



With Righteous Anger  
and Tenderness  
at the Side of the Poor

**MISEREOR**  
IHR HILFSWERK

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## MISEREOR – about us



MISEREOR is the German Catholic Bishops' Organisation for Development Cooperation. For over 50 years MISEREOR has been committed to fighting poverty in Africa, Asia and Latin America. MISEREOR's support is available to any human being in need – regardless of their religion, ethnicity or gender.

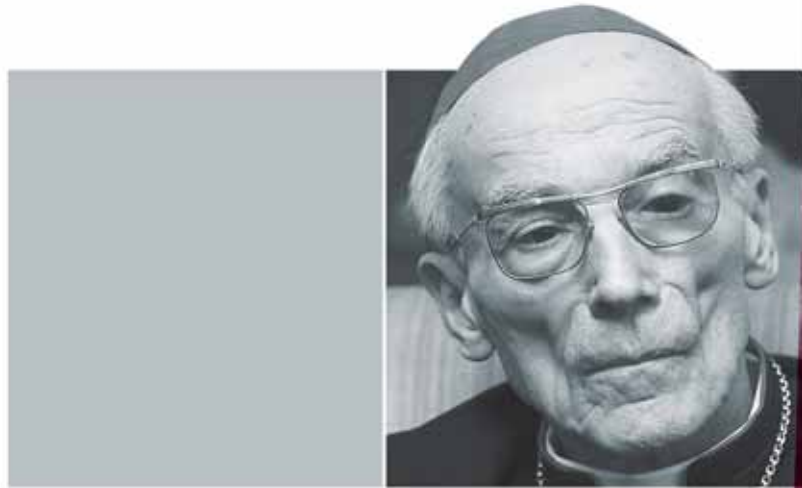
Changes cannot be prescribed from outside. MISEREOR therefore believes in supporting initiatives driven and owned by the poor and the disadvantaged. This is because in MISEREOR's experience it is they themselves who possess the strength to improve their lives sustainably. We support them in their efforts in accordance with the principle of help toward self-help. On the ground, projects are run by local organisations. This ensures that the project work is geared to the needs and way of life of the people involved.

# MISEREOR


## is right there at the side of the weak

MISEREOR supports the weakest members of society: the poor, the sick, the hungry and the disadvantaged. It is of no importance whether those in need of help are men or women, what religious beliefs they hold or where they come from. To love one's neighbour is a basic attitude of Christian life, and MISEREOR's vocation is to translate this attitude into concrete action; the poor are our sisters and brothers, who have a right to a life of dignity. MISEREOR supports them in realising it. The organisation does not pursue any ends other than the promotion of development. The mandate given to MISEREOR by the German Bishops rules out the promotion of pastoral or missionary measures.

'Misereor super turbam – I have compassion on the crowd' (Mk 8.2): These words of Jesus contained in the Bible gave the organisation its name. Compassion for people in need has remained the defining underlying motivation and characteristic of MISEREOR's activities to this day.







*Now, almost overnight, gateways to the whole world are being flung open before us. [...] What we have so far forgotten because of our own plight, is now coming to the forefront of our awareness: In most countries of the world, hunger prevails.*

*Cardinal Frings, founding speech for MISEREOR, 1958 (13 years after the end of World War II)*

# MISEREOR


## strengthens self-initiative

MISEREOR is convinced that poor and disadvantaged people too possess the strength to substantially improve their lives. Where the poor are able to put their talents, knowledge and capabilities to good use, they themselves become the engine of change and development. Many of them then discover for the first time that they have not been dealt an immutable fate for all time.

Projects supported by MISEREOR therefore strengthen the self-initiative of the poor, and encourage them to articulate their interests and needs – not as supplicants, but as people who know their rights and obligations. Support of this kind at the same time helps the poor avoid becoming dependent on foreign aid.





A photograph of two women in traditional Liberian attire. The woman in the foreground is wearing a red headscarf and a light blue, long-sleeved, button-up tunic with intricate blue and white embroidery, including floral and butterfly motifs. She is smiling and holding a piece of orange fabric up in her right hand. The woman behind her is also smiling and wearing a light blue tunic with similar embroidery. The background is a light green, textured wall.

*The special thing about MISEREOR is that they have stuck with us through thick and thin, through the good times and the bad.*

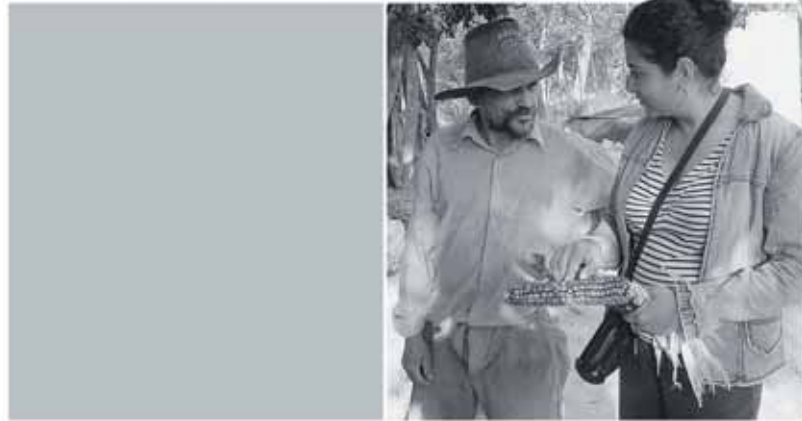
*Winifred Valentine,  
MISEREOR partner in Liberia*

# MISEREOR


## relies on local partners

When a new MISEREOR-supported project is launched this does not mean that development experts from Europe travel to the region in question with what they suppose to be the right solutions in their luggage. MISEREOR prefers to rely entirely on its local partners: Church-based institutions, non-governmental organisations, social movements and research institutes with which the agency cooperates closely, and in some cases has done so for decades. Together with the beneficiaries, the partners involved help shape local development processes and implement the projects. They receive support from MISEREOR in the form of advice, expertise and funds.

MISEREOR is not only a donor, but also a learner, a partner in dialogue and a companion in solidarity. This creates a process of permanent exchange characterised by trust, an ability to express and deal with constructive criticism, and a willingness to learn. This is how MISEREOR, together with its partners, responds to constantly changing challenges.







*MISEREOR projects are projects based on partnership. Sustainable development is not produced at the green table, but is the result of mutual planning, mutual efforts and mutual success.*

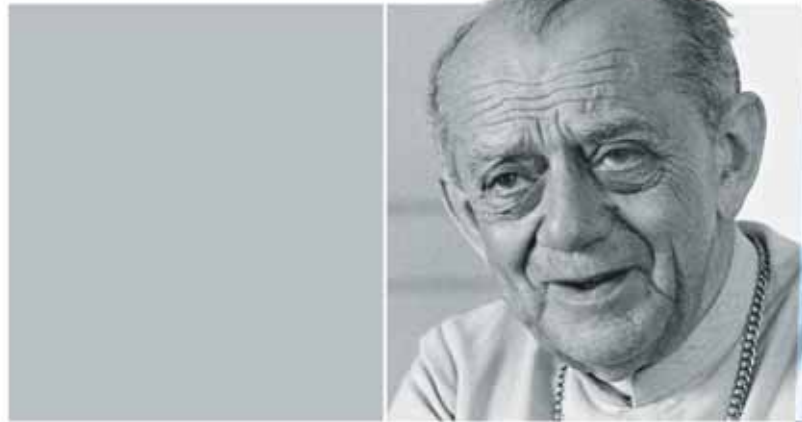
*Lulu Cipriano,  
former national coordinator of the  
Philippine MISEREOR Partnership (PMP)*

# MISEREOR

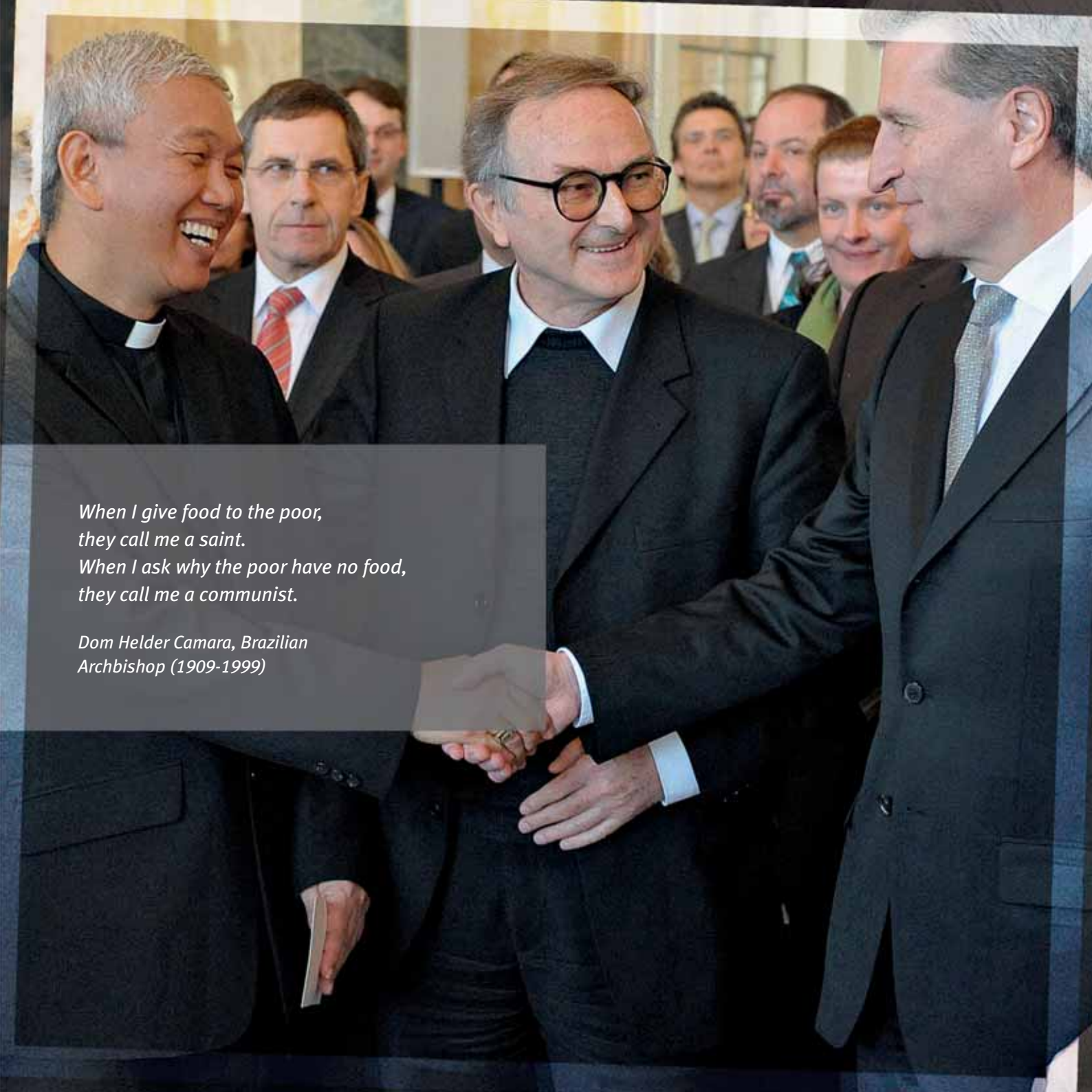
## appeals to the consciences of the powerful

MISEREOR's approach is to fight the causes of injustice, because it is not enough to just alleviate its impacts. For this reason, MISEREOR aims to influence public opinion and policymaking. Political education, the exchange of experiences and networking are key elements of this work. This is how MISEREOR helps enable its partners and the beneficiaries to overcome structural injustices through their own efforts, and succeed in the struggle for working and living conditions that uphold human dignity.

MISEREOR also appeals to the consciences of the powerful in Europe, and for instance stands up for fair terms of international trade. Whether communicating face-to-face with decision-makers or speaking before committees and parliaments – wherever possible MISEREOR invites representatives from the South to articulate their concerns for themselves. MISEREOR also tries to sensitise people in Germany to the ways in which their lifestyle influences the lives of people in developing countries. Wherever possible, MISEREOR promotes living solidarity between people in the North and the South.







*When I give food to the poor,  
they call me a saint.  
When I ask why the poor have no food,  
they call me a communist.*

*Dom Helder Camara, Brazilian  
Archbishop (1909-1999)*



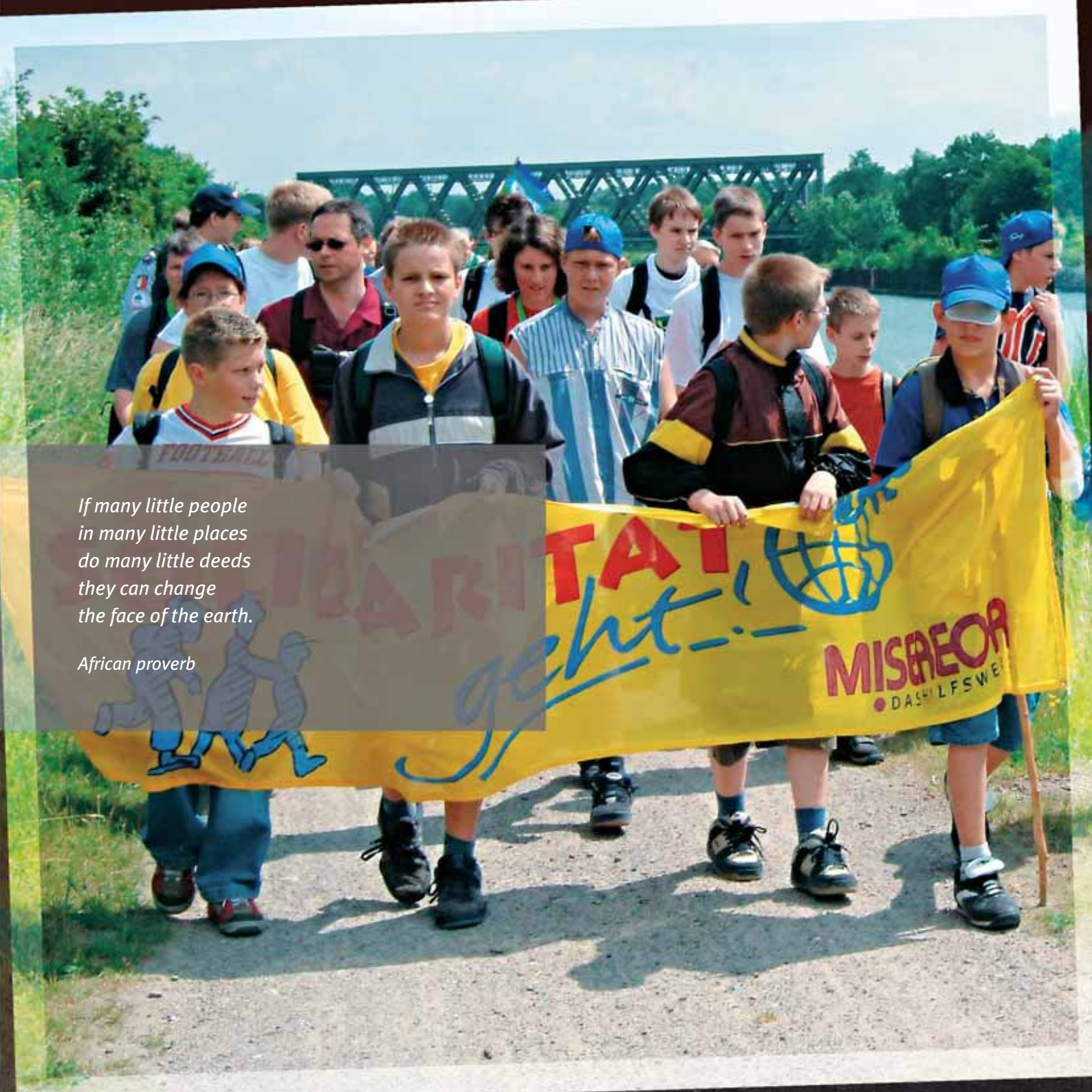
# MISEREOR

## is a movement

MISEREOR was established by the German Bishops' Conference 50 years ago as an organisation emerging from a broad movement of German Catholics who wished to help their sisters and brothers in need. And to this day the agency would be inconceivable without its numerous supporters. Groups and committed individuals, children, youths and adults invest a huge amount of time and effort in drawing attention to injustices and inspiring others to join the struggle against hunger and poverty.

Only very few of MISEREOR's donors are wealthy. Many sacrifice the satisfaction of their own wishes to benefit the disadvantaged. And they give more than just their money. Each donation carries with it the message: 'We are thinking of you. We are close by. You are important to us!' In this way MISEREOR becomes a bridge between people in Germany and the poor in Africa, Latin America and Asia. MISEREOR and its partners therefore work in awareness of the fact that they are intermediaries who make this global solidarity possible. All those involved share one concern: a more just world.





*If many little people  
in many little places  
do many little deeds  
they can change  
the face of the earth.*

*African proverb*

# MISEREOR

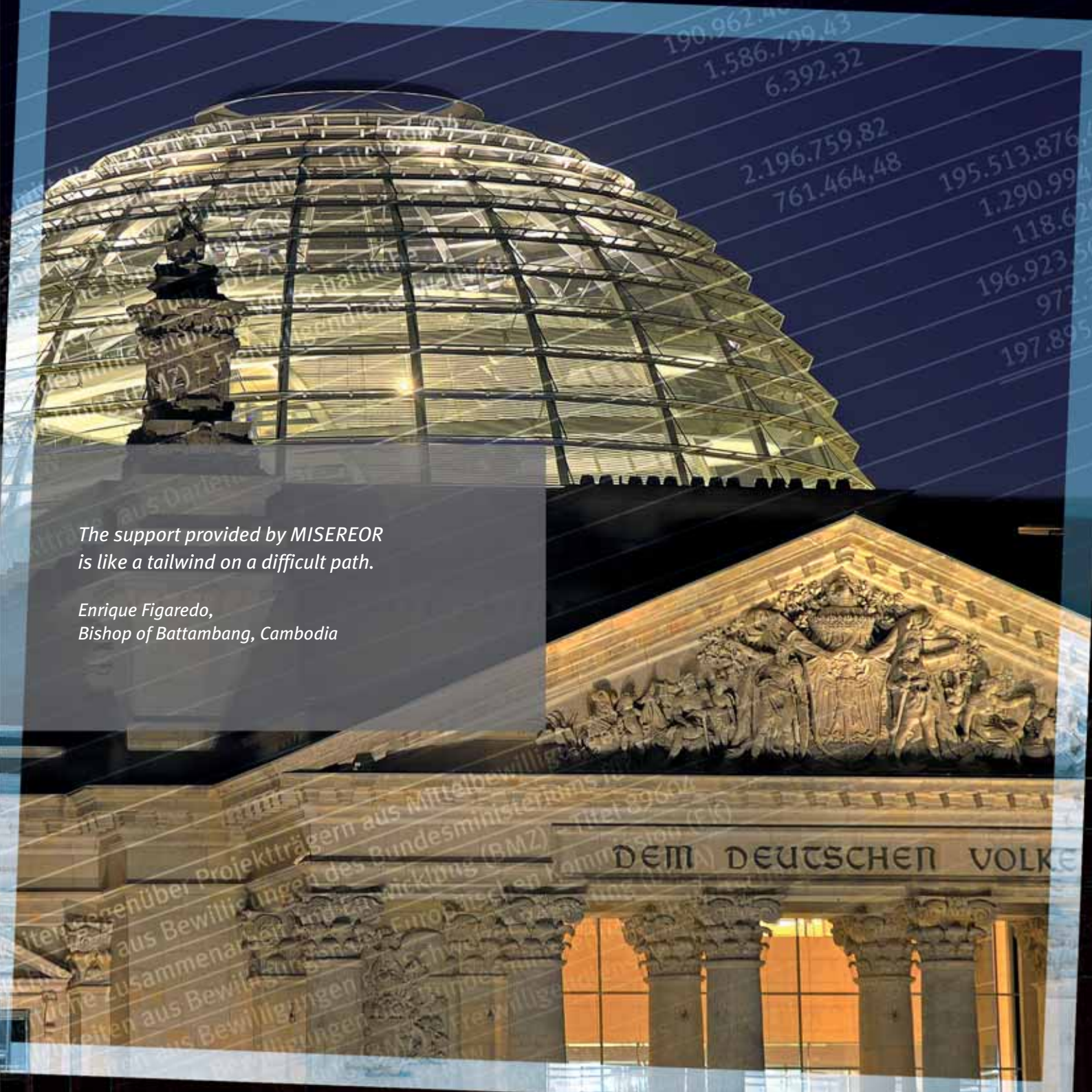
## has strong supporters

Since 1962 the German Government has also relied on MISEREOR's expertise. Because the organisation works on a partner-oriented basis and close to the poor, every year the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development provides it with considerable sums of tax monies for development projects, which now account for two-thirds of MISEREOR's project budget.

This cooperation is based on mutual trust, and two principles: The German Development Ministry has pledged not to tie these monies to political conditionalities. At the same time it must be ensured that no pastoral or missionary measures, which in any case are not included in MISEREOR's mandate, are promoted with public funds.







*The support provided by MISEREOR  
is like a tailwind on a difficult path.*

*Enrique Figaredo,  
Bishop of Battambang, Cambodia*

# MISEREOR

## stands for transparency

MISEREOR uses the funds available to it responsibly, economically and efficiently, and regularly accounts to the individual and public donors providing it with the money. A multistage monitoring system guarantees that the stewardship of funds remains transparent both within and outside of the organisation.

MISEREOR has set both itself and its partner organisations clear rules. All areas of work are regularly and consistently monitored. Internal guidelines for staff members and line managers contribute to ensuring that any forms of abuse or corruption are prevented. The requirement of maximum transparency also includes the regular publication of data on the source and use of funds. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the development work performed in the projects supported by MISEREOR is also reviewed by external consultants, and documented every year in a public evaluation report.





A photograph showing a woman on the left wearing a patterned headscarf and an orange top, and a man on the right in a light-colored shirt. They are both looking down at a document held by the man. The background is a simple room with a desk and a chair. A semi-transparent grey box with white text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

*Corruption hurts the poor disproportionately by diverting funds intended for development, undermining a Government's ability to provide basic services, feeding inequality and injustice and discouraging foreign aid and investment.*

*United Nations Convention against Corruption*




# A new project is born

For MISEREOR, each individual project is part of a larger task. In dialogue with partners in Africa, Asia, Oceania and Latin America joint visions and goals are developed so that social processes can be effectively supported. MISEREOR underpins these processes by facilitating exchange of experiences and networking, and by providing professional advisory and consultancy inputs on themes such as urban and rural development, human rights, health, peace and many more.

The partner organisations are closely accompanied by MISEREOR, and if required are also advised on management and organisational development issues.





*Projects planned in partnership promise to be more concretely pro-poor and realistic. The fact that projects are locally and culturally embedded means that they are more likely to succeed and be sustainable. The partnership principle makes it easier for MISEREOR to realise the subsidiarity principle.*

*From the MISEREOR Cross-Sectoral Evaluation of Partnership (2008)*

# The basic principles of project work

Professional support requires firm principles. This is why MISEREOR appraises the anticipated effects and feasibility of each potential project carefully in advance.

Interventions funded by MISEREOR must satisfy a number of basic conditions. They must be based on the subsidiarity principle, and must be both complementary and temporary. This means that MISEREOR will only provide assistance where the people and institutions on the ground have reached their own limits and thus require external support. MISEREOR will not permanently take on tasks that fall within the sphere of responsibility of the state; it will, however, remind governments that their actions must be pro-poor and serve the purpose of poverty reduction. And last of all the measures must be temporary. This is because the support provided should help enable the poor to lead self-determined lives, and should not create new dependencies.







# The effectiveness of support

MISEREOR projects are designed to help enable poor people improve their living conditions and initiate processes of social and political transformation. The changes brought about by the project work must be monitored, regardless of whether they are expected or unexpected. MISEREOR therefore enables its target groups and partners to assess, evaluate and report on these project effects.

This outcome and impact assessment provides project actors with the basis on which to intervene and steer processes, and generates lessons learned that can be utilised in future projects. At the same time, it is also important that both we ourselves and our partners document outcomes and impacts for purposes of external accountability.





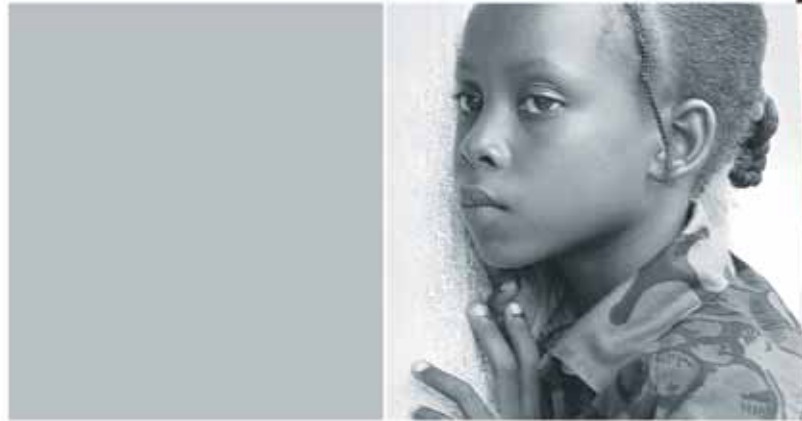




# The dream of a more just world

The development projects supported by MISEREOR are as diverse as the causes and faces of poverty. They all have one thing in common, though. They all focus on the whole human person. As well as satisfying basic needs such as food security, they also help ensure that human rights are upheld and the way is paved for the people concerned to live in dignity.

Our ideal would be a world in which all human beings are able to participate in shaping their communities, in which cultural diversity is recognised and promoted, and in which equality is a reality. All these are overarching goals that are, among others, pursued in project planning.





# With Righteous Anger and Tenderness at the Side of the Poor

By using the terms ‘righteous anger’ and ‘tenderness’ MISEREOR is underlining the special motivation at the heart of its activities. What we mean is the righteous anger over injustice and suffering that is rooted in human compassion, especially for the poor, the disenfranchised and the disempowered.

Since 1958 MISEREOR has represented the Catholic Church’s commitment to stand at the side of the poor, the sick and the oppressed, and join them in the struggle to overcome poverty and create decent living conditions.

*For Christians, standing at the side of the poor is an imperative of faith. If our faith is authentic and true, then our loyalty to the Gospel calls us to respond in this way. Following Jesus means walking side by side with the poor, or nothing at all.*

*Bishop Luís Flávio Cappio,  
Brazil*





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