

Project Compassion helps Irene secure a brighter future for herself and her family.

Irene is a 25-year-old single mother of two boys living in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

After her father died in conflict, Irene along with her mother and siblings were displaced, and her mother became the sole breadwinner for the family. Despite the difficulties for her mother to afford school fees, Irene attended school for as long as she could.

However, when Irene was a teenager, she became pregnant, and the father of her child abandoned her not long after she gave birth. Irene's lack of education and in turn, limited job opportunities, further complicated her ability to support her family's basic needs.

Thanks to Caritas Australia's partners, Caritas Kongolo, Irene was able to join the Youth Capacity Strengthening Program and take up a sewing course. In addition to this, Irene attended agricultural training sessions enabling her to grow and produce food for her family. Irene's newfound skills not only provide financial stability to her family but have also enabled her to take on a mentoring role, training other young women to sew.

"With the earnings from this job, I can not only buy my own clothes but also for my family members... Regarding the children I send to school, there are my orphaned nephews from my late brother. I make sure to provide for all their needs," Irene said.

"Our lives are so different now. Before, women depended on men's income, but now, with our sewing skills, we can take care of ourselves" Irene added.

Irene is currently safe amid the worsening conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as the fighting has not reached her Diocese, however she is feeling the pressure of rising prices of household necessities being felt across the country.

Find out more about Irene and watch her story here: [Irene's story](#)

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