

OCTOBER 2021

Sustain

Sr Lenah Mambo

~ by Sr Elizabeth Donnan ibvm **ibvm**

Sister Lenah Mambo ibvm will be remembered fondly by the people of Lukulu in Zambia. Sr Lenah arrived from Kenya in May 2016 and died of COVID-19 in May 2021. In her five years, she reached out to many. The people at the parish leprosarium had a special place in Sr Lenah's heart. Her visits were the highlight of their week.

She was a very committed teacher at St. Columba's Secondary School, and results in the national biology exams improved significantly throughout her time there. She worked tirelessly in her coordination of the Christian religious program offered, and she supported the Catholic ethos of the school in many different creative ways. She was very aware of student needs, especially those struggling with poverty. When the school feeding program looked like collapsing due to a lack of funds, she sourced funds through MWIA - an example of her constant desire to help those in need.



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COVER*

Sr Ephigenia Gachiri ibvm running an education lesson in a village of the Diocese of Nakuru, Kenya, Africa.

*Consent for all imagery of children and young people used in this publication has been received.

ABOUT US

Mary Ward International Australia (MWIA) is a registered charity and is the Australian and global development organisation of the Loreto Sisters. Our Mission is to support the Loreto Sisters and the broader MWIA network as we work with women and communities to transform unjust structures and reduce poverty and oppression, primarily through formal and non-formal education.



Mary Ward International Australia respectfully acknowledges all

Traditional Custodians of the land and waters of Australia. We pay respect to their Elders, past and present, and young leaders of today and the future. Mary Ward International Australia commits itself to the ongoing work of reconciliation with our First Nations families and communities.

Agents of Change



Colonialism and neoliberalism have shaped our reality in the contemporary international development and aid sector. For decades now, we've grappled with the paternalistic nature of our industry, characterised by gross economic inequalities manifested not only in the aid relationship itself but also in the living conditions of those involved.

At Mary Ward International Australia, we are conscious of this inequity, of the privilege and power that allows us to do the work that we do. We aim to channel this privilege by doing good, not harm; by doing better, not worse, each day.

We are conscious that the communities we aim to serve are at the heart of the change and solutions required to redress this enduring imbalance. Our role is to help make things a little bit more equal by sourcing much-needed funds, resources and opportunities to assist them in doing so.

But, as there are power dynamics at play globally, so too there are locally.

At MWIA, we strive to promote autonomy and agency where individuals are able to act and make choices freely within their own communities. This can mean challenging the structures that reinforce power and inequality under the guise of ability, gender or custom.

Few know this better than Loreto Sister Ephigenia Gachiri ibvm and her team in Kenya.

This edition of Sustain shines a spotlight on their work within their own community to find solutions that celebrate culture and tradition without causing physical and psychological harm to those with less power in their midst. In this instance, change is being driven from within.

Similarly, here on the other side of the world, we can drive change from the ground up.

In the following pages, you will also see it is at Loreto's core to foster generation after generation of young people who are well informed, critical, curious and compassionate, with the intent that they then put these skills to use to drive change in countless ways – small, large and everything within.

We can all be agents of change by drawing on the resources we have at hand and working together. Whether you are in Australia, Kenya or somewhere in between, there is an opportunity to be part of something bigger, to make a difference in this beautiful but challenged world of ours.

Thank you for being part of this.

Hannah George
Executive Officer

MARY WARD INTERNATIONAL AUSTRALIA

PO Box 4082, Auburn South, VIC 3122

Ph: 03 9813 4023 **E:** mwiaustralia@loreto.org.au

www.mwia.org.au   

Executive Officer: Hannah George

Ph: 0448 393 479 **E:** hannah.george@loreto.org.au

ACCOUNTABILITY AND ACCREDITATION

MWIA is a full member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID). We are committed and fully adhere to the ACFID Code of Conduct, managing our work with transparency, accountability and integrity. MWIA is an approved organisation under the Overseas Aid Gift Deduction Scheme (OAGDS) and endorsed by the Australian Taxation Office as a Deductible Gift Recipient.



ACFID
MEMBER



Making a rite right

~ by Hannah George

Hitting the headlines in Kenya this year is the spike in the number of women and girls being forcibly 'circumcised'.

Behind these headlines are the stories told to Loreto Sister Ephigenia Gachiri ibvm and her team as they work with local communities to end the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM).

Recently, they learnt that over a two-month period, more than 30 married women in one Rift Valley village had involuntarily had their genitals cut and sewn up. They were not girls being 'circumcised' as part of a cultural rite of passage - they were teachers, parents, and even wives of chiefs.

Sr Ephigenia attributes the surge in FGM cases to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"There are a few reasons behind this" she says. "People are being driven by fear, social pressure and desire for power and control. Recently I learnt that some men, threatened by their own impotence due to excessive alcohol and drug use, have wanted to ensure their wives are as incapable as themselves.

"Then there are the communities that believe that men with uncircumcised wives should not become leaders, driving those with political aspirations to harm their wives. These beliefs are hidden and difficult to ascertain, but fear keeps them alive.

"Another main driver is economic hardship and uncertainty. Lockdowns have meant people can't work or earn an income, so they look for alternatives. One of these is to cut the girl and then marry her off in trade for a dowry or to reduce the 'burden' of another mouth to feed.

"Adding to this, schools are also closed, which some parents take advantage of to cut their girls, while circumcisers are making a living out of the practice."

Working to end FGM in Kenya since 1998, Sr Ephigenia knows the challenges and what's needed to drive change in attitude and practice.

"I think the fact that I'm well educated, older, and from a community that practices FGM gives me credibility. When one talks to the elders politely and with respect for their beliefs, they will accept you. I don't know how much being a Sister helps, but perhaps it helps to know that I have no personal benefits to gain from the work. It may also help sway those in the community who believe the practice has religious support.

"In my team, I have married men and women because FGM is connected to sex and marriage. The married people on my team talk from experience."

In most societies where FGM is practised, it is considered a cultural tradition, which is often used as an argument for its continuation. It is often considered

a necessary part of raising a girl, preparing her for adulthood, and increasing marriageability.

When Sr Ephigenia was told by a community she was working with that they couldn't stop the practice because their daughters couldn't "grow like goats who just move from one stage of maturity to another with no initiation rite", she rose to the challenge and worked with them to develop alternative rites of passage.

The parents said their children needed to be prepared to enter into adolescence. They believed that was the original aim of FGM rituals; FGM was a ritual within a rite, but it was only one aspect.

"Unfortunately, most of the traditional rituals have gone, and only FGM remains today. The cut has assumed a very big role, whereas originally it was only a ritual within the rite," says Sr Ephigenia.

"I already knew that no person can force another to change behaviour - people decide for themselves. But listening to their reasoning, explaining the short and long-term harm it causes, and providing alternatives can definitely help."

Image:

1: Sr Ephigenia running an education lesson

MAKING A RITE RIGHT

Please join us for our next webinar featuring Sr Ephigenia Gachiri ibvm, live from Kenya. Sr Ephigenia will share the stories of girls whose lives have been positively transformed by the MWIA FGM Prevention project and the powerful difference you can help make. An event not to be missed! Mark your diary now!
MONDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2021 | 6.30 - 7.30 PM (AEST) | ZOOM

I have male facilitators who have married women that have endured FGM. We respect our participants, and they are delighted when men speak with men, and the married women address married women. Remember, this is a very sensitive area to our people.

~ Sr Ephigenia Gachiri ibvm



WHAT EXACTLY IS FGM?

Female genital mutilation (FGM) involves the partial or total removal of external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is classified into four major types:

TYPE 1

The partial or total removal of the clitoral glans (the external and visible part of the clitoris, which is a sensitive part of the female genitals), and/or the prepuce/clitoral hood (the fold of skin surrounding the clitoral glans).

TYPE 2

The partial or total removal of the clitoral glans and the labia minora (the inner folds of the vulva), with or without removal of the labia majora (the outer folds of skin of the vulva).

TYPE 3

Also known as infibulation, this is the narrowing of the vaginal opening by creating a covering seal. The seal is formed by cutting and repositioning the labia minora, or labia majora, sometimes through stitching, with or without removal of the clitoral prepuce/clitoral hood and glans (Type 1).

TYPE 4

This includes all other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, e.g. pricking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterising the genital area.

Keeping our Focus Fixed

A Mary Ward school today continues to take its bearings from Jesus, his gospel, and our charism, and to be guided by our JUST SOUL traditional values of Justice, Verity (Truth), Sincerity, Freedom, and Felicity (Joy).

(cf KG pp 1-2; IBVM Call 1)

(bearings, direction)

Guiding and Guarding in the use of Media

A Mary Ward school today develops responsive and effective ways to enable the young to engage safely and ethically with social media and emerging technology. This ensures the integrity of relationships while enhancing the opportunity for learning and creating global digital citizens.

(cf KG pp 7-8; CJ Call 8)

Being an Agent of Change

A Mary Ward school today discerns what change is happening or needed, and encourages collaborative work to embrace change in order to take God's purpose forward through education.

(cf KG pp 3, 7)

Owning and Developing the Charism

A Mary Ward school today joyfully accepts responsibility for evolving and unfolding in our time the God-given charism that Mary Ward channelled in her time. We continue to interpret this charism, adapting what has been passed on to us, in creative and innovative ways congruent to the times.

(cf KG p 2; IBVM Call 1; CJ Call 8)

Cultivating Values Needed Now

A Mary Ward school today promotes not only the traditional values in which it is rooted but also those values needed for education that is responsive and relevant to the present reality and to the future.

(cf KG pp 1, 7)

Embracing and Affirming Diversity

A Mary Ward school today embraces diversity as a mirroring of the wonder of Creation. Seeing the image of God in human diversity, we encourage the young to discover their interdependence so they each find their own dignity - "I am because you are" - and feel truly affirmed and included.

(cf KG pp 6-7; IBVM Call 5)

Thinking and Acting Justly

A Mary Ward school today is aware of inequalities and oppression in the world of which it is part, and strives to be part of the solution, building peace by helping the young to think and act justly in response to injustice - whether in the school community, the broader community, or the environment.

(cf KG pp 3, 6, 7, 9; IBVM Call 2; CJ Call 5, 6)

Engaging with the Bigger Picture

A Mary Ward school today, recognising the interconnectedness of all things, finds educational ways to engage with Laudato si' and Agenda 2030: Transforming our World. We promote the values, skills, and behaviours needed for living as global citizens finding fulfilment in harmony with all of creation.

(cf KG p 3; IBVM Call 2, 4, 5; CJ Call 4, 5, 6)

1



Our Compass

points the way to 'thinking and acting justly'

~ Michelle McCarty

Students in Loreto Schools across Australia are energetic, passionate and dedicated to making a difference in the world; indeed, a commitment to justice is found in the very DNA of our educational approach. The Mary Ward Schools' Compass (left) links our Australian schools to those of our global family. It includes two key foci relating to justice education; the South points us to the importance of 'thinking and acting justly' whilst the North-West directs us to 'being an agent of change.' Using the Compass to explore these two distinct yet clearly linked paths underpins the formation of our students as young people who are well informed, critical, curious and compassionate. Their voices are then expressed in a variety of ways; as skilled debaters, as advocates on issues of politics and policy, as caring volunteers, as enthusiastic fundraisers and as young people who seek truth and do justice.

In a true demonstration of 'thinking and acting justly', our schools raise significant funds for different MWIA projects every year. This year, the total raised to date is over \$100,000 - an extraordinary effort in another year impacted by significant COVID-19 related lockdowns and long periods of remote learning in many of our schools. On Feast Days, Mission Days and Loreto Days, which are joyful celebrations of community, the tradition of student-led action for MWIA as a key focus has continued this year. Loreto student leaders in both Year 11 and 12 take seriously the responsibility of developing activities to practically support the work of MWIA and raise awareness and understanding of their work in all students.

Loreto Normanhurst supported the work of Sr Ephigenia Gachiri ibvm in Kenya through their Loreto Day celebrations. Sr Ephigenia is a leading proponent against the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Kenya. In partnership with MWIA, she has made a significant impact toward its eradication through educating local communities. Year 11 students educated the school community about issues associated with FGM with skill and sensitivity, inviting Dr Ngatho Mugo, a Sydney Community Education Officer, to speak as part of Loreto Day alongside their House stalls, giant raffle and the traditional school concert.

At Loreto Kirribilli May Day, in a wonderful celebration of felicity, the school community came together to raise funds for MWIA, demonstrating their ongoing support for the Loreto Sisters' work in Timor-Leste. The day commenced with a beautiful liturgy in honour of Mary Ward, as per tradition, and continued with fundraising activities and an entertaining student-led concert. Loreto College Coorparoo held its Mission Day to support the work of MWIA in India. The grounds of Coorparoo were filled with the sound of music from a range of choirs and jazz groups and the heady smells of delicious student-run food stalls. Along with various fun activities coordinated by student leaders, a wonderful day of community was enjoyed in sunny Brisbane.

At Loreto College Marryatville, Mission Day ended Term 3 this year. Under the topical theme of 'Felicity Fairytale', the Marryatville community celebrated a day of colour, fun and entertainment. Mission Day focused on the work of Loreto Rumbek in South Sudan, particularly the Primary Health Care Centre and its Healthy

Foundations program for children under five. Loreto College Ballarat also generously supported Loreto Rumbek earlier in the year with their annual Walkathon. This year's dress-up theme, 'Be the Iconic', saw creative and clever costumes worn by Loreto girls on their long walk through the streets of Ballarat. Loreto College Ballarat continues to support the Sisters in Timor-Leste by selling face masks made in Timor by local women who have partnered with Loreto. Children and students in Ballarat wear these masks with pride to help protect their community and support their friends in Timor-Leste.

John XXIII College (JTC) in Perth celebrated its JTC Day in August. Each year the JTC community directs a generous donation to MWIA to celebrate their connection with the Mary Ward family. Loreto Toorak has rescheduled their planned Feast Day to later in the year and is committed to supporting the Landing Pad project administered by the Kolkata Mary Ward Social Centre in India. School captains recently launched the project at an online school assembly, encouraging these young Loreto women to show real solidarity with the women and girls of Kolkata, for whom this project will make a practical difference to their education and daily lives. Finally, our wonderful primary students at Loreto Nedlands celebrated their Mission Day on the last day of Term 3, raising funds with felicity, in a continuation of their enthusiastic support for the Brickfield Schools project in India.

Mary Ward International Australia thanks all schools for their ongoing commitment to social justice and helping those in need.

Images:

- 1: Mary Ward Schools' Compass
- 2: May Day, Loreto Kirribilli

a bright future...

Sancta Maria College of Nursing and Midwifery opens!

~ by Kirstin Del Beato

In 2020, the Bishop of Mongu approached the Loreto Sisters to manage the construction and operations of a new nursing and midwifery college in the remote community of Lukulu, in the Western Province of Zambia.

The college is being developed on the site of the abandoned Sancta Maria Mission Hospital located in the centre of town. It will provide local young people with an opportunity for tertiary and professional training otherwise inaccessible to them in this remote and underdeveloped area of Zambia.

Without education, local youth are unable to break the cycle of poverty for themselves and their families. An environment of hopelessness perpetuates amongst young people. It manifests through significant dropout rates from school, teenage pregnancies, prostitution, alcohol and drug problems, and the confinement of young girls to village life with no apparent future.

Having a nursing and midwifery college that recruits students predominantly from the local area with deep, established family connections and a familiarity with the adverse living conditions means that qualified nurses graduating from the college will be more inclined to stay and work in the region. Ultimately, this will result in more stable and skilled staff delivering quality health services in these marginalised areas of the country.

The college will also promote much-needed future economic development by creating a hub for health education and encouraging complementary business and health services to establish themselves in the region.

With the recent approval by Zambia's Nursing and Midwifery Council and initial renovations of the old hospital buildings complete, the college opened its doors to its first intake of 60 students on 23 August. The next crucial phase of works, which is well underway, comprises constructing accommodation for students and senior academic staff.

The college now has a new bus to transport students to and from their practical sessions at the local hospital, located five kilometres from the college. The community was so thrilled when the bus drove into Lukulu for the first time, the driver decided to take a tour of the town with the college staff aboard before finally arriving on site!

The final phase of construction will commence in 2022 and will safeguard the long-term future of the college. Building on the works to date, it will ensure the college is fit-for-purpose through the construction of new classrooms and more extensive accommodation to cater to the increasing student numbers, with projected new intakes of up to 100 annually.

Loreto Sisters in Lukulu

Lukulu is situated in the remote, impoverished Western Province of Zambia, with minimal access to health facilities, schools, clean water and sanitation. While the township of Lukulu generally serves the scattered rural community of approximately 70,000 people across the Lukulu District, it also provides support to the even more isolated communities of the Mitete District, situated across the Zambezi River from Lukulu.

The Loreto Sisters are well-established in Lukulu and have long supported the community, particularly through the provision of education, health and pastoral care. Upon arrival in Lukulu in 2006, Sr Pat Hanvey ibvm began work in home-based care, which over subsequent years has evolved into an integrated health care program as a direct response to the needs of the community and local Ministry of Health. Other work undertaken by the Loreto Sisters in Lukulu includes providing teacher training and community school support as well as saving the lives of hundreds of children and babies through the Baby Milk Program and Lunch Feeding Project.



1

We Couldn't do it Without You

An enormous thank you to the Noel and Carmel O'Brien Family Foundation for helping bring this vision to life.

For over 60 years now, the O'Brien family, brimming with philanthropic heart, have lent their generosity toward numerous similar projects in Australia and around the world. This is not their first investment in the work of Mary Ward International and the Loreto Sisters – they're also behind the construction of the Loreto community centre in Ostico, Timor-Leste, having previously funded the nearby Gari-uai Pre-School and Community Centre.

Noel still takes a very close interest in all that the foundation does, ensuring that it remains true to the spirit and intent of himself and his dearly beloved Carmel.

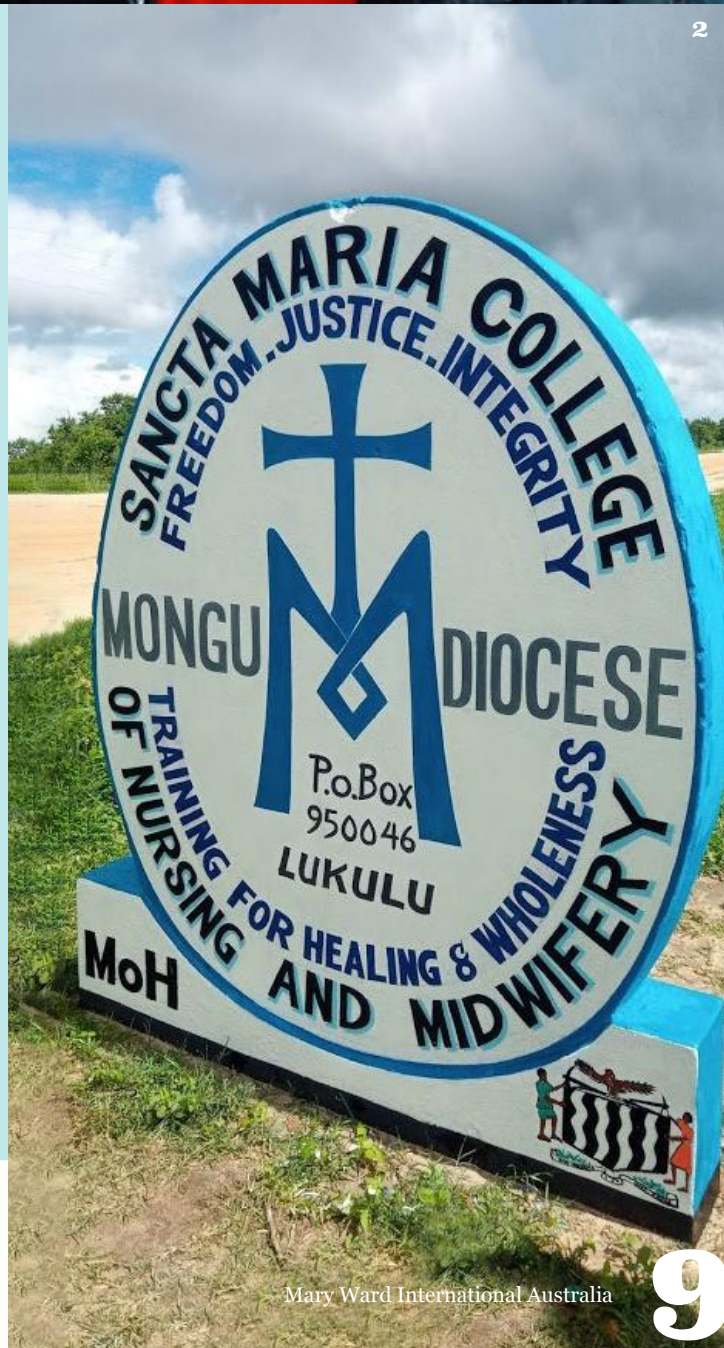
Growing up in the Depression years, Noel and his family saw plenty of hardship and, through this, brought out entrepreneurial skills that have been with Noel all his life. As young boys, Noel and his brothers started selling snowballs (the edible type) and peanuts at Melbourne's Essendon Airport to help put food on the table at home.

This grew rapidly to the idea that they could do the same thing at the Essendon football ground. Little did they know that when they jumped the fence and started selling their goods, it would lead to something much greater. Noel and his brother Jack formed a formidable partnership as O'Brien Catering which lasted over 40 years, becoming the largest leisure contract catering company in Australia.

It is this entrepreneurial spirit that is also behind the family's long-held commitment to helping those most in need, and importantly, inspiring and encouraging those around them to join them.

Images:

- 1: Students aboard the new bus
- 2: Entrance to Sancta Maria College



2

Global Impact Snapshot



PERU

COVID-19 Response

Personal Protective Equipment and oxygen concentrators provided to combat the third wave of COVID-19. Pharmaceutical services have been provided to over 1689 people, primarily women, children and the elderly. Further provided were hundreds of telemedicine consultations and home visits, in addition to medicinal donations to vulnerable people.

SOUTH SUDAN

Health Support Project

Between November 2020 and April 2021, medical care for over 11,141 patients (predominantly women & children with malaria) has been provided. This has enabled community members and beneficiaries coming to the clinic to access complete and free care and medication.

KENYA

Sustainability for the Mary Ward Retreat Centre | Solar Energy

Solar panels have been installed at the Mary Ward Retreat Centre in Nairobi. These panels now provide power to the upgraded water bore pumps and the new irrigation system on the adjacent sustainability farm. This farm provides much of the produce for catering at the centre.
Supported by missio München.

INDIA

Landing Pad

Since January, 4200 sanitary pads have been produced. Over 3000 pads have been distributed to women in the red light district of Sonagachi in addition to awareness and hygiene education.

Ethical Enterprises Initiative for Young Women

Four girls from the jute product training group passed the training and joined the permanent jute product making group. Other girls began higher education studies or college. The reduced migrations meant lower numbers of girls and women being trafficked from Sukna and Gulma.

Bringing Light to Sundarbarns

50 solar lanterns have been distributed to families in Manmathnagar, Chandipur and Bidadaspur - areas without electricity and with snake infestations.

AUSTRALIA

Bourke Men's Centre

This project, led by CatholicCare, has flourished over the past year. A coordinator has been employed and is a local founder of the Men of Bourke group. 265 activities have been conducted, including 112 individual support sessions, 74 group sessions, 26 education workshops, 15 events and 38 network meetings.

TIMOR-LESTE

Loreto Ostico Building Project

Foundation works for the community centre, and the Loreto Sisters residence are nearing completion as construction moves above ground. Water supply is now connected to the new tank located on the premises, providing fresh water access to the many onsite workers. Importantly, many of these workers are from the local village, providing income and development opportunities to the people of Ostico.
Supported by the Noel and Carmel O'Brien Family Foundation.

ZAMBIA

Baby Milk Project

58 babies are receiving formula support across four centres. The program continues to deliver health, hygiene and infant care education, complementing the formula provided to the infants.

Strategic vision

2021 - 2024

GOAL 1

Women and community-led, sustainable programs transforming unjust structures and reducing poverty and oppression.

2024

GOAL 2

Sustainable, systemic change through effective, respectful collaborations and partnerships.



Evidence based advocacy

2023

GOAL 3

Increased awareness of and commitment to MWIA and its mission.



Diverse income streams and financial growth

DELIVER CHANGE

2022

An engaged and inspired network

GOAL 4

Strong, streamlined governance and expanded organisational capacity enabling MWIA to achieve its mission.



2021

Sustainable and efficient governance and financial structures

INITIATE CHANGE



A JUST WORLD

LASTING CHANGE

Collaborative,
innovative projects

Active, open partnerships
with shared vision

CHANGE

Many parts come together to make Mary Ward International Australia (MWIA). It is a dynamic organism, constantly responding to changing contexts. What links the parts are our vision and values, distilled in our Purpose statement, *'Creating just and sustainable change with women, children and communities.'*

So who is involved in the work of MWIA? And what part do they play? First and foremost are our MWIA project partners in country - the Loreto Sisters and their colleagues, and the communities we work with through particular projects. I think of the communities in the Brickfields in Kolkata, the Ostico community in Timor-Leste, communities in Zambia and Kenya, and closer to home in Wilcannia. I think of Sr Monica in India, Sr Orla in Africa, and Sr Margaret Mary in Timor-Leste, and their love for and commitment to the communities in which they work.

Supporting this work are our MWIA staff, small in number, efficient and dedicated. Their work encompasses many areas, often unseen: writing grant applications, supporting our project partners, linking local needs with resources, ensuring MWIA

complies with its legal obligations, spreading awareness of the mission and work of MWIA, including across Loreto schools and the Loreto family, engaging in advocacy on behalf of those whose voices cannot easily be heard, and connecting with donors.

Our donors are pivotally important. Without resources, we can do little ... 'no money, no mission'! Many people contribute to the work of MWIA through donations: those who are regular donors, giving what they can afford; those who respond to specific appeals; the Loreto school communities across Australia who devote their annual Loreto Day or Mission Day to awareness-raising and fundraising for an MWIA-supported project; those who arrange bequests to MWIA; and our generous major donors. Thank you to each one of you.

Finally, we have a hardy band of volunteers. Volunteering can take many forms, and we are hoping to expand opportunities to volunteer in the future. In writing this piece, however, I am thinking of the wonderfully generous volunteers who serve on the Board of MWIA.

Teams behind the scenes

~ by Dr Leoni Degenhardt, MWIA Board Chair

I think too of those who contribute their expertise and experience in a range of ways for particular projects, such as developing our new strategy, and in ongoing ways as members of our five board committees and working parties.

Through working together towards a shared purpose, everyone benefits. I end with an excerpt from one of the MWIA Board Directors, currently working with an NGO in Papua New Guinea, describing her work:

“It's pretty simple - good strong leadership, playing to people and organisations' strengths, and leaning in or leaning out when you are or are not needed. No one person/organisation is the champion but we couldn't do it without each other. Extremely humbling.” - Rebecca Walker

Our future together, inspired by the youth

~ by Sr Janet Palafox ibvm

Despite recent events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the return of the Taliban in Afghanistan and the recent Women's Summit in Australia highlighting that inequality, particularly gender inequality prevails, I have hope. The girls and young women I have the privilege of collaborating with are interested, passionate, eager to understand and most importantly, courageous and articulate in advocating for change. They understand the importance of collaboration, transparency, and accountability.

Together with current and past students from Mary Ward schools and professional young women, we raise awareness, advocate at the United Nations, and hold our governments accountable for the delivery of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a framework for peace and prosperity for people and the planet.

Prior to the pandemic, the world made some gains in reducing extreme poverty (SDG 1), improving maternal and child health (SDG 3), providing access to education (SDG 4), and even made gains in gender equality (SDG 5) and employment (SDG 8). However, according to the 2021 UN Secretary General's (UNSG) Progress Report, the goals will not be achieved by 2030.

The report also highlights what we already know; the pandemic has pushed back the gains we made on most SDGs. Extreme poverty is expected to rise for the first time in two decades, and an additional 83-132 million people will find themselves forced into chronic hunger.

Experience in Australia confirms that COVID-19 is a 'generational catastrophe for our children's learning and wellbeing.' The digital divide was ever-present, and many children had no access to online learning.

Alarming, more than 168 million children's schools closed for almost a year, and one in seven children missed more than 75% of face-to-face learning. These children are at risk of not returning to school, making them vulnerable to child marriage or child labour.

Our environment suffers (SDGs 13, 14, 15). CO2 emissions increase and the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report states that climate change is evident in every region of our world and across the whole climate system. Almost every year in Australia, we experience the effects of drought, bush fires, flooding, cyclones, and the bleaching of our precious Barrier Reef. We ignore these warnings at our peril.



Image: Loreto Ballarat students participating with other school students in regional climate change protest | Image courtesy of Reuben Rasmussen

Over 100 years since women's suffrage and more than 25 years since the Women's Conference in Beijing, gender equality (SDG 5) remains a dream. No country has achieved gender equality. Poverty and hunger have a feminine face. Women and girls are the most adversely affected in many areas, including health, education, and work. While discrimination and violence against women are overtly displayed in countries like Afghanistan, they have increased worldwide, particularly during the pandemic. It is a dire situation for women experiencing domestic violence, locked at home with their abusers. Gender equality is critical if we are to achieve the SDGs.

The pandemic provides an opportunity for governments to reset as we plan our recovery. The UNSG's report calls on governments to 'use the recovery to adopt low-carbon, resilient and inclusive development pathways that will reduce carbon emissions, conserve natural resources, create better jobs, advance gender equality and tackle growing inequities.'

The pandemic demonstrated that providing living wages and universal healthcare saves lives and the economy. Properly targeted, they are investments for a better future. The recovery must include all people. Leave no one behind is not just a slogan; it is our way to a better future.

History tells us that significant paradigm shifts are often started by the people and not those who benefit from the status quo. Young people, including many of our Mary Ward current and past students, are leading us by questioning the status quo, challenging the norm and prompting change. This generation inspires hope in me.

COVID-19

Response Impact



JICAMARCA, PERU

Countries worldwide are struggling with wave after wave of COVID-19. Health services are being pushed to the brink to provide adequate care for the sick. When the second wave hit Peru, the town of Jicamarca was not spared. Local cases increased, raising concerns about some of the secondary complications of the virus, such as limb numbness, headaches, and lung and heart conditions, in addition to the emotional toll. With so many losing family members and friends to the pandemic, there has been a notable rise in the need for mental health support.

A much-needed grant from MWIA allowed the Our Lady of Guadalupe de Jicamarca Health Centre staff to respond to this most challenging trial. The team procured essential Personal Protective Equipment supplies for frontline health staff, including masks, gloves, aprons, caps and shoe coverings, as well as ammonium for disinfection and anti-fluid uniforms and caps, allowing them to prevent disease and work safely with their patients. Alongside these items, three oxygen concentrators were acquired to treat acute COVID-19 sufferers.

The health centre staff have provided pharmaceutical services to over 1689 people, primarily women, children and the elderly. They have further provided hundreds of telemedicine consultations and home visits, in addition to medicinal donations to vulnerable people.

INDIA

In a sign that community extends far beyond our immediate surrounds, MWIA supporters contributed \$70,500 to Loreto emergency relief efforts as India faced devastating numbers of COVID-19 cases, a collapsing medical system and a shortage of oxygen.

"People have come together from all walks of life in the most extraordinary ways to lend a helping hand," said Sr Shakuntala Kujur ibvm, Director at the Darjeeling Mary Ward Social Centre.

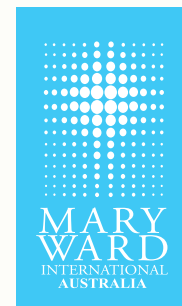
These funds provided desperately needed medical, nutritional and educational support to those in India who have been hit the hardest, particularly those who lost work and could not afford to provide food or medical treatment for themselves and their families.

As our Sisters live and work in the communities directly impacted, they were able to ensure medical support and emergency relief reached those who needed it quickly, save lives and help stop the spread of COVID-19. This included:

- Purchasing oxygen concentrators for the communities of Darjeeling, Champasari, Shillong, Ranchi and Kolkata.
- Delivering food, medical, and educational support for over 1,000 families from West Bengal province's poorest, most remote communities.
- Providing medical and educational support for 250 young female street children as part of the Loreto Rainbow Homes program.
- Running COVID-19 awareness and protection training to local communities. This included the distribution of masks made by the youth group of the Darjeeling Mary Ward Social Centre.

Thank you for your support of our MWIA global projects. We are privileged to address the most basic needs of people at a time when it is far too apparent that they are without the same economic and social safety nets as we have. On behalf of the people we serve, thank you.

Making a rite RIGHT



Female genital mutilation (FGM) is mainly carried out on young girls between infancy and adolescence and occasionally on adult women. More than three million girls are estimated to be at risk of FGM annually, while today, there are more than 200 million FGM survivors around the world.*

The practice has no health benefits for girls and women. In fact, it has the opposite effect. FGM can cause severe bleeding and problems urinating, and later on, cysts and infections. It can further cause complications in childbirth and an increased risk of newborn deaths. On top of this, there are psychological impacts, including depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Loreto Sister Ephigenia Gachiri ibvm and her team work with parents, teachers, students, health workers, police and other community and business leaders to build understanding about the short and long-term devastating consequences of FGM. They further work to find alternative cultural practices that celebrate the role of women in society. In fact, 20,000 girls have been transformed through the work of her team since it began in 1998.

Help us ensure this incredible team of dedicated guides and mentors, led by Sr Ephigenia, can continue their life-changing work.

**UNICEF FGM Brochure 2016*

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Mail to the address below

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The quickest & easiest way

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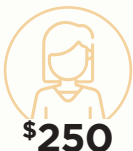
03 9813 4023
Pay via Credit Card

What your gift could provide:



Will cover the cost of a one day **FGM PREVENTION SESSION** for 300 school students

\$100



Will see two girls **CELEBRATE** an alternate rite of passage

\$250



Will fund **TRAINING** for five community advocates

\$500



Will **COACH** six lead trainers to **EQUIP** other trainers

\$1000

Title	Full Name		
Address		State	Postcode
Phone	Mobile	Email	

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I would like to make a recurring monthly gift of \$ _____ Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible

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- ☐ I would like to receive information about leaving a gift in my Will
- ☐ I would like my gift to remain anonymous
- ☐ I would like to meet with an MWIA representative

2021_SS_MAG_10

Should the total number of donations exceed our Kenyan project financial goal, donations will be redirected to support the ongoing development work of other project partners.

Privacy: The information you provide is confidential and will be used to process donations, issue tax receipts, acknowledge your support and provide you with news and information. Our privacy policy is available at www.mwia.org.au/privacy-policy and contains information on how you can correct your personal information and who we disclose your personal information to and how to lodge a complaint. If you wish to limit the amount of communication material you receive from MWIA please call us:

03 9813 4023 or write to us: PO Box 4082, Auburn South, VIC 3122. Thank you.

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for your
generous
donation!**