

Your impact magazine²⁰²⁴



Pray for Gaza

**Serving all faiths
and none**

**From Benbecula
to Bahía Solano**

Your SCIAF family



SCIAF

Uniting for a just world
Caritas Scotland

With your support, a better world is possible. Join us today to provide long-term solutions to the world's biggest challenges. Together, we can nourish communities, respond to emergencies, and break the structures that keep people poor.



You helped us change the lives of **1,277,848** people



Emergency relief was given to 460,437 people in need



407,445 people were helped to grow more food and earn more money

...in 2023

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Photographs

Front page pic
(L-R) Dora, Luz and Daliz are all indigenous leaders living along the Atrato River, Colombia. Thanks to our local partners, they have been brought together to co-ordinate responses to the pollution of their river which is so important to their community's lives.

Front cover photo by James Cave (SCIAF). Other photos in this edition by James Cave, Thoko Chikondi, Aisling Gallacher, Colin Hattersley, Val Morgan, Barnaby Jaco Skinner, Mark Swaroop and Caritas Internationalis.



Waves for Change, Colombia. This project uses sport and coaching to help kids caught up in conflict.



It's now a year since I took up the post of Chief Executive at SCIAF. It's been a year of change, but a change for the better I believe.

We're now settled in our new home in the Archdiocese Offices on the banks of the Clyde, next to the beautiful St Andrew's Cathedral. Not only has it been a cost-saving exercise, it's brought us closer to our roots in the Church. My hard-working team has embraced the change, with one saying, "We moved house but found our spiritual home."

Sadly, it's also been a year of conflict and despair. War is never far away, and the intolerable suffering of people in Gaza and Ukraine, to name only two, is a pain we share. Thank you for helping us do

what we can to be there when our sisters and brothers need us most.

At SCIAF, we are all too aware of the financial difficulties facing many charities and many families like yours in these difficult times. We are also honoured that despite this, you continue to support us and put your trust in us to serve the poorest communities in the world.

We are determined to maximise your generosity and make every penny go further. We hope you enjoy your new, slimmed-down Impact Magazine, which is packed with inspirational stories of your generosity and the hard work of our partners to build a better world.

Thank you.

Lorraine Currie.

DID YOU KNOW?

...some solicitors waive their fee in November for Will Aid month. Visit our website or call SCIAF to find out how your faith in a fairer future can live on long after you've gone. sciaf.org.uk/wills or **0141 354 5555**



News and events

Our WEE BOX appeal this year focused on our work with women affected by sexual and gender-based violence in Rwanda. Despite the cost-of-living crisis, you once again dug deep to support our sisters and brothers facing poverty around the world. We can't thank you enough for the BIG change you're making!



THANK YOU!

St John's Academy, Perth



Hair-raising fundraising

Wig-wearing clergy helped the children of **St Patrick's Primary in Coatbridge** raise valuable funds for **SCIAF**. Thanks for the great snap and your commitment to helping the world's poorest people!



Savage Sponging for SCIAF

The opportunity to throw wet sponges at the P7s was too good to miss for fellow pupils (and teachers) at St Mary's in Largs! **This fiendish fundraiser raised a fabulous £178 for the WEE BOX.**



CEO at Celtic

An amazing £1,930 was donated by fans outside Celtic Park ahead of the game against Hearts in May. "We are so grateful to the football fans today," said a smiling CEO as the final whistle blew. "A great result for both SCIAF and Celtic!"



WEE BOX, BIG COMPANY

The Pope heard about the amazing work of the WEE BOX in March, as former CEO Alistair Dutton met the Holy Father. **We're looking forward to a brimming BOX returning from the Vatican soon...**



Wheels of change

Chris Colvin, originally from Ayr, and Katie Ballantyne, originally from Orkney, completed a 435-mile cycle between their birthplaces to raise funds for SCIAF's Holy Land Emergency Appeal. "We are so delighted to have exceeded £5,500, including about £1,500 from the Immaculate Conception in Maryhill."

Algiz whizz

You may have noticed that SCIAF's resources look amazing – and you probably think that this costs the earth. Well, the truth is, it doesn't. Thanks to design agency Algiz, and our friendship with SCIAF-supporter Iain Lindsay, we benefit from amazing acts of kindness – and have done for more than 15 years. Iain and team, thanks for using your considerable talents to help SCIAF and the world's poorest people!

Follow us

One of the easiest ways to support SCIAF's mission is to follow us on social media, liking and commenting on our posts!



HELP PUT A MEAL ON THE TABLE

In Zambia, communities are facing the worst drought in a generation. This has been the second year in a row of devastating harvests. Families now face an agonising wait to see if the next crops they plant will produce the food they need to survive.

As this urgent situation unfolds, we are asking for your vital help. If you have given to SCIAF's urgent appeal, thank you! If not, there's still time to make a vital difference to the lives of our sisters and brothers facing hunger in Zambia and across Africa.

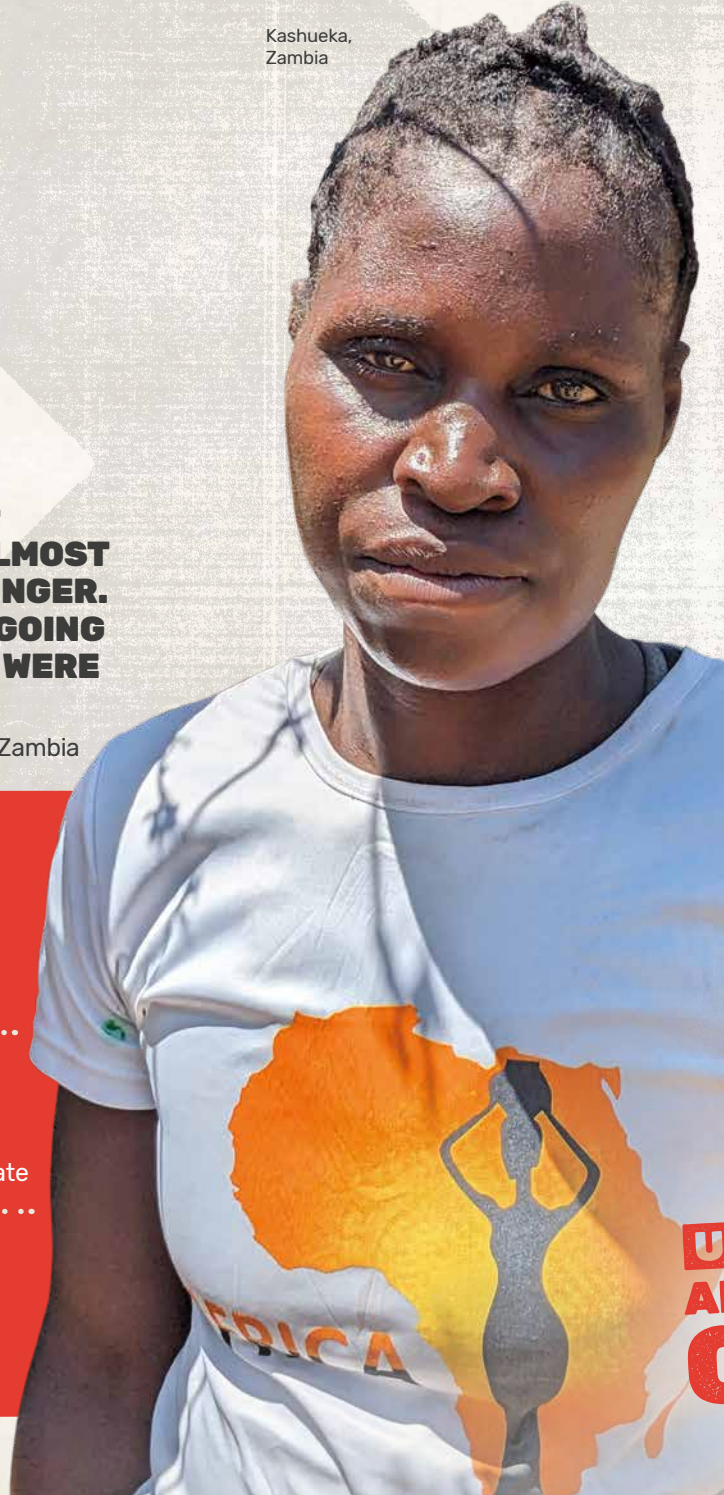
We urgently need your donations to feed families today and help them to build resilience to extreme weather events by helping them grow climate-hardy crops next year – and in the years to come.

“£55 CAN PAY FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF THREE MONTH'S FOOD FOR A FAMILY.”

Aisling Gallacher
SCIAF Zambia Officer



Kashueka, Zambia



“A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE GOING HUNGRY; MARRIAGES HAVE ALMOST BEEN BROKEN BY HUNGER. CHILDREN WEREN'T GOING TO SCHOOL AS THEY WERE TOO HUNGRY.”

Stumbeko Moliko, Village Head, Zambia

WAYS TO DONATE:



1

Scan the QR code



2

Visit sciaf.org.uk/donate



3

Complete the response form provided.



PRAY WITH SCIAF FOR FAMILIES AFFECTED BY THE FOOD CRISIS IN AFRICA

God our Father

We give You thanks for the abundance of Your Creation, and the generosity of Your gifts.

We are sorry that so many of our sisters and brothers in Zambia are suffering from hunger and scarcity, excluded from the feast You have lovingly prepared for all.

May Your Spirit inspire us as we work for justice, so that hunger and poverty may no longer injure our world.

May Your Spirit guide our efforts, so that every person has enough food to thrive, and finds a place at the table spread for all.

Strengthen our resolve and fill our hearts with compassion and generosity, for all those impacted by the hunger crisis in Africa.

Amen

URGENT APPEAL
AFRICA HUNGER
CRISIS





Fostina,
Malawi

**WEE
VOTE
BIG VOICE**

Thank you!

AHEAD OF THE GENERAL ELECTION IN JULY, WE PUBLISHED A LIST OF THE MOST CRITICAL INTERNATIONAL ISSUES THE NEW GOVERNMENT IN WESTMINSTER SHOULD FOCUS ON.

As the election candidates vied for your support, you wrote letters, spoke up at hustings and posted on social media to ensure these issues were raised. You campaigned on behalf of the world's poorest people, ensuring their voices were heard – and we can't thank you enough for your help in building a better world.

SCIAF'S PRIORITIES FOR GOVERNMENT

- Fix the food system
- Increase aid spending
- Champion climate action
- Challenge corporate power
- Pursue peace in the Holy Land

PARLIAMENTARY PLEDGE

WE RAISED A BIG VOICE IN THE RUN-UP TO THE ELECTION – BUT NOW OUR NEW GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN CHOSEN, IT'S TIME TO REMIND THOSE IN POWER OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITY TO OUR POOREST SISTERS AND BROTHERS.

We would like every Scottish MP to sign SCIAF's Parliamentary Pledge – a written commitment to do everything they can to address the greatest injustices faced by our global neighbours.

We need you to send this pledge to your local MP and encourage them to sign it. If everyone in the SCIAF family does this, there's no doubt our individual voices will come together to make a BIG difference!

WILL YOU HELP US BUILD A BETTER WORLD?

ACT NOW AT sciaf.org.uk/pledge



"Hearing from constituents that they care about issues of international development demonstrates to politicians that people want to see progress. It's important to understand which MPs are willing to stand up for these issues – this pledge can help do that."

Siobhan Wright
SCIAF supporter and former MSP





Why I volunteer

We sat down with Marie Seenan, a retired teacher from East Kilbride, to understand why she dedicates so much time to the SCIAF family, both in our schools and her local parish...



St Francis Xavier's Primary, Falkirk

When did you start volunteering with SCIAF and what does it involve?

I retired from primary teaching last year and started volunteering for SCIAF in October 2023. Throughout my time as a teacher in Catholic primaries, I was always very impressed with the work of SCIAF, so it was a natural 'fit' for me in my retirement. I've still got plenty left to offer!

What do you most enjoy about volunteering in schools?

The resources we are given by SCIAF's education team are great – there's something for every age. I enjoy using these resources to teach pupils about global justice, which is so important in the world we live.

I did my first school visit with the very experienced Mark Booker, from the Development Education team, which was great fun – and from there I was able to go it alone. It was lovely to see how the younger children engaged with the "This Is Our World" story, particularly the prop bag full of games!

What do the children get from SCIAF's visits?

I think it's important for pupils to be aware of how people live in other countries and to support them in developing a sense of global justice. It's important for our young people to think of others, particularly the poorest – and recognise how fortunate we are in Scotland.

With SCIAF's support, the children learn that those who are supported are encouraged to be self-sustaining, building their own businesses and shaping their own futures.

What's the highlight of your involvement with SCIAF at a Parish level?

I'm the named SCIAF contact for St Vincent de Paul's Parish in East Kilbride, and I very much enjoyed promoting the Lent appeal this year. In total, we raised £2,037 through coffee mornings and workshops – I was so pleased! SCIAF is the official aid agency of the Catholic Church in Scotland and is so deserving of all the support we can give.

Is there anything else you'd like to say?

I love volunteering with SCIAF and hope to continue working in schools and my Parish for as long as possible. I would encourage others to do so, if they have the time!

Volunteer roles in schools, parishes, the community and universities are all up for grabs!

If you are interested, please visit sciaf.org.uk/volunteer, contact getinvolved@sciaf.org.uk or call **0141 354 5555**.



St Charles' Primary School, Paisley

Serving people of all faiths and none

Around the world, SCIAF works with people of all faiths and none. We believe all God's children are our sisters and brothers, and that everyone must be treated with dignity.

Claver and Odette, Rwanda



In Rwanda, thanks to your donations, we have been supporting some of the country's poorest communities since the genocide in 1994. Claver, 64, and Odette, 61, are one such couple whose lives have changed for the better, thanks to your support of SCIAF.

"Our daughter died four years ago," explained Claver. "It was extremely hard. Life was very bad. We ate just once a day. Healthcare was a challenge. And the yield from our small plot was insufficient for our family's diet."

Thanks to SCIAF's partners in the Diocese of Kigali, however, the couple was enrolled in a livelihood project, receiving seeds and training to grow more food, a water tank for accessing clean water, and the gift of goats for their small plot.

Claver continued: "Before the project began, we owned just one goat – we now have 11! We sold some of the animals to earn money, allowing us to buy some land.

"We then spent some more money from the goats on a new house. It has a roof made of corrugated sheets. Our old house was smaller and made of mud.

"Life in the new house is much better. We have electricity from solar panels. The water tank has made fetching water much easier. And we also sleep better as we have a mattress and mosquito net – it is much more comfortable."

Odette added: "There is hope now for the future. I can buy clothes for myself. I can buy my own shoes. I have a mattress and a bedsheet for night-time."

Claver and Odette practise their Muslim faith at the community mosque, where we chatted with the couple.

"Our Muslim faith has helped a lot. It teaches love, good manners. I've really appreciated that this project has helped everyone regardless of their religion. SCIAF is impartial. If you are vulnerable, they help.

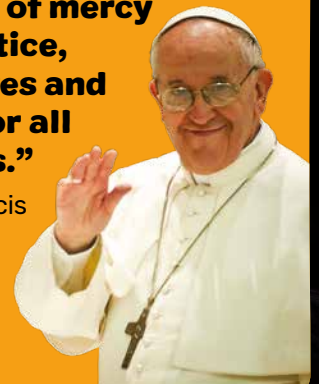
"My message is to tell SCIAF 'thank you'. May God bless you all. Please be encouraged to give more. You've given us a hand up. We were vulnerable – we are no longer!"

Our mission is to work in the hardest places, to lift up the poorest people, and ensure everyone, everywhere can access the basics they need to survive and thrive.

Thanks to you, we can serve all our sisters and brothers regardless of their race, religion, background or beliefs. All are welcome at the table.

"We are called to bear witness together to the God of mercy and justice, who loves and cares for all persons."

Pope Francis





The SCIAF family

The SCIAF family is a global community stretching from Aberfeldy to Addis Ababa, Balloch to Bukavu. It is one body with many parts, all of which work together to make a life-changing difference in the world. What role do you play?

Generous supporters and campaigners

Across Scotland, generous people like you fundraise, campaign and give in support of our work. Whether through regular donations, pledging a gift in your Will, running a marathon or using your voice to make world leaders take notice, we can't thank you enough!

The people we serve

The people we serve share with us their desires and dreams and do the hard work of lifting themselves out of poverty. We are blessed to work with so many inspiring people around the world.

Partners

As local experts, our partners across the world co-create our projects and deliver our work day-to-day. They provide skills training and education, and accompany people on the path to peace and prosperity.

Volunteers

SCIAF's volunteers enrich our family and make our work possible, from retired teachers who deliver school resources, to interns in our office. 23-year-old Molly said: "I helped build advocacy strategies, hosted a documentary screening, visited schools, and conducted research. This internship, as part of my Master's degree, was a formative experience."

Parishioners

From Stranraer to Stromness, the people in Scotland's pews unite to raise millions of pounds every year, pray for the people we serve, and campaign for justice. From coffee mornings to climate rallies, they believe a better world is possible!

Schools

Our teachers nurture the future; our children are the future. We work across Scotland supporting development education, encouraging schools to pray, act and give in support of people living in poverty.

Priests

Priests encourage their parishioners to support SCIAF, the official aid agency of the Catholic Church in Scotland. They hold a special WEE BOX collection on the 4th Sunday of Lent and, year-round, ensure the SCIAF family is always in their parishioners' hearts.

Networks

We collaborate with international NGOs and church groups to magnify our impact and bring about justice. As part of Caritas Internationalis, we get to the root causes of poverty and injustice at the global level and respond quickly to emergencies around the world.

SCIAF staff

SCIAF's small but dedicated staff work in everything from administration to advocacy, programming to communications. They ensure our projects are safe and effective, that our work influences politicians, and that people in Scotland understand the difference they make.

SCIAF board members

Made up of Bishops, priests and experts in their field, the Board guides decision making and ensures SCIAF's work meets the interests of all those we serve.

Get inspired. Get involved. Get going.

There are many ways to contribute to the SCIAF family.

Visit sciaf.org.uk/get-involved or contact getinvolved@sciaf.org.uk today.

PRAY FOR GAZA

The scenes of death, despair and devastation in Gaza have affected everyone across the SCIAF family over the past year. But while the scale of suffering has been hard to comprehend, your solidarity with those in need has been a constant source of hope.

Here we look at how you have helped SCIAF respond to the crisis in the Holy Land.



Scenes of destruction, Gaza, 2024

IN 2023
WE SUPPORTED 48 EMERGENCY PROJECTS IN 20 COUNTRIES, INCLUDING IN THE HOLY LAND

EMERGENCY RELIEF

After the terrible attacks in October, our Caritas partners were quick to respond to those most in need, providing essential medical aid, emergency food, psychosocial support and cash relief – and it is thanks to your long-term support of SCIAF, and donations to the Gaza emergency appeal, that this was one of the most effective humanitarian responses in the region.

When emergencies like this strike, SCIAF joins together with other Caritas agencies around the world, raising funds, pooling resources, and collaborating with local experts to get aid where it is needed most. It is an effective and fast-moving international model, which quickly gets cash to the real experts who live in the communities where emergencies strike.

“The dedication, bravery and selflessness of those working in Gaza know no bounds – and even when faced with great personal losses they have continued to serve others. Scottish solidarity and support allow heroic work like this to continue in Gaza and around the world.”

– Lorraine Currie, SCIAF CEO



Caritas provides emergency aid, Gaza, 2024

UK ADVOCACY

Alongside our emergency work, we joined with UK charities to demand that the government de-escalate the conflict, including a campaign to ban the sale of arms to Israel. We asked you to campaign for peace in the Holy Land too by signing our petition.

Thousands of you signed our petition to the Prime Minister outlining our demands to bring about peace, release any hostages, and let aid flow into Gaza.

Thanks!

FR GABRIEL IN GLASGOW

In April, the SCIAF family came together in solidarity with Gaza, as we welcomed Fr Gabriel Romanelli, the Parish Priest of the only Catholic Church in the Gaza Strip, to Glasgow.

Together with the Archbishop of Glasgow, and our friends at Justice and Peace Scotland, we welcomed 330 guests to the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, followed by a Mass at St Andrew’s Cathedral on the banks of the Clyde.

It was a truly special day. Fr Gabriel lit up the room with his compassion for his parishioners and fellow Gazans, and his commitment to lasting peace in the Holy Land.

“There is no safe place in Gaza, so we put our faith in Jesus to give courage and to stop this war. We pray for peace, for justice, without revenge.”

– Fr Gabriel



Action in Afghanistan



In October last year, devastating earthquakes struck western Afghanistan resulting in destruction in more than 300 villages. In addition to loss of life and injury, homes, health facilities, schools and water networks were destroyed. This large-scale disaster left thousands of already vulnerable families in urgent need of humanitarian assistance.

As temperatures plummeted through the Afghan winter, we responded quickly thanks to the Scottish Government's Humanitarian Emergency Fund, and our partners working in the country. For the coldest nights we supplied blankets and heaters, as well as small cash grants and sanitary items to the most affected communities.

In the following weeks, we began working with 22 families to 'build back better' from the damage caused. This included technical assistance to ensure homes and infrastructure were earthquake-proofed through stronger foundations, ring beams and corner bracing.

Repairing homes in Afghanistan



Scottish solidarity

Thanks to your support, SCIAF is able to deliver projects on behalf of big donors. The Scottish Government is one such funder which, thanks to the people of Scotland, has supported the projects detailed on pages 18-19.



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot



African relief

Malawi food security

In response to the ongoing food crisis in Malawi, we supported our partner CADECOM to provide small cash grants to over 4,500 households. Most people used the money to purchase food, though the grants also supported other household needs including healthcare and fertiliser.

Loss and Damage in Zambia

Increased floods, droughts and storms are plaguing Zambia as a result of the climate crisis, hitting the poorest communities hardest. At the start of 2024, the heaviest rains for 20 years caused extensive floods in rural and urban areas. Through local Caritas agencies, we responded quickly to this dire situation with cash grants and food aid for local people, alongside the rebuilding of infrastructure.



Cash transfer, Zambia

Tackling climate anxiety in the Catholic classroom

There's no doubt, the climate crisis is frightening.

Unless we make some big changes, the world is going to look like a very different place in the decades to come. There will be more extreme weather, more species going extinct, and many more people in the poorest parts of the world suffering dearly for a crisis they did not cause.



St John's Academy, Perth

SCIAF's new resource

For young people in Scotland struggling to process what's happening, it's important to help redirect their anxiety from personal burden and fear towards actions that are just, caring, and seek the common good. With this in mind, SCIAF is supporting teachers with a new digital resource they've been asking for: 'Tackling climate anxiety in the Catholic classroom'.

The resource looks at the impact of the climate crisis on pupil wellbeing and helps teachers explore how Catholic Social Teaching, and particularly Laudato Si', can guide our response to climate anxiety.

Featuring a variety of video contributors, this resource includes hopeful stories from SCIAF's partners alongside opportunities to pray and reflect on the issues.

Strategies for tackling climate anxiety

The new resource focuses on the following three themes:

1 Building resilience

Pope Francis has said: "The most important thing in the life of every man and every woman is not that they should never fall along the way. The important thing is always to get back up." This resource helps teachers to engage young people in meaningful climate activities and discuss their feelings along the way. If things don't work out as expected, they are encouraged to reflect and continue to be hopeful for change.

2 Challenging hopeless narratives

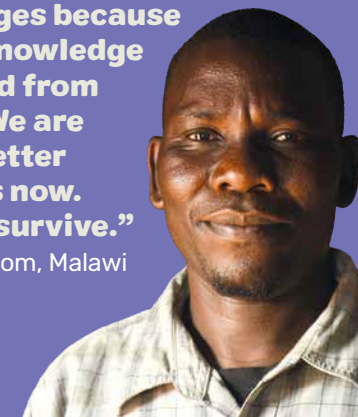
Climate conversations are awash with misinformation, especially on social media. Sometimes climate change is labelled a hoax; sometimes the planet is doomed. This resource supports teachers to critically examine these controversial and hopeless narratives, discuss them in class, and build pupils' confidence in the science and solutions.

3 Sharing stories of positive change

The poorest people are suffering the impacts of the climate crisis first and worst. However, thanks to the generosity of the people of Scotland, SCIAF can provide support to those most affected by droughts, floods and storms, and put pressure on our leaders to do more to solve this crisis.

"If climate change continues, I am ready to adapt to the challenges because of the knowledge acquired from SCIAF. We are much better farmers now. We will survive."

- Julius Thom, Malawi



Find this resource and many others at sciaf.org.uk/resources

From Benbecula to Bahía Solano

Fr Michael Hutson, Parish Priest at St Mary's in Benbecula, sits on SCIAF's Board. In June, he self-funded a trip to Colombia alongside SCIAF staff to help us prepare for next year's WEE BOX appeal. Here he reflects on his first-hand experience of SCIAF's transformational work...

'Impact' means to have 'a noticeable effect, an influential change'. It's a great title for this magazine because the support we give to SCIAF has a positive impact throughout the world.

I say this with confidence because I recently visited the poorest region of Colombia, Chocó, with its warm people, amazing jungles and dramatic beaches along the Pacific coast. Since the 1980s, Scottish Catholic generosity has been bringing about hope and change here in what is a very challenging place. In a number of creative projects, we help empower local people who 'hunger and thirst for what is right.'



We support families whose very existence on the rivers of Chocó are threatened by industrial levels of illegal gold mining



We support parents who worry about their sons and daughters being forced into one of several illegal armed groups that dominate the area



We support Afro-indigenous communities whose previous generations were enslaved people, and who still face extreme discrimination and racism today



We support women's groups with business opportunities



We support communities affected by the crime and violence caused by the ever-present cocaine industry, adding to endemic fear, disarray and exploitation



We support children, especially victims of trauma and violence, through youth clubs that use music or sport to help them experience and develop positive attitudes



And we support community leaders, especially from indigenous groups, striving for dignity, justice and peace, and who are sometimes threatened, kicked out of their homes, killed or ominously 'disappeared'

I felt proud for Scotland when I experienced the impact that SCIAF is having in Colombia. Everyone kept thanking SCIAF, especially for simply 'being with them!'

We should approach SCIAF with a bit of GIVE and TAKE: GIVE generously and thoughtfully through this official agency of the Catholic Church; TAKE advantage of the informative and prayerful SCIAF materials we are sent or can access online. If we do this, SCIAF can have an impact on us too. Transformed, we can better conform to the will of the one who said: "Blessed are the peacemakers... Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for what is right."



Fr Michael walks along the beaches of Bahía Solano on Colombia's Pacific coast. Here, SCIAF runs Rugby for Peace and a new surfing project that uses sport to support young people's mental health and provide positive role-models and opportunities for them.



Every month matters!

Join thousands of SCIAF supporters across Scotland who give a monthly gift by direct debit.

Your monthly gift can make a vital difference to our sisters and brothers in the world's poorest places, helping to build a just and green world for all.



Ethiopia

£15 per month

could give 12 families chickens, providing eggs to eat and chicks to sell all year long.



Malawi

£25 per month

for a year could support the building of a community well, giving people safe access to clean water.



Ukraine

£40 per month

could supply a mobile medical centre with medicines and keep it running all year long.

Ways to donate



Visit
sciaf.org.uk/monthly



Complete the
response form
provided.



Scan the
QR code

Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund

SCIAF is the official relief and development agency of the Catholic Church in Scotland and a proud member of the Caritas family. 196 Clyde Street, Glasgow, G1 4JY. Tel: 0141 354 5555. Scottish Charity No: SC012302. Company No: SC197327.



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Caritas Scotland