limited progress made at the UN climate change conference in Cancun, Mexico, in December but warned that an ambitious, fair and legally-binding deal is still urgently needed to prevent devastation in developing countries. SCIAF is already helping communities deal with the impact of climate change such as unpredictable weather patterns and more severe droughts and storms. The conference was seen widely as an improvement on the abject failure of the previous UN summit in Copenhagen. Countries made some progress on cutting their emissions, providing a fund to encourage the preservation of rainforests, setting up a new UN climate fund to distribute \$100 billion to developing countries, and agreeing to the transfer of low-carbon technology to poor countries.



Photo: Duncan McIntyre

Duncan McIntyre in St Peter's Square, Rome.

Riding High for SCIAF

SCIAF supporter Duncan McIntyre has raised a fantastic £2,360 following an epic cycle ride from the UK to Rome! The incredible 1,185 mile pilgrimage followed the Via Francigena route undertaken by Sigeric, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in 990.

Cycle enthusiast Duncan raised sponsorship amongst friends and family and at a fair in his parish of Our Lady of the Waves in Dunbar, East Lothian. Despite being a bit saddle sore, Duncan said, "Crossing the Alps was for me the high point of the trip. I felt a real sense of achievement on reaching the summit, which at over 8,000 feet, really did feel like the top of the world. It was a fantastic feeling to arrive in St Peter's Square."

Pakistan Recovery

Work is continuing to help thousands of people recover from the devastating floods which hit Pakistan in July and August. SCIAF is working closely with Catholic sister agencies on the ground to help those worst affected. An initial £251,000 was sent by SCIAF in the emergency response phase to pay for water, food, hygiene kits, temporary shelters, blankets and cooking equipment for 35,000 people.

Wedding favours

If you're getting married and looking for something more meaningful than sugared almonds to give to your friends and family, SCIAF's wedding favours may be just the thing! We'll send you beautiful cards for all your guests that highlight you've made a donation to SCIAF on their behalf. For a suggested donation of £1 per guest we can provide SCIAF pin badges too.



SCIAF
for a just world

To our family and friends

To say thank you for making this special day with us we have made a donation in your name to the charity SCIAF.

SCIAF is the official aid agency of the Catholic Church in Scotland. They help some of the world's poorest people, regardless of religion, and campaign to change the root causes of poverty.

Every day, SCIAF gives people the tools, training and support they need to work their way out of with HIV/AIDS and build peace in countries torn apart by war. When disasters like hurricanes and earthquakes strike, SCIAF is there to respond.

The picture overlaid is of a girl from Sudan on her way to a SCIAF-funded school for refugees.

SCIAF is the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund.
Registered Charity Number: 50020201.

Faith in Action



Chief Executive Paul Chitnis reflects on SCIAF's guiding principles.

In 1965, when SCIAF was established by the Bishops of Scotland, their vision was of an organisation which "helps the world's hungry, underprivileged and destitute people and the doing of all such other things as are ...conducive to the attainment of this charitable purpose." Central to this vision was the desire to "arouse among the Catholics of Scotland a lively awareness of the obligations deriving from Christian charity and responsibility..."

In 1967, Pope Paul VI noted that development is about accompanying poor people on their journey "from less human to more human

conditions." More recently Pope Benedict XVI has said: "Authentic human development ...requires a transcendent vision of the person, it needs God. Progress of a merely economic and technological kind is not sufficient."

In five key areas, SCIAF's four year strategy (2011-2015) reaffirms our founding vision and ensures its relevance in a world that is unrecognisable from the sixties. First, SCIAF is fundamentally a Catholic organisation established by the Catholic community in Scotland, inspired by Jesus' example, and nurtured by the social teaching of the Church and the experiences of the impoverished people with whom we work.

Second, our developmental approach seeks to empower others because we believe that it is the poor who must be the authors of their own future.

Last year we helped directly 400,000 people to improve their lives and livelihoods. Third, working for the common good requires us not only to give direct support to the poor, but also to address the root causes of their poverty. Pope Benedict speaks of "the political path of charity, no less excellent and effective than the kind of charity which encounters the neighbour directly." Fourth, SCIAF has always responded to humanitarian crises from Biafra in the 60s to Haiti last year, where we provided food and shelter to people affected by the earthquake. As a member of the international Caritas confederation, SCIAF can respond quickly and effectively.

Finally, SCIAF is committed to nurturing our spirituality in order to bring about the fullness in ourselves and in the world of the vision we hold. Prayer without action is empty just as action without prayer fails to recognise a transcendent vision of development. It is with these principles in mind and heart that we look forward to the next few years and to a world in which all people may have life to the full.

Haiti: After the cameras have gone



Photo: Thomas Omondi

With the first anniversary of the Haiti earthquake just behind us, SCIAF's Clea Ferguson explains how this year's WEE BOX, BIG Change campaign will help the country and its people towards a brighter future.

You probably know a lot more about Haiti now than you did before the 12th January 2010. You will know that even before the earthquake, Haiti was the poorest nation in the Americas, and one of the poorest in the world. You will know that over 230,000 lives were lost and 1.5 million made homeless following the 37 second-long earthquake.

You will have read about how crushing poverty forces many Haitians to eat pies of mud; how thousands of people are affected by cholera; how violence and death followed the elections in November last year; and how the struggle to rebuild Haiti is not happening fast enough for a population that has already suffered so much.

Although you know a lot about Haiti already, we wanted to use our WEE BOX, BIG Change Lent campaign this year to tell you more about SCIAF's story in Haiti – not just about our emergency work since the earthquake, but about our long-term development work in this challenging country.

SCIAF has been working in Haiti since 1987, helping many families – particularly in rural areas – to stand on their own two feet. Rural families are particularly vulnerable in a country that has a level of 97% deforestation and that frequently suffers from natural disasters. It is very hard to grow enough food to eat or have the money to buy it. Through our trusted local partners, SCIAF provides tools and training in improved farming techniques, and provides animals like goats, cows and pigs. Thanks to long-term, sustainable projects such as these, many Haitian families previously living in desperate poverty now have a more secure future with enough food to put on the table, and money to send their children to school.



Photo: Thomas Omondi

This Lent, if you look at your WEE BOX, you will see one of these families. Meet the Felix family from Mombin Crochu, in the north-east of Haiti. The family consists of Dad, Gerneus and mum Gilaine, along with their five children, Dieudline (23), Danose (18), Evaincs (16), Gerby (14) and Adeline (9). Gerneus and Gilaine also adopted Gerneus' brother's children after his death, Tifia (16) and Jamesy (12).



Photo: Thomas Omondi

Because of the generosity of supporters in Scotland, the Felix family has been part of one of our long-term projects for several years. They have received tools, training, seeds and animals.

Gerneus told us: "We have been taught organic composting techniques, and to weed the fields and not burn them, which we used to do before. We also now use pineapples as 'living barriers' – we plant them

around our crops - to prevent soil erosion. We have a better harvest now, the soil is richer. We can grow cassava, yams, bananas, sugar, coffee, groundnuts, sweet potatoes and beans."

As well as the agricultural training, the Felix family recently received a cow, which will help them by providing milk to drink and to sell for extra income. They will also be able to sell the calves, which will help to pay for school fees for all the children.

"Life has changed," continued Gerneus; "Everything I harvest is income for living. Everything I do is to pay school fees for the children. Educated people have a better spiritual and economic life."

Gerneus' eldest daughter, Dieudline explains "Life is hard in Haiti. We have to work hard here. There are problems with having enough food, and sending children to school. There is a lot of misery and a lot of crime in Haiti. Being involved with the project has helped us to advance."



Photo: Thomas Omondi

Hope for the Future

It will take many, many years for Haiti to recover from all she has suffered. SCIAF will be there. Thanks to the generosity of supporters following our emergency appeal, we will be continuing our work with earthquake survivors, helping them in their daily struggle to survive by providing medicines, water, sanitation and hygiene items. By taking part in our WEE BOX, BIG Change Lent campaign, you will help us keep making BIG changes with our long-term work in Haiti and across the world, enabling people like the Felix family to live with security and dignity.

"Haiti is in a lot of pain. I want to thank the people of Scotland for helping us. I hope that you won't forget us. I hope that you will always have an eye on Haiti." - Dieudline

Visit www.theweebox.org to find out how your donations can help make BIG Changes in Haiti and across the world.



What you can do this Lent

- Fill your WEE BOX
- Give a WEE BOX to a friend
- Invite a SCIAF speaker to your school or parish
- Visit www.theweebox.org
- Hold a WEE BOX fundraising event
- Complete a SCIAF campaign action

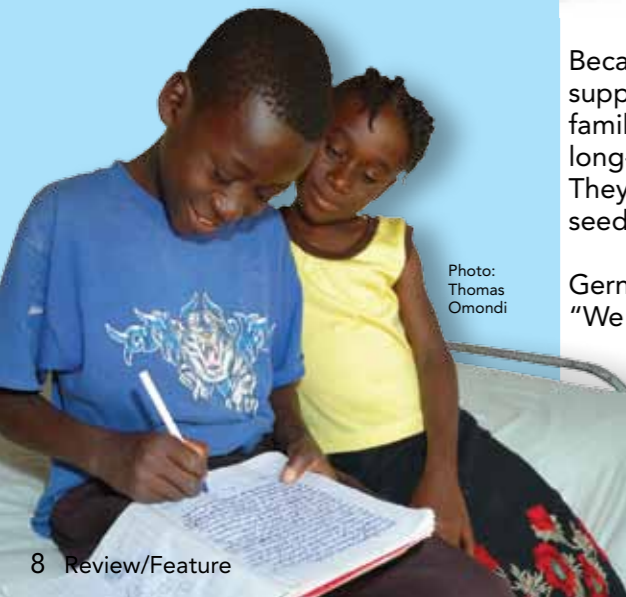


Photo: Thomas Omondi

Famous faces back SCIAF

Every year famous faces from the worlds of music, entertainment, sport and business sign up to support SCIAF's WEE BOX, BIG Change Lent campaign. Find out why.



Michelle Mone, Entrepreneur

"No one should have to go to bed hungry - but over one billion people around the world do, every single night. SCIAF is helping people free themselves from poverty and hunger. I'd ask everyone to put a SCIAF WEE BOX in their living room, or their kitchen, or bring one into work because if we all fill one up, we really can make a difference."



The Proclaimers' Charlie and Craig Reid

"SCIAF is a fantastic Scottish charity which works with some of the poorest people in the world to help them work their way out of poverty and overcome difficulties we can only imagine."



Katherine Brown, formerly Miss Scotland and Miss UK

"I know every penny raised will make a real and positive difference to the lives of some of the poorest people in the world. SCIAF's work brings hope where there is hardship. I'm taking part so people in developing countries can get the practical help they need to work their way out of poverty."

Michelle McManus, Pop Idol winner and TV presenter

"I support SCIAF because they make lasting changes in some of the world's poorest countries."



Colin McCreadie, Taggart

"Let's do our bit during Lent and fill up that WEE BOX and help a make a BIG Change!"

Ally McCoist
Rangers FC
Assistant Manager

"I know the money I save and donate to SCIAF will provide direct and practical support to people living in poverty who face hunger every day of the year."



Jackie Brambles,
TV presenter

"SCIAF's WEE BOX, BIG Change campaign provides real support to people in some of the poorest countries in the world, such as school books for children, seeds and tools for farmers, and skills training for people without an income. SCIAF helps people living in poverty to improve their lives and to be independent."

Peter Grant,
former Celtic FC coach

"SCIAF is a Scottish aid agency that's working with poor communities in developing countries like Ethiopia, Zambia and Uganda so they can escape extreme poverty and have a brighter future. We can all make small changes which make a big difference to others."



**Mark Miller, comic
book writer -
*Wanted and Kick Ass***

"Growing up in Coatbridge, SCIAF has always been part of my life, whether it was calendars in school or little collection boxes my Mum would have at home. This is an organisation literally designed to help the most desperate people on the planet and, really, there's nothing more deserving than that."



**Romeo, Clyde 1
In Demand
presenter**

"Hundreds of millions of men, women and children around the world go hungry every day. SCIAF is working with communities in Africa, Asia and Latin America so they don't have to."



**Suzie McGuire, Clyde 1
breakfast show presenter**

"Millions of people suffer every day from a lack of clean water, food, shelter, and education. SCIAF's WEE BOX, BIG Change campaign is dedicated to helping people living in poverty. Everyone in Scotland can help fight global poverty by giving a direct donation or making a wee change to their lives for instance by giving something up this Lent, putting the money saved in a WEE BOX, and donating it to SCIAF."

(Photos: Maverick, Andy Barr, Paul McSherry, SNS Pix, Peter Sandyground.)



WEE VOTE BIG CHANGE

Take action this Lent

Throughout 2010 you helped achieve great things through campaigning with SCIAF. Find out how you have made a difference and what you can do in Scotland this Lent to help end injustice around the world.

Last year's Lent campaign action ran before the UK general election. In response we received confirmation that the UK's international development budget would be maintained from the new coalition government, as well as a commitment to fight climate change. Almost four thousand of you signed up to the Robin Hood Tax campaign which is gaining ever more support from politicians around the world including German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Nicolas Sarkozy. And in November over 400 emails were sent to First Minister Alex Salmond in just four days, calling on his government not to cut the Scottish aid budget – and this year's £9 million commitment to fighting global poverty was saved.

We've seen how simple campaign actions can influence big decisions which affect the lives of the poorest people all over the world.

This Lent, we are asking you to take part in our WEE VOTE, BIG CHANGE campaign, and make a real difference again.

With the Scottish Parliament election on 5th May, we need to ensure that whoever forms the next Scottish Government, they continue to keep Scotland's promises to the poor by *protecting* the aid budget, *implementing* the world-leading climate change act, and *ensuring* Government spending is fair trade.



Photo: Thomas Omond

Marlene, Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Marlene says that after the earthquake, they had no toilets, and they couldn't afford to pay for clean water. Funding from the Scottish aid budget has helped Marlene and her children get access to water, showers and toilets in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake.



Photo: SCIAF

Vernia, Mombin Crochu, Haiti

Like many in Haiti, Vernia's family depends on their crops to survive. Climate change is making it even harder to grow food, as rain patterns are changing and the crops are often killed by drought, or the soil is washed away by flooding. Scotland's Climate Change Act is world-leading, reducing our greenhouse gas emissions by 42% by 2020, in line with UN scientists' recommendations. This will help reduce the impacts of climate change on the most vulnerable.

What are we asking the next Scottish Government to do?



• Protect the aid budget

Scotland's £9 million aid budget has saved and changed lives around the world. We have seen how it has helped people work their own way out of poverty.

Scots are rightly proud of this commitment which means we can be there when disasters like the Haiti earthquake or the Pakistan floods hit, and also support long-term sustainable development in countries like Malawi.

But support like this is most effective when it is both secure and predictable.

We are calling on all of Scotland's political parties to commit to maintain or increase the current aid budget over the lifetime of the next parliament.

• Implement the climate change act

Scotland's world-leading climate change act is the first piece of legislation that commits a country to do what UN scientists say is necessary to avoid catastrophic climate change. The Scottish Government must live up to that responsibility and continue to lead by ensuring they fully implement the act, and create a fund to help people in developing countries to adapt to and survive the changing climate.

• Make Scotland a Fair Trade Nation

Buying fair trade changes lives around the world. The Scottish Government is Scotland's biggest consumer, spending around £9 billion a year on goods and services across the public sector. We are asking the Scottish Government to take a lead by ensuring fair trade policies are applied where possible to government spending.

You really can make a difference

Simply fill out the campaign postcard included in this *Review* and pop it in the post to SCIAF, 19 Park Circus, Glasgow, G3 6BE.

Alternatively, if you're online, you can email all your constituency candidates at the click of a mouse!

Go to www.sciaf.org.uk/weevotebigchange, pop in your postcode, and join our WEE VOTE, BIG CHANGE campaign!

Climate Cafés

Together with Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS), we're organising six special 'Climate Café' events around Scotland so you can come along and quiz your election candidates over a coffee. We want to help you set up your own event in your area too!

You'll also have the opportunity to quiz senior party representatives as SCCS hosts the first ever online leader's debate. You'll be able to send in your questions live via the internet and comment on whether your point has been answered.

And alongside our fellow aid agencies in Scotland, you can come and quiz representatives from all parties at a hustings event in March.

Keep looking out for your SCIAF updates to find out more about these special election events!



Photo: Caritas CRS/Trocaine

Helping Pakistan Recover

Generous donations of over £570,000 enabled SCIAF to provide immediate aid to the people of Pakistan following July's devastating floods. SCIAF's Head of International Programmes, Lorraine Currie, reports on how your money is continuing to help.

Pakistan's worst floods in recorded history killed more than 1,700 people and affected 20 million - more than a tenth of the country's population. A massive cascade of water, triggered by heavy monsoon rains in late July, swept through the country washing away homes, roads, bridges, crops and livestock.

An initial £251,000 was sent by SCIAF in the emergency response phase to pay for clean water, food hygiene kits, temporary shelters, bedding, clothing, water containers and cooking equipment.

This initial aid provided over 35,000 people in Sindh province with a vital

lifeline. However, the humanitarian situation in the province remains critical and complex. Over 150,000 families still require urgent emergency assistance.

As a harsh winter descends on Pakistan SCIAF will forward over £250,000 early in 2011 to continue its work with local partners on the ground. This money will provide vital supplies and help people to recover in the longer term. The obvious trauma caused by the flooding, as well as work to rebuild homes and livelihoods, will take time.

Counselling and outreach services are being provided to women in camps, and sessions will be held focussing on raising awareness of women's rights. Safe child care centres are being established where children will receive informal education, snacks, toys, and sports equipment. The staff of the centres will monitor the children and work with counsellors to ensure that their physical and emotional needs are being met.

Further initiatives to help people recover include providing skills tools and livestock, 'cash for work' initiatives and direct cash payments to extremely vulnerable people.

Household and community water supplies will improve sanitation and hygiene and reduce the prevalence of water-borne diseases.

The work of SCIAF and its partners not only aims to reduce the intense suffering of the people affected by the floods and assist them in a dignified return to their homes, but also improve their lives with a stable income and access food in the long term. Your continued support is vital in making this happen.

If you would like to make a donation to SCIAF's Pakistan Floods Emergency Appeal visit www.sciaf.org.uk or call 0141 354 5555.



Photo: Sean Sprague

Sudan: Out of the Shadows

A referendum on 9th January will have determined whether Southern Sudan remains a region within Sudan or becomes an independent country. Regardless of which way the vote has gone, it is vital that Southern Sudan comes out of the shadows of its violent past.

Without peace it is impossible for a country to develop in a sustainable way where schools, hospitals, businesses, markets and food production can take place. A civil war between northern and southern Sudan raged for 21 years and cost the lives of an estimated 1.5 million people. The region's infrastructure was laid to waste. Innocent civilians including women and children had to flee their homes and fields, and take up a life of destitution in the bush. When peace came in 2005 with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement many thousands returned to their towns and villages only to find they had been destroyed.

According to the United Nations' Human Development Index which tracks the development of countries around the world, Sudan stands at 154 out of 169 countries. Average life expectancy is 58 years and the typical length of time a child will spend in education is 2.9 years. These figures however, conceal massive inequalities and the plight of the people in Southern Sudan, as with communities in Darfur in western Sudan, is far worse due to the impacts of war.

SCIAF has been working in Sudan since 1986. Hand in hand with local organisations we are working to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, promote peace, and help local communities and organisations rebuild for a more prosperous future.

This work includes helping farmers and their families by providing seeds, tools and agricultural training so they can grow enough food to eat and provide an income for themselves. SCIAF and its partners also provide women with access to a

basic education and vocational skills training in construction, engineering and welding for young people.

Our work focuses on helping the most vulnerable in society including people with disabilities who receive mobility aids like wheelchairs, counselling and support so they can attend school or gain employment.

As the big political question of Southern Sudan's future will have been decided in the referendum on 9th January, it is now up to all parties involved to work for a peaceful future for the country and its people. If peace can be maintained in this troubled land, its people will have the first real opportunity to escape from poverty and injustice for many years.

To make a donation to help SCIAF's work visit www.sciaf.org.uk or call 0141 354 5555.

Increasing SCIAF's impact

SCIAF is increasing the impact of its work in Scotland and overseas. To help us do this hundreds of supporters recently completed a detailed email-survey. This has helped to guide our future plans as outlined in our new strategic plan of action.

The new strategic plan will guide our work up to 2015. It looks at how we can improve what we do to reduce poverty and injustice overseas and build deeper relationships with parishes and schools as the official aid agency of the Church. Uppermost in our mind is the need to make sure every penny given to SCIAF counts.

A major aim of the plan is to **build stronger international development partnerships with schools, parishes and the general public** in Scotland. Over 60% of respondents to the survey said they want us to be more visible in their community and 84% said they would like their parish or school to have stronger links with SCIAF projects overseas. Work is already underway with *Project Connect*, linking schools with individual projects overseas (see page 26), and a new initiative for parishes will be coming to a church near you soon.

There was also very strong backing for SCIAF's campaign work which tackles the root causes of poverty such as unfair trade rules and climate change. In the survey **60% said they would like SCIAF to do more campaigning** with over 70% of respondents saying campaigning was 'important' or 'very important'. The new strategic plan commits SCIAF to **develop and deliver high-quality campaigns to hold governments and businesses to account**. You can be sure you will be hearing from us on how you can make your voice heard.

An overwhelming 95% of respondents stated it is 'important' or 'very important' that SCIAF is part of the international Caritas and CIDSE coalition of Catholic aid agencies. Over three quarters of respondents said it was 'important' or 'very important' that we continue to respond to major

disasters such as the earthquake in Haiti. We agree and are committed to **strengthening our ability to respond to emergencies with our coalition partners** over the coming years. The international network of SCIAF partners is of tremendous benefit to our long term development projects which empower people to work their way out of poverty. We will be constantly working on ways to **increase people's access to food, income and employment, especially for the most vulnerable**. Human rights and building the capacity of our partners to direct their own future are key objectives over the next five years.

With your ongoing support, we really can create a more just world for all. Thank you to everyone who gave their time and considered answers to our email-survey.

With Your Help

How your support in helping SCIAF changes lives.

Colombia

War has raged in parts of Colombia for years with widespread violence forcing many to flee. In the troubled region of Choco SCIAF is working with mixed-race returnees and the Afro-Colombian population to ensure communities have enough to eat, can generate an income and set up community organisations. As many people return to the land they previously lived on SCIAF is also helping them to gain legal titles to their land.

£40,000

Myanmar (Burma)

Poverty remains a major problem amongst farming communities in large parts of rural Myanmar. SCIAF is working with hundreds of poor farming families to increase their capacity to grow food so they can have enough to eat and also earn an income. By building farmers' capacities to provide for their own needs it will empower them to take



responsibility in shaping their own future.

£29,900

Sudan

Southern Sudan is a country in flux following January's referendum on independence from the rest of Sudan. This follows decades of civil war which

left 1.5 million people dead and the region's economy, infrastructure and social services in ruins. People with disabilities are amongst the most vulnerable. SCIAF is helping over 6,500 people with disabilities in Southern Sudan to access mobility aids like wheelchairs, education, and skills training so they can become self-supporting. SCIAF and its partners are also running community programmes to reduce discrimination against people with disabilities.

£64,000

India

The booming economic growth of India has not lifted millions of poor communities out of poverty. In the state of Karnataka a SCIAF project targets individuals and families in the lowest sections of society who lack the resources and skills to improve their land and water resources. Over 100 landless families are being helped to start new businesses, 230 marginalised farmers are being given training in how to market their produce to increase their income, and 2,000 women in self-help groups will benefit from small loans and leadership training.

£40,000



Volunteer Focus

Volunteering makes you happy! By helping others we can create a feeling of inner strength and keep our own day-to-day problems in perspective. SCIAF's Volunteer Co-ordinator Kirsteen McDonald explains.

Research suggests that participating regularly in voluntary work dramatically improves life expectancy and vitality more than any other activity. Volunteers gain confidence, get the chance to try something new, make new social contacts and get a real sense of achievement, the research says.

But volunteering isn't just good for the soul and for generating a feel-good factor, it can improve your career and personal skills. Last but by no means least, it can be lots of fun too! SCIAF is fortunate to have a vibrant

volunteering community spanning the length and breadth of Scotland. We offer a host of opportunities ranging from one of the many roles within our offices in Glasgow to promoting SCIAF within your parish as a parish contact, or as a speaker in schools. No matter what skills and experience you have there is always something that you can do to help.

The biggest problem for many people is finding the time to volunteer. If your spare time is limited you only need to donate a few minutes to help tackle the root causes of poverty. By completing an online e-action and putting pressure on decision makers SCIAF e-campaigners work together to build a fairer and more just world for everyone.

If you have some time and want to put an extra spring into your step, you can find out more at www.sciaf.org.uk/get_involved/volunteering.

Did you know...

- 10 million people in the UK volunteer each week.
- 63% of 25-34 year olds say they feel less stressed.
- Nearly half of all volunteers (47%) say volunteering has improved their physical health.
- 15% of all volunteers say volunteering had led them to eat less chocolate!
- A recent survey found that volunteering was the second greatest source of individual joy after dancing!

To find out more contact Kirsteen McDonald on 0141 354 5555 or email kmcdonald@sciaf.org.uk

Your Parish in Action

Motherwell ambassador Kieran Dinwoodie brings back a message to all our supporters from northern Uganda.

St Monica's Girls Tailoring Centre is a beacon of hope for thousands of girls and young women who were abducted and forced to become child soldiers for the notorious Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The centre offers practical, educational and spiritual rehabilitation to help the girls reclaim their lives and plan for a future lived with dignity.

One day I watched a young child, Faith, play happily as we waited for the Archbishop of Gulu to arrive for a graduation ceremony. This scene has played on my mind ever since Sister Rosemary, the Director of the centre (also see page 27), related the story of how she came to know the girl.

Ten years ago Faith's mother was kidnapped by the LRA and forced to become a child soldier and slave wife. Five years later she was found after walking through the bush terrain, having escaped with her new baby. She was totally exhausted, and her baby severely dehydrated. They were lucky to survive. However, now Faith has graduated from nursery school and her mother has graduated from the tailoring school.

Faith's mother is one of the 250 young women, many of whom are former abductees, who graduate from tailoring, catering or business administration courses every year. St Monica's provides these girls and their children with accommodation, food, education and love. I saw how this makes it possible for the girls to be reintegrated back into society. Indeed St Monica's boasts a near full employment rate for the students once they have completed their courses.



There were perhaps 500 people waiting outside in the open-air church when the Archbishop arrived. However, when he realised I was connected to SCIAF he delayed the start of the service in order to talk to me! He explained the challenges, the suffering of the people, but also the remarkable work by the sisters and staff at St Monica's. He also asked me to pass on the following message:

"Please send our heartfelt thank you to the people of Scotland for SCIAF's ongoing support."

School News

Connecting Lives

SCIAF has launched an exciting new initiative called *Project Connect*, which gives schools in Scotland a great focus for fundraising and global citizenship.

Project Connect helps pupils to find out more about SCIAF's work in Burundi, India and Nicaragua by using our interactive *Project Connect* website before deciding which country, and even which project, their school would like to focus on.

St Cadoc's Primary School in Newton Mearns (pictured right) has already signed up to *Project Connect*. They got the whole school involved and held a polling day for pupils to decide which country to focus on. Primary Six pupils Cara MacBride and Jessica McKeever said that even the process of deciding which country to support was fascinating:

"Our experience has been amazing, built our confidence and has helped us to learn about the different countries." SCIAF will provide schools with a range of downloadable materials to support their activities on their chosen country, including teachers' notes, PowerPoint presentations and videos. Importantly, schools will also receive two updates per year from their chosen country, letting them know how the projects they support are helping people.

Signing up to *Project Connect* is easy, just visit www.sciafyouth.org.uk/youth/connect.



Photo: Sean Sprague



Sister Rosemary visits Gryffe High School



Photo: Sciaf

SCIAF was once again delighted to welcome Sister Rosemary Nyirumbe of the St Monica's Girls Tailoring Centre in Uganda, to Scotland. St Monica's provides training in tailoring, cooking and business administration to former girl child soldiers. During her visit Sr Rosemary was able to visit a number of secondary schools including Gryffe High School in Houston (pictured) which raised £3,500 last year. She thanked pupils for their fantastic support of SCIAF's work.

NEW - Schools Lent resource pack

SCIAF's new Lent resource pack for schools includes everything you need to launch the WEE BOX, BIG Change campaign in your school. It will help you to take pupils on a journey through SCIAF's work in Haiti, the focus country this year. The new schools' DVD-ROM includes video clips, day in the life stories, teachers' notes (for both primary and secondary schools) and much more that can be used at assemblies and in the classroom.



If you would like to receive a **FREE** pack contact SCIAF on 0141 354 5555 or email: youth@sciaf.org.uk.

Thank you Ivor Clarke

SCIAF would like to say a special thank you to Ivor Clarke, one of our longest-serving schools volunteers in the east of Scotland, who has recently retired from his role with SCIAF. Ivor (pictured right) has visited schools all over the country, talking to young people about our work and encouraging them to get involved in working for a more just world for all. Thank you very much Ivor, you've done a grand job!



Photo: SCIAF

Staying positive with HIV



Photo: SCIAF

Tsega is a 40 year old single mother with three children who lives in the eastern part of Tigray region. She runs a small shop, looks after her children at home and always seems to be wearing a smile. Business is a bit slow these days but that doesn't make her feel down. Tsega has learnt that she can overcome many challenges in life.

In 2003 she lost her husband. He was a farmer and used to be the only bread winner in the family. When he had gone, Tsega was left with no means of generating an income. She had to sell all her belongings to feed her children, but the money did not last for more than three months.

Amid all this, Tsega started to fall sick and was seriously ill for most of 2004. When she finally took a blood test, she found out that she is HIV positive. She said, "I had no hope. All I knew was that I was dying. My neighbours were also sure that my days were over." She could not

imagine how she would be able to provide for her children whilst being HIV positive. However that all changed when she got help from a project funded by SCIAF and its sister agencies Trocaire and CAFOD.

She received free health treatment, which helped her to manage her illness. She continued getting counselling services for two years. Tsega also started to receive 150 Birr (£6) from the project to meet the basic needs of her family and borrowed 4,000 Birr (£153) to open a small shop. The business now generates 350 Birr (£14) per month and Tsega has already paid off half of the loan.

When she described her life she said, "I have seen two times: a horrible time when I was seriously damaged by the disease and a hopeful time being able to care and provide for my children." She added that she now lives a good life and looks forward to days in the future where her children complete their education and support her.



Photo: SCIAF

SCIAF and its sister agencies Trocaire and CAFOD support the Adigrat Diocese Catholic Secretariat (ADCS) which runs a three year community-based HIV project to improve the quality of life of 9,800 people affected by HIV. The project also seeks to improve the knowledge, attitudes and behaviour amongst 30,000 people in the wider community to help reduce their vulnerability to HIV infection.

To make a donation to help SCIAF's work visit www.sciaf.org.uk or call 0141 354 5555.



Photo: Sean Sprague

Learning from Lent

Father Slavin on the deeper meaning of Lent.

My five years in Bangladesh were spent entirely under martial law with Italian priests, many of whom were critical of the mixed blessings such a regime produces. The Bishops felt obliged to remind us that we were foreigners and that the worst thing that would happen to us is that we would be flown out of the country while they were left to deal with any backlash from the government.

In the film *Des hommes et des dieux*, about the Cistercian monks in Algeria during the 1990s phase there of an ongoing civil war, they are warned that their lives are at risk because they are foreigners. The film is about their decision, one by one, to give up the privileges of protection and identify themselves with the

risks the local people have to endure daily. For which, of course, they pay the same price as poor, ordinary people everywhere now pay in modern warfare where the casualties are increasingly civilian.

The purpose of Lent is to offer us the possibility of detachment from the privileges we have been born into by reason of country, class or the colour of our skin. If we translate the traditional practices of *prayer, penance and almsgiving* into their modern equivalents of *meditation, dieting and fundraising or SCIAF's giving, acting and reflecting*, then we have the opportunity to join many in our society who, irrespective of creed, feel a sense of mission to save the world

from itself, starting with ourselves here and now.

Overseas, in places which we were brought up to think of as the foreign missions, the churches, now often well established, have sometimes to face the choice and the challenge to have either privilege or persecution. Only if we in our own time and place are able to take the risk of being different can we act in solidarity with and in support of those who face marginalisation in the global economy. Working with SCIAF in Lent is one small step along the way of Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee who, despite temptation, sought no privilege from the government in Jerusalem and who still offers us today the chance of a graceful transformation of our lives.

Father Willy Slavin is the Parish Priest for St Simon's and St Peter's in Partick.

Diary

February

28th

Fairtrade Fortnight starts.

March

8th

International Women's Day.

9th

Ash Wednesday – WEE BOX, BIG Change Lent campaign starts.

22nd

World Water Day.

April

23rd

WEE BOX, BIG Change Lent campaign ends.

24th

Easter Sunday.

25th

African Malaria Day.

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It is crucial to our work fighting poverty that we communicate with our supporters. If at anytime you would prefer not to hear from us, please write to us at the address above or email supporterservices@sciaf.org.uk.





Photo: SCIAF



“ The economy needs ethics in order to function correctly – not any ethics whatsoever, but an ethics which is people-centred. ”

Pope Benedict XVI, Love in Truth, 45



www.sciaf.org.uk

SCIAF (Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund)

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SCIAF is the official aid and development agency of the Catholic Church in Scotland. We help some of the world's poorest people, regardless of religion and tackle the underlying causes of poverty.