

News from Global Care and our partner projects

Winter 2021

NEWSBRIEF



MODERN SLAVERY & MOTHERLESS CHILDREN

SRI LANKA

***Roshina left her home and children in Sri Lanka to work as a housemaid in the Middle East because she knew no other way of earning the money her family needed for a better life.**

But she suffered terrible abuse in Saudi, whilst back in Sri Lanka her children struggled without her. When she returned home after the end of her two-year contract, all the money she'd sent was gone, and she was battered and broken. Her husband had found another woman, and her children were traumatised and angry.

Roshina's story is far from unusual. The housemaid industry, bringing Sri Lankan women from impoverished backgrounds to work in rich households in countries including Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Jordan, is Sri Lanka's third largest foreign-income earner, after the garment and tea-picking industries. Currently, one in five families have a mother working overseas, and more than one million Sri Lankan children are left motherless.

But the housemaid industry is completely unregulated. As many as 60% of women report abuse at the hands of employers, with no recourse to legal protection**. 20-hour days are common, along with beatings and rape, false imprisonment, semi-starvation and a failure to pay agreed wages. Many women are effectively being trafficked into slavery.

To make matters worse, children left motherless in Sri Lanka are often at the mercy of relatives and friends who may abuse and exploit them, and do not protect them as their mother would have hoped. They may be sent out to work, drop out of school, become caregivers for siblings or even be raped, pimped or trafficked themselves.



"In the end it is bad to go, and bad to stay," says *Keshini, another veteran of the housemaid industry. "It's all about living in poverty." But large signing-on bonuses, sometimes of over US\$2,000, make it very tempting to go, despite the risks.

Global Care's long-established Sri Lankan partners, Community Concern, want to give marginalised women other options. We want to help women find a way of earning money to support their families, whilst staying in Sri Lanka and caring for their children.

*name changed to protect identity

**Report by US Department of State, 2010



WHAT ARE WE DOING?

Global Care's 2021 Christmas Appeal aims to raise £72,000 to fund a new three-year programme to tackle this issue.

The 'Reducing Vulnerability to Trafficking and Abuse' project aims to protect women through empowering them with employability and enterprise skills and training.

The initiative will also raise awareness of domestic violence, abuse and the housemaid industry, strengthen the stand of the community against it, and help women work together to challenge the status quo. All this will in turn protect children.

The initiative will support up to 550 women and their children, in locations around Colombo and in the north, where large numbers of trafficked women originate due to destitution in the long aftermath of civil war. The Community Concern team will also establish community-based organisations in all locations, to enable networking, safeguard women and children, and support victims of abuse.

"For years, we have helped marginalised children through Morning Star School and our child sponsorship programme, and many of these children have been badly affected by their mother leaving to work in the Middle East," says John White, Global Care's CEO. "Too often our partners are the ones who pick up the pieces."

"This new project is an important opportunity to intervene in this cycle at an earlier stage, to prevent the trauma a child may experience when their mother leaves, and to increase the protective factors in children's lives for the long term."

By empowering women to stay in Sri Lanka and to earn enough income to rise out of poverty without all the risks of leaving the country, we protect both women and their children, and help to create a happier, more stable society.

DOUBLE YOUR MONEY THIS CHRISTMAS

You have a wonderful opportunity to make your money go further this Christmas, thanks to match funding generously provided by Global Care supporters.

The first £27,000 in donations to our new anti-trafficking project will be doubled in value.

So if you give us £20, it's worth £40, or your gift of £50 is worth £100, and so on. It's an exciting opportunity to double the impact of your giving, at no extra cost to yourself.

For the first time, both online **and** offline gifts are eligible for match funding, so you can give to our Christmas Appeal in any way which suits you, and your donation will still be doubled.

Match-funding will be available until 10th December, or until it is used up, whichever comes first. So if you want your gift to benefit from our match funding offer, don't leave it too late – give now!

Please use the form on the back of this magazine, phone us on 030 030 21 030, visit www.globalcare.org/Christmas-2021, or use this QR code. Thank you!



"NEW DREAMS FOR MY LITTLE GIRL AND ME"

***Yamu was raped by her stepfather when she was barely a teenager. By 15, she was a mum.**

Desperate to escape, Yamu put her daughter up for adoption and left for the Middle East, to work as a housemaid.

"You needed no qualifications for this job, and I met those requirements," she says. "I had dropped out of school, I had no skills, no education and no other opportunities."

At 20, she was working in Lebanon: "I thought nothing could be worse than where I had lived most of my life. But I was wrong. My mistress was an extremely wicked woman and treated me like I was dirt. The son was as mean as his mum, and I worked 19 hours every single day."

Yamu returned to Sri Lanka with money in her hand. For a vulnerable girl, this wasn't necessarily a good thing. A young man cheated her: "I was back to being penniless and hopeless again."

This time she went to Dubai, followed by two years in Kuwait. "I was nothing more than a slave. I left Kuwait feeling I had aged many decades."

At 27, she wanted to settle down, but her dreams of a happy ending crumbled. Her husband had another woman, who was working as a housemaid in the Middle East! He had no intention of giving her up.

After their daughter was born, her husband's family encouraged her to go overseas, this time to Jordan.

"When I got back, my daughter was almost three, all the money had been used, and my husband was openly involved with the other woman. His family once again pushed me to go.

"But I felt a need to protect and raise my own daughter. I had the chance to do this right this time. I decided that I was done working in the Middle East. I had been a housemaid for 10 years and had nothing to show for it except many bad memories, and a sweet little daughter."

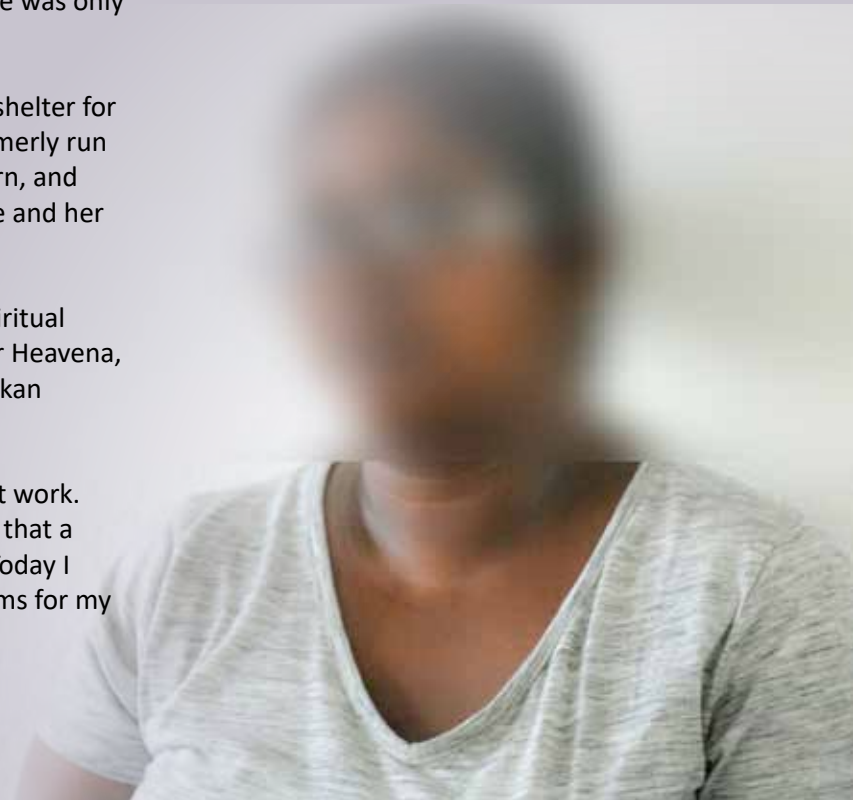
One day, after a row, she walked out. "I was not going to let my daughter have a miserable life like me. I saw all the scars my daughter already had, and she was only five."

Yamu was referred to Heavena, a residential shelter for homeless, trafficked and abused women, formerly run by Global Care's partners, Community Concern, and supported by Global Care for many years. She and her daughter stayed for six months.

"Through physical, mental, emotional and spiritual restoration I had a new image of myself. After Heavena, I found a job as a housemaid to a kind Sri Lankan family.

"We have a small home, and we are making it work. If not for Heavena I would have never known that a good life for someone like me was possible. Today I am grateful and hopeful, for I have new dreams for my little girl and me."

“ I had been a housemaid for 10 years and had nothing to show for it except many bad memories, and a sweet little daughter. ”



GIRLS GO TOO!

In South Sudan, the sad reality is that a girl is more likely to die in pregnancy or childbirth than to complete primary education.

We are doing what we can to change that, one step at a time.

At Agok primary school in the disputed region of Abyei, the girls' toilets were dangerously decrepit, after being damaged by floods, and the girls had to share with the boys. Due to the lack of toileting privacy, girls were leaving lessons early, arriving late and dropping out of school in droves.

Because the region is disputed, claimed by both Sudan and South Sudan, it is at high risk of conflict and many larger funding organisations won't contribute to development there. That's not fair to the life chances of children in this area.

Now, thanks to funding from Global Care, these girls are celebrating the opening of brand new girls' toilets, complete with air vents and toilet covers, to remove a significant barrier to education and make schooling possible again.

It is such an exciting (and locally unusual) achievement, the opening of the new toilets was featured on local radio!



Thanks to a generous donor, we were able to send a grant to support the Evangelical School for Boys, in Beirut, Lebanon, who were once supporters of our work with Syrian refugees locally, but now need help themselves.

The economic collapse in Lebanon is having catastrophic consequences across the country,

where essentials like petrol, medicine, milk and electricity are no longer available, or subject to an extremely erratic supply. The extreme devaluation of the Lebanese lira is rendering the earnings and savings of middle-class professionals meaningless, let alone those of lower-paid unskilled workers.

We are exploring how we can support families, with our former partners.

CHAOS IN LEBANON

'THE GREATEST HARM TO THE POOREST PEOPLE'

'Timely intervention'

UGANDA

The pandemic is far from over, with new lockdowns, school closures and movement restrictions imposed around the world, as the highly-infectious Delta variant continues to spread.

A new 42-day lockdown imposed across Uganda in June caused enormous hardship for families, who were once again struggling to put food on the table.

We sent funds to provide food parcels for 589 families connected to our three Ugandan projects, to last around 20 days, at a cost of around £12,500.

"We thank Global Care UK office and sponsors for the big help of food to ease the situation," said the Rukungiri team.

In and around Soroti, families struggled even more as a recent dry spell had affected crops due for harvest, followed by heavy rainfall and flooding which caused further damage.

Brenda, the Soroti Child Care Assistant, said: "We extend appreciation from the children and families for the response to the massive effects of lockdown, leaving families at risk of starvation. When food reached Abeko, children and caregivers shouted with joy." She added:

"Global Care is the only organisation to respond and quickly provide relief to this community. Local leaders commend Global Care for such timely intervention."



KENYA



AMBIA'S STORY

In north-east Kenya, we provided emergency food parcels for 106 extremely needy families in Laghbadana village, Garissa, at a cost of just over £3,000. We had been approached by our former partners, the Touching Lives Trust, to help destitute families in this desolate corner of Kenya, near the Somali border. It is a predominantly Muslim area.

Ambia is a stay-at-home mum to seven children. Her husband sells charcoal for a living, and earns extra as a casual labourer on large farms. However movement restrictions and increasing poverty mean he has lost most of his clients, and it is harder to get jobs on large farms, who are restricted in the number of workers they can employ due to government guidelines on social distancing.

He and Ambia were extremely grateful to receive a food parcel, which should last them at least two weeks. "May the peace of Allah and his blessings be on the donors for supporting us through this tough time," they said.

HARVEST HOPE

INDIA

A massive thanks goes to everyone who gave to our Harvest Appeal. By late September you had donated a wonderful £15,186 in support of an emergency feeding programme for children attending our GCare Centre in Patripul, India, and Covid needs in other slum communities.

In addition, a small band of dedicated supporters took on our Shack Challenge and raised a fabulous £6,261 in support of the same initiative.

We smashed our £20,000 target and are grateful to have some funds available to meet ongoing feeding needs.

Happily, the GCare Centre in Patripul was able to reopen in early July, alongside local schools. Linking the feeding programme to school attendance from this point has been very positive in encouraging children back into education after the long break. Severe flooding of the slum in late July further compounded this community's needs.

“ COVID-19, in short, is doing the greatest harm to precisely the people - in precisely the places - that can least afford it... For the world's poorest, the 'global recovery' is nowhere to be seen. ”

- World Bank, July 2021



“PRAY THAT I WILL NOT BE LED BY FEAR OR COMFORT”

MYANMAR

The displacement of thousands of people across Myanmar, due to civil unrest following February's coup, coincided with the spread of the Delta variant of Covid.

As a result, experts say Myanmar risked becoming a 'super-spreader' for the whole region, as refugees and internally-displaced people (IDPs) ignored movement restrictions to flee the fighting.

Our Karenni partner, DS, confirmed these reports. "In the first wave there were no cases in Karenni State," he told us in July. "But now IDPs are fleeing to villages and hiding in the jungle, and there are now cases. This is an area with no health infrastructure and no vaccines."

With Covid surging, movement restrictions, and fighting breaking out across the state, there is much suffering. Ethnic groups are taking on the Burma army equipped only with muskets and homemade weapons. The price of rice has quadrupled, and people are being taught to dig trenches around their homes to protect themselves from aerial bombardment in the return of the civil war.

"Please pray for the people facing Covid and fighting," says DS. "Very many people are dying. And pray that I will not be led by fear or comfort; this is very important to me."

DS returned to Karenni State in late September to continue his work supporting village schools, teachers and children.



LOVING 'THE LEAST OF THESE'

Our commitment to the most vulnerable children has led us, for the last nine years, to develop initiatives supporting children with disability in Uganda.

The 'double whammy' of disability and stigma, in families struggling with poverty, means disabled children are often rejected, isolated and disregarded within communities, sometimes even within their families.

From the early days of The Ark, our day centre in Soroti, to our Rukungiri programme reducing barriers to education for disabled children, we have sought ways to help children and to challenge negative community attitudes.

As we constantly seek to improve what we can achieve with the resources we have, our work with children with disability in Uganda has undergone another shift.

The Ark was forced to close in the first Covid lockdown in March 2020. However, staff were allowed to visit the children at home, and began training families to provide the stimulation and exercises the children would have received at our centre. With this support many children continued to progress.

We have therefore decided to make permanent the switch to a community outreach model. Actively supporting up to 35 children per year who are isolated because of disability, the new service will improve care for children within their family setting, and help families connect to peer support networks. This element will build on our work with existing Disability Support Groups in Abeko and Atiira.

The new model will enable us to help more children, and help families be more proactive and better aware of their rights, responsibilities and the services available. The team currently have a caseload of 36 children, and community engagement activities have identified a further 231 eligible children.

The Soroti team have appointed Salume, an experienced Special Educational Needs teacher, to lead the project. We look forward to seeing how this new initiative improves the lives of children with disability in Soroti district.

REBECCA'S STORY

***Rebecca was born with physical disabilities which went untreated for two years. Even after her mother reached out for medical support, a lack of access to specialists meant her condition remained officially undiagnosed for a long time.**

When she arrived at The Ark aged four, in April 2019, she could not sit up or carry out basic tasks and her understanding was very limited. By mid-July, she could stand for 30 minutes with the aid of a walker. By the beginning of 2020, she was learning to crawl. Staff were delighted by her progress, not just in movement but also in her social skills and engagement with the world around her.

Then, coronavirus closed the centre. Rebecca was no longer accessing the physiotherapy and sensory play that had brought such rapid progress. How would she fare at home?

Home visits gave the team opportunities to educate Rebecca's family on physiotherapy exercises and ways to engage with her in play. Over the months, they have seen Rebecca's continuing development – all in the context of a positive family life. Rebecca is fully supported by her mother and siblings, engaging with them all. She recognises more words, copies actions such as handwashing and, by the end of 2020, could stand for a few minutes unsupported.

For the team, seeing Rebecca flourish within her family was wonderful proof of what at-home support could offer a child with disabilities.



Independence, dignity and hope

Our work with children with disabilities in Rukungiri is also approaching a pivotal point. Originally developed as a three-year programme, we assessed the best ways of helping children with mobility difficulties access education.

Our local team has built accessible latrines at schools and in homes, installed ramps to classrooms, arranged school transport and walking aids, and advocated on behalf of children with local authorities, teachers and community leaders. It's been a steep learning curve but has brought dignity, greater independence and hope to the lives of the children taking part.

The coronavirus pandemic has led us to extend the programme for a further year. Most of the children

haven't attended school for the last 12-18 months, as schools have not yet reopened to younger children, and we cannot effectively evaluate the initiative in the current circumstances.

However, the children are all doing well at home, and this year the project has been able to bless all the families with new tools to improve their quality of life – and their ability to get to school in future.

All the families received either a goat or a pair of piglets, thanks to our 'alternative gifts' programme last Christmas. Livestock is a tried and tested means of improving family financial stability, through breeding and selling kids or piglets.

In addition to the livestock, 14 families with children who cannot walk to school have been given a bicycle in order to transport their child. For a time, the project paid for motorbike taxis to transport children to school. This approach, whilst successful, is not sustainable over the long term. These gifts have been extremely well received.



PROSSY'S PIGLETS

Six-year-old *Prossy lived with her grandmother, but sadly her elderly guardian died in the first lockdown. The little girl now lives with her uncle and his family. Prossy and her carers were very excited to receive, firstly, two piglets, and later, a bicycle.

Our local team report: "Her uncle was extremely happy and promised to support Prossy in everything. He welcomed the idea and

believed the family was going to benefit much, as in one year, if they feed them well, they will produce, and they can sell off the young ones and raise school fees and other personal necessities for the child."

As well as the goats given to disabled children in our Rukungiri programme, an additional 51 goats were given to families connected to the Abeko Disability Support Group, near Soroti, following our Christmas gifts programme.



CHRISTMAS GIFTS 2021

£32



Highlight
of the year.



School packs for children impacted by HIV/AIDS

After the success of our 'alternative' Christmas gifts in 2020, this year we are offering two new items which will make a positive impact on the lives of marginalised children.

After making your donation, you will receive a gift pack with a card, including space for your message, and a leaflet explaining the gift. And a child receives a welcome gift from our international partners, meeting a genuine need.

£16



This little
light of
mine...



It's going
to let them

shine.

GIVE A LITTLE LIGHT THIS CHRISTMAS!

In Uganda, many families rely on kerosene lamps for lighting after sunset. But kerosene lamps emit a high proportion of black carbon, which is far more damaging to the environment than CO2.

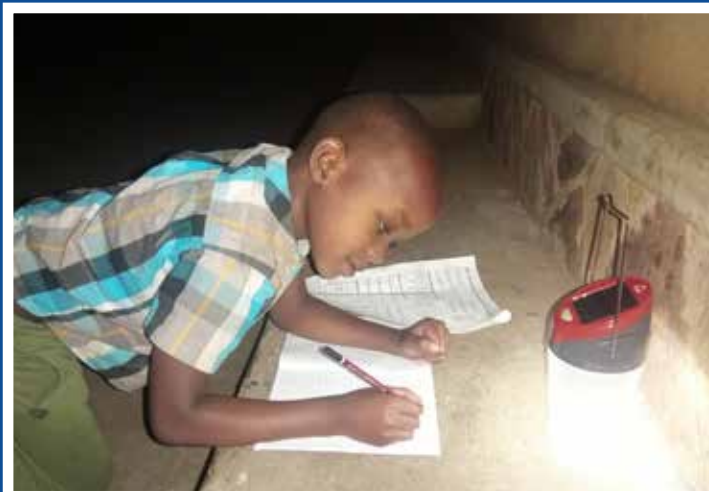
They also give off unhealthy fumes which cause respiratory diseases, and are a frequent cause of household fires causing injury, destruction and even death. The cost of kerosene fuel is another burden for families in poverty.

We want to introduce simple solar lighting to marginalised families. The gains are obvious; a solar lamp is free to use, emits no harmful gases, does not damage children's health or the environment, and is not a fire hazard.

Our simple solar lamps cost just £16, including transport across Uganda and delivery to an identified family, and should last for up to three years.

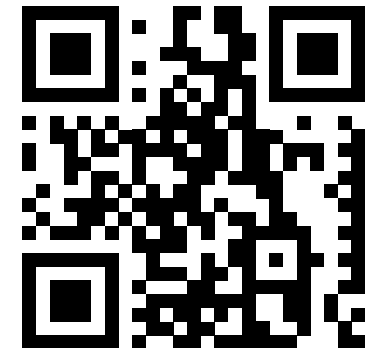
CEO John White explains that this new initiative is not only a win for families, but is also a positive start to Global Care's move to becoming carbon neutral as an organisation, through carbon-offsetting.

He said: "We recognise that climate change is real and urgent, and we recognise that the effects of climate change disproportionately hit the poorest families the hardest. So as an organisation with an absolute commitment to improving the welfare of most vulnerable people on our planet, we must address our own contribution to climate change, and reduce our impact wherever possible."



Donate for the gift of your choice at

www.globalcare.org/shop
or use the QR code.





Pack modelled by a child from a different Community Concern project

SCHOOL PACKS FOR AIDS-AFFECTED CHILDREN

It's been a tough year for families supported by Kadella, one of just a handful of services in Sri Lanka supporting people with HIV/AIDS, run by women who themselves 'live positively' with HIV.

Located close to the Infectious Diseases Hospital in Colombo, this location became a liability for immuno-compromised people in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic. Despite everything, they are still serving these families, and Global Care has recently renewed a three-year commitment to fund extra nutrition and care packages for 26 vulnerable children supported by Kadella.

Good nutrition is extremely important for children living with HIV, and all these children come from families who cannot afford the fresh, healthy food their children need to stave off HIV-related health complications.

In addition to feeding, as part of our drive to ensure equitable access to education, we also provide these children with a 'school pack' at the start of each school year in November.

Costing just £32, each pack consists of a school bag, a new pair of shoes, and all the stationery they need for the year, including exercise books, pens, pencils and other essentials.

Could you donate to buy a school pack for an HIV positive child this Christmas? There are just 78 of these packs available – one for each of the 26 children for the next three years. We would dearly love to be 'sold out' this Christmas!

Thirteen year-old *Ayomi lives with her mum, who is a sex worker. Ayomi discovered she was HIV+ after her mum was diagnosed, and this has driven a huge wedge between them. Ayomi is very angry. Mum's lifestyle is still chaotic and the home is sometimes violent.

Despite everything, Ayomi is a bright girl who currently benefits from a scholarship to a good school in Colombo. Ayomi moved there after advocacy by Kadella and other human rights organisations. She was excluded from her previous school when other parents discovered her HIV+ status and

demanded she be removed. This was extremely traumatic for her. Although she has successfully studied online during the pandemic, she is looking forward to returning to school as soon as the current lockdown ends. For Ayomi, school is a bright spot in an otherwise difficult life.

Our partners say: "She has good prospects of a productive future if she is not influenced by her mother. Ayomi often thinks she is alone and has no one whom she can depend upon. But now she says someone at Kadella cares for me."

Can you give Ayomi, and children like her, the essentials they need to start the school year with confidence?

AYOMI'S STORY



Yes, I'd like to give Sri Lankan families HOPE this Christmas.



Please find enclosed my/our donation of £

Please receipt my/our gift

Don't forget! ALL donations will be doubled in value (up to £27,000) if you can give before December 10th.

I'd like to order my Global Care Christmas Cards

Please send me pack(s) of Design no. at £3.49/pack.

I/we include a postage fee of £1.85 (for 1 pack) and enclose a total of £
 £3.49 (for 2 or more packs)

I'd like to buy solar lamp(s). I/we enclose a total of £
 school pack(s).

Your details:

Title First Name Surname

Address

Postcode

Email Phone no.

Gift Aid on your donation means extra funds for Global Care!
I would like Global Care to reclaim the tax I have paid on this gift, all gifts of money made in the past 4 years, and all future gifts made from the date of this declaration.

I understand that Global Care will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give. I confirm that I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. I will notify Global Care if I change address, no longer pay sufficient tax on my income and/or capital gains, or if I want to cancel this declaration.

Yes (please tick) Date Signature

To make a card donation over the phone call the office on **030 030 21 030**

To make a card donation online visit:
www.globalcare.org/christmas2021

Please complete this slip, and send it with your donation in the enclosed Freepost envelope

Thank you

Christmas Cards

Our 2021 Christmas Card has a 'While Shepherds Watched' theme, featuring children from Soroti, Uganda. The new cards are available via the enclosed order form, or available online, with a selection of other cards, at www.globalcare.org/shop



Design 1: While Shepherds Watched



Design 2: Merry Christmas



Design 3: Joy to the World

If you prefer to send e-cards, you'll find a selection of Global Care Christmas Cards available, for a donation, at

<https://www.dontsendmeacard.com/ecards/charities/global-care>

*Names have been changed to protect the identity of children

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