

Oliva, Tanzania



Oliva stands near her home in Karatu District, Tanzania. Photo credit: August Lucky

[Watch Oliva's story.](#)

Oliva, 22, didn't have the opportunity to attend school and was embarrassed because she couldn't read, write or count. As an adult, her small business was losing money because customers were taking advantage of her. Then Oliva enrolled in literacy and numeracy classes, as part of Caritas Australia's A+ program. Even while she was still learning herself, she set up a classroom in her home, to share her knowledge, free of charge, with other adults who were too shy to attend public classes. Now, she has graduated, attendance at her home-based classes are growing, her business is thriving, and she is fulfilling her dream of becoming a pastor.

Oliva lives in northern Tanzania with her husband and four children. She has two sons, aged seven and two, as well as an adopted niece and nephew, aged 12 and 21. She runs a kiosk and works as a casual labourer on local farms.

Due to low rainfall in her region, there are food security issues and many struggle to afford shelter and clothing.

Oliva's ability to earn an income was hindered by not having an education.

"Due to low family income, my parents could not send me to school," Oliva says. "My mother preferred that I take work as a labourer. I felt inferior and didn't interact with my friends. When I went to church and the pastor said, "let us open our bible and read", I could not read even a single word. As an adult, people used to take advantage of me because I couldn't count, I was operating my business at a great loss."

Around 25 percent of Tanzanian girls and women over 15 years cannot read or write.* Many families are unable to afford an education. Schools are far away, limited in resources and teachers are not willing to work in remote areas.

Women in Tanzania tend to carry out most household tasks and have limited decision-making powers within their family and community.

However, three years ago, Oliva joined the A+ literacy program run by Caritas' local partner, Diocese of Mbulu Development Department (DMDD). Because of donations from Australian schools and parishes, the program was able to assist Oliva to achieve her vision for a better future.

* Source: [World Bank](#)

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Oliva attended Caritas Australia-supported literacy classes in the village and then began teaching other adults from her home, when she noticed they were too embarrassed to attend the same classes as their children.

“Now I can now read my bible, my students are happy and are highly motivated, they believe that one day they will be like me,” says Oliva. “My business is growing because I can keep financial records without confusion, save and buy basic needs like food, medicine and farm materials. Education has enabled me to come closer to my children, as we do homework together, with an increase in the family bond.”

Caritas Australia has helped the community to improve access to safe drinking water, increased livestock production and improved toilets in schools. Around 2,500 people have benefited from this program so far.

“The effort that Oliva shows in adult learning is an eye-opener to other community members who used to feel inferior after missing primary education,” says DMDD Program Coordinator, Rither Mallewo. “Adult learning classes empower the community as they reveal useful hidden talents.”

Oliva now aspires to ‘Be More’ and wants to help her community achieve its vision of a better life for all.

“I’m now the women’s chairperson at the church, I want to be a pastor. I will also contest for a leadership position in the next village council election so that I can represent my community,” Oliva says. “I am proud to be a teacher who helps others to achieve their dream. I would like to thank Caritas Australia for your support toward fulfilment of our community vision, may God bless you all.”



Oliva (second right) with other students outside the classroom of the Adults Learning Program.
Photo credit: August Lucky

1. Read and discuss/write your responses:

- a) Identify the key challenges Oliva was facing.
- b) Explain how Caritas Australia and their partners in Tanzania are empowering Oliva, and others like Oliva, to overcome some of these challenges.
- c) What have been the impacts of Oliva's participation in the Caritas Australia supported program?
- d) What have been the flow-on effects into the rest of Oliva's community?
- e) What are two facts you learnt about poverty and gender inequality from Oliva's story?
- f) Explain which Catholic Social Teachings you see reflected in Oliva's story.

2. Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals are 17 goals developed by the United Nations that aim to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.

Read through the [17 goals](#) and explain which of those Caritas Australia and its partners in Tanzania are working towards in Oliva's story.

3. Global Literacy

Using the data in the table below, construct a graph that displays the number of illiterate youth within the world between 1985-2018. Once completed, analyse the graph by describing any trends you see.

Number of illiterate youth (aged 5-24 years) worldwide, 1985-2018, in millions

Year	Female	Male	Total
1985	109	68	177
1990	104	65	169
1995	100	64	163
2000	88	56	144
2005	83	51	134
2010	74	51	125
2015	61	45	106
2018	56	44	100

Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics Global Database, 2019

4. Connection between literacy and poverty

Read this [United Nations article](#) about the correlation between literacy and poverty.

Discuss the ways in which literacy and poverty are closely connected.



Oliva teaches adults from her community inside her home in Tanzania.
Photo credit: August Lucky

COUNTRY STUDY: TANZANIA



Engage with the [Country Study Thinglink](#) and do some of your own research to find out the information below. Suggestions for reliable sources are included on the Thinglink and below.

<p>Predict life expectancy in Tanzania. Find out the correct answer. Does this surprise you? Why/Why not https://ourworldindata.org/life-expectancy</p>	<p>Prediction:</p> <p>Actual:</p>	<p>https://www.britannica.com/place/Tanzania</p> <p>https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/tanzania/Pages/tanzania</p>	
		<p>What are the official languages?</p>	
		<p>What is the main religion?</p>	
<p>What is the population of Tanzania? What is the population of Australia? https://ourworldindata.org/world-population-growth</p>	<p>Tanzania:</p> <p>Australia</p>	<p>What system of government does Tanzania have?</p>	
<p>What is the poverty rate in Tanzania? https://data.worldbank.org/ http://hdr.undp.org/en/data</p>		<p>In what region of the world is Tanzania located?</p> <p>What direction is it from Australia?</p>	
<p>List three major factor/s affecting poverty and wellbeing (E.g. Education)</p>		<p>Describe the ways Australia is connected to Tanzania. E.g. trade that occurs between the two nations, services that are exchanged, immigration, etc.</p>	
<p>Summarise Caritas Australia's support to improve wellbeing.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>		<p>Select two relevant Sustainable Development Goals.</p> <p>Why did you select these? www.globalgoals.org</p>	

“We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing they hold future promise.”

Excerpt from the prayer of St Oscar Romero

Reflection questions:

- What are the ‘seeds’ that are planted in Oliva’s story?
- What other ‘seeds’ can we ‘plant’ in our world today, that will make a difference to the lives of others in the future?
- What connections can you make between this quote and Jesus’ [parable of the mustard seed](#)?

- How might you raise awareness in response to what you read and thought about in Oliva’s story?
- Explain how you can share your own literacy skills with others in your school or local community.



Pray

Write a prayer of intercession based on what you have learnt from Oliva's story. You may want to share these as a class at an end of the week reflection, or on your online classroom platform.

Here is an example of one:

Loving God, we pray for those who do not have access to education, as many of us are blessed with. May we work to support organisations like Caritas to provide them with the resources to learn. We pray to the Lord.

