



LUTHERAN
WORLD RELIEF

2023 ANNUAL REPORT FOR CONGREGATIONS

LEFT: Maria Tinda is a teacher in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania. Because of your love — and LWR School Kits — both attendance and relationships have improved at her school.

All around the world, families are suffering. Violence. Natural disasters. Hunger and poverty. Amid it all, you have been a refuge, protecting and supporting our neighbors in this terrible, perfect storm.

Your compassion has made a life-changing impact. You alleviate suffering for families in crisis. You empower sustainable change for a better tomorrow. You surround and comfort those in distress with the warmth and love of your quilts and kits.

Your love goes where no one else goes. This is how you are changing lives.

Your love reached neighbors in **40 countries** in 2023.



IN TIMES OF CRISIS: UKRAINE 📍

SITUATION: In areas of Ukraine under Russian occupation, many health care systems have been decimated. Even once liberated, these communities are left with destroyed or damaged hospitals and little access to care since many doctors fled or were killed.

IMPACT: Your love is providing vital health care in Ukraine in places where there is none. Iryna Martynenko, 57, visited the LWR mobile medical unit in Balakliia, following the 2022 Russian occupation. As a caregiver, Iryna stayed behind to care for her disabled mother while many of her neighbors fled. Most doctors have either left or have been killed, so Iryna is grateful for the opportunity to be seen. She's even more grateful that because of you, the care is free. Her minimum wage job at the local library wouldn't have covered her medical expenses.

"I am happy, yes. I am very pleased that I have such an opportunity to see doctors," she says. "And just the right doctors ... **I am very, very grateful. I just don't know how to thank you.**"

For Oleksii Bordunov, the clinic's general manager, it's all in a day's work. "Our job is to come to the town and start providing medical services to people who need them," he says. **"We will support these people and visit them under any circumstances."**



Iryna Martynenko after receiving care at the LWR mobile medical unit in Balakliia, Ukraine.

 [View video report at LWR.ORG/2023REPORT](https://www.lwr.org/2023report)



Wandeba Scovia sorting and hand-raking coffee at a drying shade in Bufuma, Uganda.

FOR THE LONG TERM: UGANDA

SITUATION: Some of the best coffee in the world is grown in Uganda, but local, small-scale farmers often are the last to reap the benefits. This can lead to continued cycles of poverty for those struggling to make ends meet and provide for their families despite incredibly challenging work.

IMPACT: Your congregation not only provides support in times of crisis. You are also creating lasting and sustainable change. In Uganda, that support is empowering local coffee farmers, particularly women.

In Uganda, like many other countries in Africa, farming — particularly coffee farming — is mostly done by women. In the past, training and opportunity have focused on the landowners, who tend to be men. By focusing on women farmers, there has been an increase in the quality of the coffee and as a result, farmers bring in more income. Household dynamics are improving as well.

There is a reason behind wanting women to be involved just beyond quality, however. “When a woman gets more money in my country,” says Uganda staff member Kenneth Barigye, **“they invest in better food, they invest in better products, they invest in education.”**

QUILTS & KITS: TANZANIA

SITUATION: In Tanzania, school supplies are a luxury. When students do not have supplies, not only are they ill equipped to learn when they are present, but there is also a greater tendency for them to be absent, which stunts and prevents their learning even more. Absenteeism can often cause tension between students and teachers as well.

IMPACT: Your congregation’s love is passionately crafted into the thousands of quilts and kits delivered to those in need. From across the miles, your love surrounds our neighbors, including the young students in teacher Maria Tinda’s primary school, located in the southern highlands of Tanzania.

This compassion is making a difference. Recently, each of the 161 students in Maria’s school received an LWR School Kit, assembled with love by Lutheran congregations like yours from across the country. On the surface, the kit is simple — pens, pencils, paper, scissors, crayons, a ruler and an eraser — all in an easy-to-carry bag. But for the students, having such supplies has profound effects. Being equipped translates to better engagement and learning when they are in the classroom, and greater classroom attendance overall.

“Now the situation that the children have, **they are happy when they are at school,**” says Maria. **“It also blesses us and makes us do our job well. I am grateful.** Students and their parents, they appreciate it and are very grateful.”



A student in Tanzania who received an LWR School Kit.

None of this is possible without you.

We at Lutheran World Relief — and your neighbors in need around the world — are **forever grateful.**



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