



MARY  
WARD  
INTERNATIONAL

MARY WARD INTERNATIONAL

# Annual Impact *Report 2024*



# *Driving* Global Change

Mary Ward International is the Australian and international development organisation of the Loreto Australia & South East Asia Province. Through providing much-needed resources, we support the Loreto Sisters and those in our broader Loreto community around the world, assisting where the need is greatest.

Inspired by Loreto's founder, the Venerable Mary Ward, Mary Ward International is committed to working towards a just world where women share leadership, children thrive, and communities live in harmony with each other and the Earth.

Mary Ward International's approach to development is rigorous, community-led and sustainable. Its work is grounded in a history of collaboration, listening, and sharing knowledge, ideas and challenges – and, importantly, Loreto values.

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Mary Ward International 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.

**Cover Image:** Building Strong Foundations, South Sudan

## MARY WARD INTERNATIONAL

Mary Ward International 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. Mary Ward International is an approved organisation under the Overseas Aid Gift Deduction Scheme (OAGDS) and endorsed by the Australian Taxation Office as a Deductible Gift Recipient.

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STEWARDSH  
COUNCIL



Our Vision is a just world  
where *women* share leadership,  
*children* thrive, and *communities*  
live in harmony with each other  
and the Earth.

## OUR PURPOSE

Creating just and sustainable change with women, children and communities.

## OUR MISSION

In the spirit of Jesus and Mary Ward, we support Loreto Sisters and the broader Mary Ward International network as we work with women and communities to transform unjust structures and reduce poverty and oppression, primarily through formal and non-formal education.

## OUR VALUES

Verity | Freedom | Justice | Sincerity | Felicity



# Message From *The Chair*

Mary Ward International continues to bring hope and a spirit of care and collaboration to women and their communities across the globe. In a world greatly in need of hope, there is much to celebrate in the work of Mary Ward International.

In Lukulu, a remote district of Zambia, the first graduates of Sancta Maria College of Nursing and Midwifery were celebrated by the entire community. These young graduates bring the hope of better health care, economic improvement and meaningful change to the lives of those with whom they live and serve.

2025 will usher in a year-long celebration of Loreto education and ministries in Australia. Through Mary Ward International, this tradition of education is thriving beyond Australian shores in the children of the Brickfields, India, the Learning Support Program in Vinh Loc, Vietnam, the Loreto Preschool in Gari-uai, Timor-Leste and in programs assisting women to improve their employment skills, their children's health and nutrition.

The hope engendered by these programs is encouraged and supported by the Board. These generous women and men ensure Mary Ward International is compliant, ethical and true to the mission and values of Mary Ward. We are most grateful for the skills, expertise and commitment they bring to the work of Mary Ward International.

This year has brought significant changes to Mary Ward International. We farewelled Dr Leoni Degenhardt AM after six years as the Chair. Leoni brought a passion for women's rights, a singular understanding of governance, and a great capacity to listen and consider a wide variety of ideas and opinions. We thank Leoni for her absolute commitment to and enthusiastic support for the work of Mary Ward International.

Joining Leoni at the conclusion of over six years' engagement with Mary Ward International were Nicole Gibson, Rebecca Walker and Sr Libby Rogerson ibvm. They generously contributed considerable expertise, ideas and commitment to the work of the Board, and we thank them with much gratitude.

Hannah George, the Executive Officer, left for further exciting challenges at the end of 2024. Hannah made an enormous contribution to the growth and development of Mary Ward International as an organisation, solidly grounded in principles of development, attuned to the needs of our partners and sensitive to the cultural and social complexities of families and communities. We thank Hannah and wish her the best in her next endeavours, grateful for all her work.

Our thanks to Kirstin Del Beato for ably stepping into the role of Acting Executive Officer, continuing her active engagement with partners and ensuring a smooth transition to the challenges of 2025.

None of Mary Ward International's work could have happened without the support of our donors. Many women, children and communities are thriving as a result of your generosity. Words cannot sufficiently express our gratitude for the hope you offer these communities. With great sadness, we note the sudden and unexpected death of Sr Elizabeth Donnan ibvm, a pioneer of Lukulu, a woman wholly dedicated to the education of young people in Australia, South Africa and Zambia. We remember her with much love and gratitude.

My thanks to all who support Mary Ward International in its ongoing work - enabling women and children to flourish, transforming communities, and developing more equitable societies.



*Wendy Hildebrand ibvm*

**Sr Wendy Hildebrand ibvm**  
*Acting Board Chair,  
Mary Ward International*

# Executive Officer Report

At Mary Ward International, our commitment to creating just and sustainable change for women and children is at the heart of everything we do. This report celebrates the dedication of our project partners and supporters, whose collective efforts continue to transform lives in the communities we serve.

In 2024, our focus on gender equity was evident, directing an impressive 97% of project funding toward initiatives that promote equality. Notably, 54% of these projects were led by women from within the project community, reinforcing the belief that strong women equal strong communities. Around the globe, our partners have worked tirelessly to build skills, education, employment, and income opportunities. In Timor-Leste, the women's sustainable livelihoods projects in Ostico and Triloca proved successful, providing valuable insights to inform future initiatives. In Kenya, women in Kibera are developing essential business skills, such as financial management and marketing, while receiving mentorship from experienced female entrepreneurs, which is helping build local capacity for long-term change.

Throughout the year, change through collaboration and partnership remained a top priority. Mary Ward International allocated \$907,596 to project partners in 2024, an increase of \$240,000 from the previous year. In-person finance and safeguarding training with the Loreto Sisters in Vietnam further enhanced local capacity for lasting impact. Representatives from the Mary Ward International network met regularly to build relationships, align development strategies, and assess the progress of co-funded projects.

Mary Ward International made significant strides in raising awareness and deepening its commitment to the shared mission of the Loreto Sisters. This progress was largely driven by ongoing engagement with Loreto schools,

and we are grateful for the remarkable fundraising efforts undertaken by each school to support our mission. This support reflects the strength and unity of the Loreto network, particularly in Australia. In late 2024, we also proudly launched our new brand, with a full rollout planned for 2025.

In 2024, Mary Ward International was officially registered as a Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) and endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR). Although we were already a DGR under our Overseas Development Fund, this new registration is a significant step that will help us manage our resources more effectively.

None of these achievements would be possible without your continued support. As we look to the future, we do so with renewed optimism, determination, and greater resilience than ever before. This report highlights our accomplishments and challenges as we continue to make a meaningful impact on the lives of women and children around the world.

Thank you for your ongoing partnership and belief in the work of the Loreto Sisters and their colleagues. Together, we continue to make lasting change.



A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'Kirstin', written in a fluid, cursive style.

**Kirstin Del Beato**  
*Acting Executive Officer,  
Mary Ward International*

# Global Impact *Snapshot 2024*



**59,470**

people  
supported

**44**

communities  
impacted

**24**

projects  
funded

**97%**

of project funding  
aimed to advance  
gender equity

**92%**

of projects led  
by women

**54%**

of projects led by  
women from local  
communities

# Educating *Tomorrow's Leaders*

Education, whether formal, non-formal, or vocational, is a vital catalyst for women's progress and gender equality. It provides the knowledge and skills to challenge traditional gender roles and access new economic opportunities, helping women secure meaningful work and build sustainable livelihoods.

More than just a pathway to employment, education fosters leadership, confidence, and a sense of agency. When women are equipped with the tools to participate fully in their communities, barriers to equality are dismantled, sparking lasting change in their lives and across broader society.



# Health Through Education: *Sancta Maria College of Nursing & Midwifery*

LUKULU, ZAMBIA

## In partnership with the Loreto Sisters, Zambia.

Throughout 2024, with the support of Mary Ward International, Sisters Elizabeth Donnan and Pat Hanvey played a pivotal role in addressing the expanding needs of the Sancta Maria College of Nursing and Midwifery in Lukulu. Their efforts included building new facilities, providing practicum support, overseeing food production, and managing the bursary program.

By March, the college's third dormitory and second classroom were completed, along with a new concrete pathway that ensured year-round accessibility to the campus.

A new initiative began in May that significantly improved student accommodation by providing essential furniture that enhanced daily life and academic success. Eighty mattresses, study desks, and chairs were supplied for the third hostel on campus, while an additional 26 mattresses, along with 20 desks and chairs, were provided for a rural health centre hostel, supporting students during their hands-on practicum experiences.





The impact on students' study environments was profound, with tutors noting that the individual desks in each student's bedroom created an ideal space for focused study outside of classroom hours.

In August, solar power was installed in the hostels during a time when the country faced extended power outages. As the only areas with a reliable energy source, the hostels allowed students to continue their studies at night, even when the rest of the college was in darkness. This ensured uninterrupted academic work, creating a more productive and supportive study environment.

With the incredible support of the Noel and Carmel O'Brien Family Foundation, construction of a new kitchen and dining facility began in mid-2024, with a seating capacity of 280 to accommodate the growing student population. This new facility, set to be completed by July 2025, will address current overcrowding in the dining area.

In October 2024, the first cohort of 26 students completed their Diploma of Nursing and were prepared to serve local communities, bringing essential care to the region. By training local youth as nurses, the college addressed the challenge of healthcare staff retention, ensuring that skilled professionals remained in their communities rather than migrating to urban areas.

The college also offered bursaries for the Diploma of Nursing program, prioritising local youth familiar with the area's challenging living conditions. These bursaries covered tuition, practical training, travel, and accommodation costs for students in significant financial need. They gave young adults the opportunity for higher education while easing the financial burden on struggling families.

The food production enterprise further enhanced the college's sustainability by providing a self-sufficient food supply and supporting its commitment to serving students three meals per day. With the help of Mary Ward International, the Loreto Sisters developed an under-utilised parcel of land into a food production farm, reducing long-term catering costs while providing nutritious meals.

Beyond its contributions to healthcare, the college stimulated local economic growth by creating employment opportunities. Through its training programs, the college offered employment pathways, helping lift families out of poverty. It also supported local businesses by sourcing materials and services from local vendors and hiring local contractors for construction projects, ensuring the economic benefits remained within the community.





## BRICKFIELD SCHOOLS

WEST BENGAL, INDIA

**In partnership with the Kolkata Mary Ward Social Centre.**

The brickfields of West Bengal rely on migrant labour, many of whom are children. The Brickfield Schools Project provides quality education in open-air classrooms, guided by a curriculum designed to meet the unique needs of migrant children. The project aims to prioritise education over child labour, providing a safe and engaging learning environment for children, health education and support for their families.

In 2024, 513 children from 373 migrant families benefited from education and nutrition support through the Brickfield Schools Project. The project facilitated the transition of children to government schools upon their return to their home villages, ensuring they had the knowledge and necessary documentation to continue their education. By the end of 2024, 55 children successfully transitioned into government schools.

Health initiatives included 1,711 health check-ups, 178 vaccinations, and 960 people attended health awareness sessions. The project's long-term impact was evident in the strengthening of community partnerships and rising aspirations among the children it supported.



## VINH LOC LEARNING SUPPORT PROGRAM

HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM

**In partnership with Loreto Australia & South East Asia.**

The Vinh Loc Learning Support Program supports children learning basic Vietnamese language and numeracy. For many families in Vinh Loc, education is not a priority due to financial constraints and a lack of formal documentation, which prevents children from enrolling in school.

The program created a safe space where children could learn, play, and build relationships with their peers by offering education, nutrition, and personal growth opportunities. In 2024, 35 students aged 6-16 years were enrolled in classes and by the end of the year, seven students could independently read short stories. Increased engagement with parents led to a significant improvement in attendance throughout the year. Meanwhile, air conditioning installation helped students maintain focus during the hotter months, and new uniforms gave them a sense of belonging.





## SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

### LUKULU, ZAMBIA

#### In partnership with the Loreto Sisters, Zambia.

For most students living in Lukulu, a meal at their school is their only meal for the day. Many of these children camp in shacks in the Lukulu township or travel from rural villages in the surrounding districts, some of which are the most remote and least developed areas in Zambia. The School Lunch Program provides daily nutritious meals to vulnerable students, ensuring they remain engaged in school and can focus on their studies.

Each term, between 65 and 77 students benefited from daily culturally appropriate and nutritious meals. Well-fed students demonstrated improved academic performance, particularly in afternoon lessons. The program not only addressed immediate nutritional needs but also supported the broader educational goals of the students, leading to better outcomes for both individuals and the community.

## BUILDING STRONG FOUNDATIONS

### RUMBEEK, SOUTH SUDAN

#### In partnership with Loreto Rumbek.

Access to health education has been transformative for the people of Maker Kuei in Rumbek. Throughout 2024, mothers and caregivers gained crucial knowledge to improve children's health and nutrition, particularly for children under five. Educators encouraged families to utilise free medical consultations offered through weekly mobile clinics, providing essential support to rural communities with limited access to affordable healthcare. These consultations were key in addressing early childhood health concerns and preventing illnesses like malaria.

Community mobilising officers working across seven communities were effective in raising awareness and encouraging mothers to seek medical care when children were unwell or malnourished. As a result, fewer children presented with severe illness, and the mortality rate for children under five decreased.







## BABY MILK

LUKULU, ZAMBIA

**In partnership with Loreto Sisters, Zambia.**

The Baby Milk program provides life-sustaining milk to orphaned or vulnerable babies, ensuring their survival by offering essential nutrition and a healthier start in life.

In 2024, the program supported 56 vulnerable babies, providing formula based on the individual needs of each child. Growth and weight progress were closely monitored to ensure healthy development and identify additional medical needs. The commitment of mothers and guardians, who often travelled several hours to access the program, underscored the vital role this initiative played in the survival and well-being of their children.

By offering essential nourishment to infants in need, the program played a crucial role in preventing malnutrition, promoting better health outcomes, and supporting families as they nurtured their children through a challenging start to life.

## TRAINING CENTRE CONSTRUCTION

WEST BENGAL, INDIA

**In partnership with the Kolkata Mary Ward Social Centre.**

The newly renovated training facility at the Kolkata Mary Ward Social Centre has transformed the delivery of the educational component of its 17 community development programs.

Previously, the lack of transportation had limited the ability of rural participants to attend training sessions. With the completion of the new facility, this barrier was removed. The centre now offers overnight accommodation, allowing participants to engage fully without the strain of an exhausting journey home.

The renovation has particularly benefited women and girls, who comprise most participants in the centre's workshops, training programs, and educational initiatives.



# Strong Women *Equal Strong Communities*

Economic empowerment gives women the confidence and agency to make meaningful decisions for themselves, their families and their futures. When women have control over their finances, they can choose, with greater freedom, the paths that shape the direction of their lives.

Economic independence enables women to participate fully in their communities' future, contributing, on an equal footing, their skills, insights, and leadership. By strengthening women's economic autonomy, we lay the foundation for more inclusive and resilient societies.

# Piriwa *Enterprise Hub*

BALGO, AUSTRALIA

## In partnership with Enterprise Partnerships WA.

Since its establishment in 2020, the Piriwa Enterprise Hub has made significant progress in supporting First Nations women in Balgo by creating opportunities to explore social enterprise and develop essential small business skills.

In early 2024, Piriwa focused on strengthening the governance capacity of its leadership team. This investment in leadership development empowered the team to manage operations independently, improve governance procedures, and develop a comprehensive strategic plan. This plan laid the foundation for the Hub's long-term sustainability, outlining key objectives and strategies for involving young women in enterprise development.

Mid-year, Piriwa took a significant step toward financial sustainability by introducing a new income stream: the sale of creative products made from upcycled clothing from the Piriwa Op Shop. This initiative opened doors to new markets while supporting First Nations women in entrepreneurship. The project aligned with the Op Shop's social enterprise goals, addressing clothing and textile waste and engaging in the circular economy while generating revenue.





Each year, the Op Shop receives hundreds of kilograms of donated clothing, though not all items are suitable for sale in Balgo's remote location. In response, the women creatively repurpose these materials. This innovative approach to revenue diversification set a powerful example for other communities, demonstrating how cultural preservation, economic development, and environmental sustainability can be successfully integrated.

Profits from these creative products are reinvested in cultural activities that preserve traditional practices and strengthen language. In 2025, Piriwa plans to showcase its designs on the Kimberley Aboriginal Textile and Fashion Art runway. This initiative will build on the Hub's success and expand its reach, increasing sales while highlighting Piriwa's First Nations women-led social enterprise model on the national and international stages.







## STREET MBAS IN KIBERA

NAIROBI, KENYA

**In partnership with Wanawake kwa Wanawake.**

Focusing on women, particularly young Maasai mothers, in Kibera, one of Africa's most densely populated informal settlements, the project aims to equip participants with practical skills to improve their employment prospects, achieve economic independence, and enhance their health and well-being.

The project opened doors to economic stability and self-sufficiency for its participants through business and vocational training. In 2024, 37 women graduated from the Street MBA program, of which 15 established small businesses, 13 developed business plans, and nine explored ventures with guidance from a female business mentor. Additionally, six women completed a building and construction course and secured employment in the sector. Feedback indicated a noticeable increase in participants' confidence, particularly in financial management and business operations.



## ETHICAL ENTERPRISES FOR YOUNG WOMEN

WEST BENGAL, INDIA

**In partnership with the Darjeeling Mary Ward Social Centre.**

This initiative increased the financial independence of women in Siliguri by developing their entrepreneurial skills and supporting the successful launch and management of small businesses. By promoting fair and socially responsible business practices, the project reduced the need for migration, encouraged environmental responsibility, and contributed to a more equitable future for these communities.

In 2024, effective outreach by the project team led to an 11% increase in enrolment in jute sewing classes and the opening of two new training centres, led by former students. Annual sales increased by 71%, reflecting strong product demand. Seventeen tailoring course graduates launched their own businesses, boosting the local economy. Additionally, three women began producing school uniforms, and three others became tailoring instructors with local organisations, demonstrating the quality of the training and the strength of local partnerships.

## WOMEN'S SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

**In partnership with House of Welcome.**

The Women's Supported Accommodation Program provides pathways to independence for women seeking asylum or on temporary visas, many of whom have experienced domestic violence. By understanding their rights and overcoming barriers to access, women develop the skills needed for full societal participation. The program strengthens financial literacy, building agency, dignity, and well-being for a more independent future.

In 2024, 100% of clients completed their casework plans, with 93% reporting improved personal safety, well-being, confidence, and social/community engagement. Over 77% of women received an income through either direct employment or participation in an employment program. Those in transitional housing demonstrated improved financial management through formalised rental agreements, further supporting their independence.

## OSTICO COMMUNITY PROJECTS

OSTICO, TIMOR-LESTE

**In partnership with the Fundacao Loreto Timor-Leste.**

In 2024, investment in community-led initiatives continued with the completion of the Loreto Community Centre in Ostico. Although construction began during the COVID-19 pandemic and took longer than expected, the building was completed within budget. The centre now serves as a vibrant hub for engagement and development, helping the community take full advantage of opportunities in this fast-developing country.

Hamelale, a women-led farming cooperative in Ostico, has emerged as a model of economic empowerment, enabling its members to achieve financial independence through sustainable agricultural practices.

At HAFUCO, another women-led cooperative based in nearby Triloca, the Mary Ward International-funded training room significantly expanded access to maternal and child health education in 2024. Sessions were held twice a week, each accommodating up to 30 participants. These included local women as well as university students from Dili, who visited as part of their academic coursework.

# Amplifying *Voices*

Advocacy is a core pillar of our development model and includes equipping women and girls with the tools to assert their rights and influence change. It encompasses rights awareness, self-advocacy, decision-making, and leadership, enabling them to actively shape their futures.

Rights awareness involves understanding legal, social, and human rights, and empowering individuals to protect and claim them. Self-advocacy focuses on effectively communicating needs and making informed choices. Decision-making refers to the ability to influence outcomes in both personal and public arenas, while leadership enables women to inspire change and participate in governance. Through advocacy, women and girls navigate systems, speak up for themselves, and contribute to positive social transformation.



# Landing Pad

WEST BENGAL, INDIA

## In partnership with the Kolkata Mary Ward Social Centre.

The Landing Pad initiative aims to shift societal attitudes towards menstruation in India by raising awareness, providing education on menstrual health, and ensuring access to sanitary pads. The program enables women and girls to fully participate in daily life by reducing stigma and breaking social taboos.

In 2024, the initiative reached 7,625 women through menstrual health awareness sessions and the distribution of free sanitary pads.

Feedback from healthcare workers highlighted the impact of the awareness sessions, with women recognising the significant role menstrual hygiene plays in their overall health. Adolescents, once hesitant to engage in conversation about menstruation, are now actively spreading awareness among peers and families.





A key insight gained from mass awareness sessions was the importance of including boys in conversations about menstruation. Their involvement in the “*Let’s Talk Periods*” workshops has helped reduce stigma and encouraged open discussions with their friends. Men, too, have begun supporting efforts to dismantle social taboos surrounding menstruation, with some who had previously hindered awareness sessions now advocating for the initiative and encouraging family members to join in.

By providing education on menstrual health and access to sanitary pads, the Landing Pad initiative has helped reduce the use of unsafe alternatives. It has also contributed to a decrease in school absenteeism and minimised the economic impact of menstruation on women, allowing them to continue their daily activities without disruption.



## BRINGING LIGHT TO THE SUNDARBANS

WEST BENGAL, INDIA

**In partnership with the Kolkata Mary Ward Social Centre.**

The Sundarbans region faces numerous challenges, including unreliable electricity, limited access to clean drinking water, poor sanitation, inadequate educational resources, and frequent natural disasters. The local economy depends largely on agriculture, fishing, honey collection, and forest products.

To address these challenges, this project aimed to help women and girls in the Sundarbans develop sustainable livelihoods and achieve economic independence.

In 2024, 100 children received education on child rights, protection, and safety, learning to identify and navigate safe and unsafe situations. This was supported by the distribution of solar lanterns to 176 families, allowing children to study and families to carry out household tasks safely after dark.

The project also strengthened women's entrepreneurial skills. Seventy-five mothers joined the initiative, with many starting small businesses in poultry and duck farming or tailoring. These ventures generated income, improved access to nutritious food, and helped support their children's education.



## CHILD RIGHTS COMMUNITY EDUCATION

LIMA, PERU

**In partnership with Mary Ward International Peru.**

The children's rights awareness initiative initially targeted grades four to six with tailored activities. However, it became clear that many students struggled with basic literacy, hindering their ability to absorb vital information. In response, the project shifted focus to support literacy and academic performance, ensuring students developed the skills needed to understand key concepts. Adapting the curriculum allowed students to engage fully with learning materials, raise awareness about children's rights, promote gender equality, protect girls from violence, and improve access to education.

This initiative created a safer environment, helping break the cycle of violence and discrimination and enabling girls to pursue education and thrive. Peer-led advocacy for non-violence has shifted the school culture, with 92% of students actively promoting children's rights. Home visits and follow-up support improved family dynamics and child protection. The training of 32 teachers enhanced the school's ability to identify and respond to violence, leading to immediate action and referrals in two cases of violence.





## HUMAN TRAFFICKING & EXPLOITATION WITHIN THE FILIPINO COMMUNITY IN ALBANIA

TIRANA, ALBANIA

**In partnership with Mary Ward Loreto.**

Many Filipinos arrive legally in Albania through recruitment agencies but face exploitation by employers who refuse to pay, threaten them, or sell them to traffickers. Struggling with work permit renewals and legal documents, they often end up working in the black economy, where they face further exploitation and fear deportation. This project aims to support the Filipino community in Albania by addressing these challenges, raising awareness about human trafficking risks, and providing access to protection and support.

In 2024, four focus group meetings, attended by 49 participants, facilitated active participation and provided valuable insights into their challenges. Social gatherings and three training sessions, with 20 participants, covered topics such as labour laws, residence permits, and safe employment practices. The project addressed gender-specific vulnerabilities, with 80% of participants being women, helping them understand their rights and reduce the risks of trafficking and exploitation.

## COMBATting HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN KANGEMI

NAIROBI, KENYA

**In partnership with Loreto Eastern Africa Province.**

Human trafficking is a highly profitable and illegal industry that deprives individuals of their rights and fuels organised crime. Despite government efforts, Kenya remains a major trafficking hub, with Kangemi residents, especially women and children, vulnerable due to extreme poverty, unemployment, and poor living conditions. Many fall prey to traffickers' false promises of better jobs, only to end up in exploitative situations.

This project aims to reduce human trafficking in Kangemi by partnering with local organisations to raise awareness about human rights, trafficking risks, and available support.

Throughout 2024, the initiative reached 11,922 people through successful awareness training in schools and the community, leading to an increase in trafficking reports. Significantly, 19 trafficked individuals were supported in their journey to reintegrate into their communities, rebuild their lives, and regain a sense of safety and dignity.

## BAREFOOT LAWYERS

WEST BENGAL, INDIA

**In partnership with the Darjeeling Mary Ward Social Centre.**

This initiative aims to raise awareness among tea plantation workers in Darjeeling about their legal rights and provide safety nets for those facing injustice. Due to generations of dependency on estate managers, tea plantation workers are one of India's most marginalised groups, often unaware of their rights.

A core part of the project involves training local women as “*barefoot lawyers*” who serve as vital links between the community and the legal system. These women not only raise awareness but also provide frontline legal support, helping connect people to justice mechanisms and increasing community resilience.

In 2024, 37 awareness programs educated over 3,000 community members on key issues such as child marriage, gender-based violence, and the importance of reporting violations. Specialised workshops focused on human trafficking, gender-based violence, and gender equity, while sessions for women and girls addressed health myths and reproductive rights. Child Protection Committees partnered with local organisations to expand outreach to marginalised communities, including remote tea estates.



## COLLECTIVE VOICES

WEST BENGAL, INDIA

**In partnership with the Darjeeling Mary Ward Social Centre.**

Collective Voices seeks to enhance women's self-advocacy and leadership by facilitating community networking opportunities and delivering education programs focused on rights protection and access. Participants build a support network and gain the knowledge needed to navigate essential services such as healthcare, education, legal support and employment. The initiative offers comprehensive support in rights awareness, self-advocacy and leadership development.

In 2024, growing community engagement around sensitive social issues led to seven legal cases registered through the legal clinic at the Darjeeling Mary Ward Social Centre. More than thirty young people participated in gender equality workshops, gaining valuable insight into the importance of girls' education.





## LEADERSHIP PROGRAM FOR SURVIVORS OF TRAFFICKING & ABUSE

WEST BENGAL, INDIA

### In partnership with the Kolkata Mary Ward Social Centre

In India, survivors of human trafficking and abuse often face isolation and stigma, with their mental health and recovery frequently neglected. Barriers such as limited access to education, loss of identity documents, and lack of skills increase the risk of re-exploitation.

This project provides survivors with essential mental health support, legal aid, and advocacy services. It also offers skills training to help survivors achieve financial independence and reduce re-trafficking risk.

The project places a strong emphasis on developing leadership skills among survivors by engaging experienced group members as mentors for new participants. This peer-led model not only encourages knowledge sharing and trust but also builds the confidence and capacity of survivors to take on leadership roles within their communities. As part of its long-term goal, the project envisions current participants gaining the skills and experience needed to independently form and lead new survivor groups, ensuring the initiative's sustainability and expanding its reach through survivor-led action.

In 2024, meetings with law enforcement and in-home visits helped identify 30 survivors of trafficking, sexual abuse, and domestic violence. Throughout the year, these survivors accessed various support services, including counselling, legal assistance and skills training. By the end of the year, four women had completed a nursing assistant training course, leading to employment and long-term independence.



# Learning *From Our Work*



# Grounded in *Resilience*

In 2024, we witnessed the many powerful ways our partners are building resilience in their communities. These communities aren't just responding to challenges; they are leading the way. Their strength lies in knowing their realities and creating solutions that outsiders often overlook. Local leaders, especially women, are at the heart of this work, applying their insight, creativity, and determination to help their communities adapt and thrive, no matter the circumstances.

Education continues to be one of the most effective tools for strengthening resilience. It gives people the knowledge and skills to overcome obstacles, adapt to change, and build better futures. In Peru, our partners are investing in children's education to reinforce the community from the ground up. In Vietnam, the Learning Support Program is doing more than opening doors for students; it's restoring a sense of pride and dignity for entire families.

Our partners also create space for women and children to raise their voices. By promoting rights awareness, they're making sure communities can advocate for themselves. Across anti-human trafficking initiatives in Albania, Kenya, and India, we have seen how connection and community form the foundation of real change. When people feel a strong bond with one another, they step up. These bonds create a safety net in times of need, allowing communities to lift each other up and face challenges together.

This journey toward resilience is an ongoing process, shaped daily by women whose leadership is transforming lives. In Kenya and Timor-Leste, women are gaining access to microfinance services, allowing them to start their own businesses and lead local change. These efforts are a reminder that when women are supported, communities thrive.

In West Bengal's Sundarbans, a region shaped by the mangrove forest, our partner drew on local knowledge to design new strategies that support women's livelihoods. Focusing on the specific needs of women and girls in this unique environment has provided the resources and tools needed to build economic independence and community resilience from within.

We continue to learn from the leadership of our partners, whose example pushes us to build our resilience as an organisation. By working closely with the Loreto Sisters and other Mary Ward International agencies, we're finding more effective ways to support this work, whether it be co-funding projects, collaboratively developing solutions, or sharing insights to deepen our collective impact.

Looking ahead, we remain inspired by the resilience of the communities we serve. And our commitment is clear: to ensure these communities, especially women and girls, have the support and opportunities they need to keep moving forward. Together, we are building stronger, more connected communities, ready to meet whatever comes next and to create meaningful change for future generations.

# FINANCIALS



## FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE & POSITION

This financial year, Mary Ward International reported a consolidated loss of \$0.50 million, compared to a surplus of \$0.64 million for the previous year.

Mary Ward International finished the 2024 financial year with net assets of \$4.08 million. This included:

- A **Specific Purpose Reserve** of \$1.42 million comprising donations and grants received for future specific activities or programs;
- A **Committed Funds Reserve** of \$0.63 million comprising funds set aside to deliver committed future contracts or multi-year project agreements;
- An **Operating Reserve** of \$0.7 million to maintain Mary Ward International's ability to trade solvent in the event of the sudden loss of a major source of funding; and
- A **corpus** of \$0.96 million provided by the Loreto Sisters/Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Mary Ward International founders on the establishment of Mary Ward International as a capital base to be invested to generate income for projects.

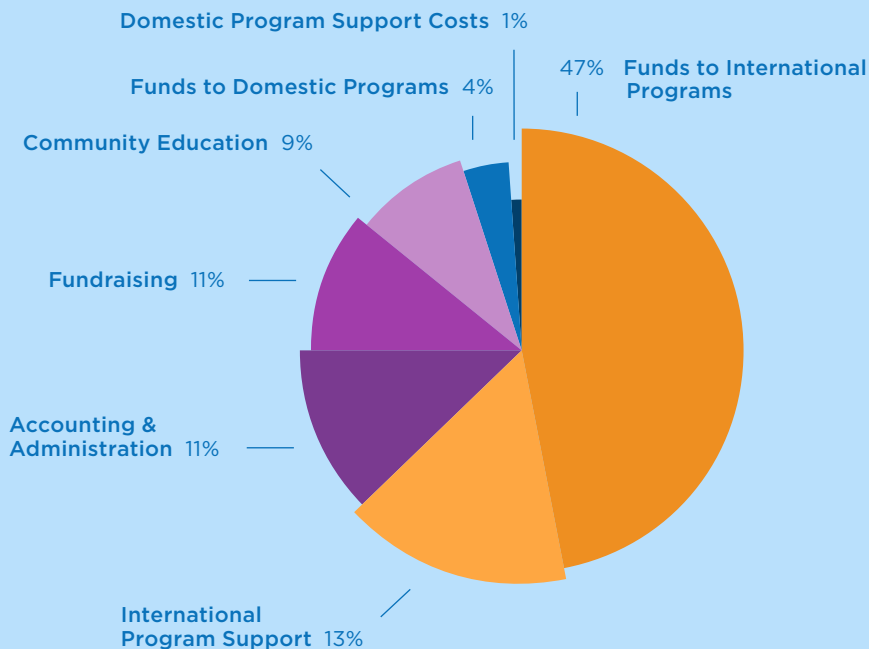
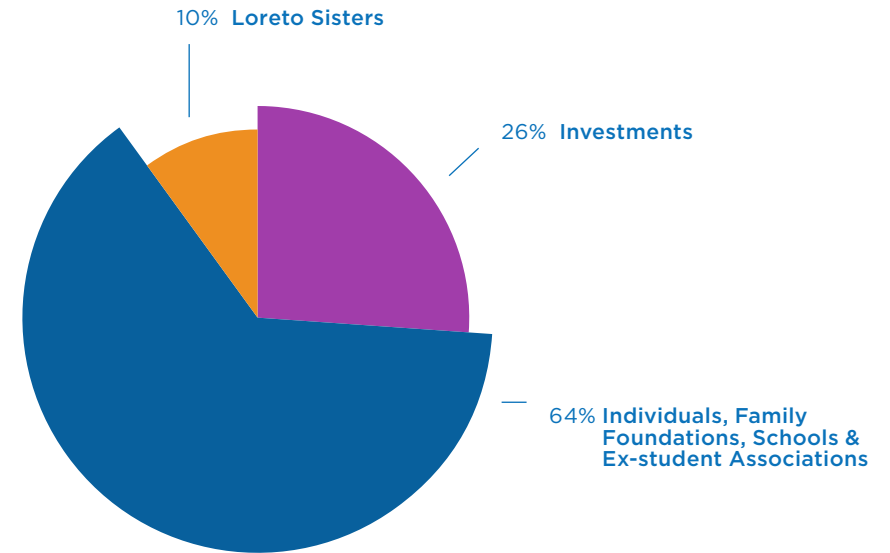
## 2024 INCOME

Our consolidated income for 2024 was \$1.26 million, compared to \$2.02 million in the prior year.

Donations from individuals, family foundations, schools and related parent and ex-student associations made up our most significant income in 2024, contributing \$0.81 million.

The Loreto Sisters/Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (the Province) contributed \$0.12 million. The Loreto Province also provided in-kind support in the form of rent, utilities and other services.

Investment income provided \$0.17 million, in addition to an investment gain of \$0.16 million.



## 2024 EXPENDITURE

Over 2024, we contributed \$0.83 million to the Loreto Sisters' work with women and communities overseas in support of transformative change for women and their communities. We also provided \$0.08 million to partners in Australia.

Expenses incurred in 2024 comprised: \$0.29 million to support international and domestic programs; \$0.36 million to promote Mary Ward International and its supported programs in schools and across the broader community, as well as to raise funds; and \$0.2 million to meet governance, compliance, and regulatory requirements.

## DIRECTORS' DECLARATION

Mary Ward International Australia Limited administers and acts as trustee of three charitable trust funds:

- Mary Ward International Australia Charitable Trust
- Mary Ward International Australia
- Mary Ward International Australia Overseas Development Fund

The following summary financial statements reflect the results and financial position of the trustee company and the three trusts that it controls, referred to as 'the group', for the period 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024. The comparatives are for the period 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023. The consolidated special purpose financial report of Mary Ward International Australia Limited was approved by the Board on 22 May 2025.

This Summary Financial Report is derived from the audited financial report of Mary Ward International Australia Limited for the year ended 31 December 2024. It has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 2 of the audited financial report and as set out in the ACFID Code of Conduct. For further information on the Code, please refer to the ACFID Code of Conduct Implementation Guidance available at [www.acfid.asn.au](http://www.acfid.asn.au)

This Summary Financial Report is approved on behalf of the Mary Ward International Board.<sup>1</sup>



**Chris Dureau**

*Acting Chair, Mary Ward International*

23 May 2025

<sup>1</sup> Copies of our audited financial reports can be obtained by writing to the Executive Officer, PO Box 4082, Auburn South, VIC 3122, Australia, or by visiting [mwia.org.au](http://mwia.org.au)



# CONSOLIDATED INCOME STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

| REVENUE                        |                    |                    |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|                                | 2024               | 2023               |
| Donations and gifts - monetary | \$615,302          | \$653,578          |
| Grants - Australian            | \$195,000          | \$320,841          |
| Grants - Overseas              | -                  | -                  |
| Investment income              | \$167,204          | \$123,857          |
| Gain on investments            | \$160,185          | \$148,996          |
| Loreto Province contribution   | \$125,000          | \$122,000          |
| Bequests                       | -                  | \$622,515          |
| Other                          | \$750              | \$28,509           |
| <b>Total Revenue</b>           | <b>\$1,263,441</b> | <b>\$2,020,296</b> |

| EXPENDITURE                                                         |                    |                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|                                                                     | 2024               | 2023               |
| <b>International aid and development programs</b>                   |                    |                    |
| Funds to international programs                                     | \$831,460          | \$552,522          |
| Program support costs                                               | \$274,528          | \$184,112          |
| Community education                                                 | \$168,259          | \$134,460          |
| Fundraising costs - public                                          | \$188,898          | \$153,129          |
| Accountability and administration                                   | \$204,147          | \$196,812          |
| <b>Total international aid and development programs expenditure</b> | <b>\$1,667,292</b> | <b>\$1,221,035</b> |
| Domestic programs expenditure                                       |                    |                    |
| Domestic programs distributions                                     | \$76,136           | \$115,940          |
| Domestic programs support costs                                     | \$17,092           | \$45,456           |
| Loss from investments                                               | -                  | -                  |
| <b>Total Expenditure</b>                                            | <b>\$1,760,520</b> | <b>\$1,382,431</b> |
| Surplus/(Deficit)                                                   | (\$497,079)        | \$637,865          |
| Other comprehensive income                                          | -                  | -                  |
| <b>TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR</b>           | <b>(\$497,079)</b> | <b>\$637,865</b>   |

## CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2024

| ASSETS                      |                    |                    |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|                             | 2024               | 2023               |
| <b>Current Assets</b>       |                    |                    |
| Cash and cash equivalents   | \$276,793          | \$2,005,141        |
| Other receivables           | \$15,294           | \$14,884           |
| Financial assets            | \$3,847,745        | \$2,694,072        |
| <b>Total current assets</b> | <b>\$4,139,832</b> | <b>\$4,714,097</b> |
| <b>Non-Current Assets</b>   |                    |                    |
| Computer & IT Equipment     | \$2,662            | \$2,956            |
| Total non-current assets    | \$2,662            | \$2,956            |
| <b>Total Assets</b>         | <b>\$4,142,494</b> | <b>\$4,717,053</b> |

| LIABILITIES                      |                 |                  |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
|                                  | 2024            | 2023             |
| <b>Current Liabilities</b>       |                 |                  |
| Other payables                   | \$60,336        | \$137,846        |
| <b>Total Current Liabilities</b> | <b>\$60,336</b> | <b>\$137,846</b> |
| <b>Total Liabilities</b>         | <b>\$60,336</b> | <b>\$137,846</b> |

|                   |                    |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>NET ASSETS</b> | <b>\$4,082,182</b> | <b>\$4,579,207</b> |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|

| EQUITY              |                    |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Accumulated surplus | \$4,082,182        | \$4,579,207        |
| <b>TOTAL EQUITY</b> | <b>\$4,082,182</b> | <b>\$4,579,207</b> |

## CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

|                                | Accumulated Surplus | Total       |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Balance as at 31 December 2022 | \$3,941,342         | \$3,941,342 |
| Surplus for the period         | \$637,865           | \$637,865   |
| Balance as at 31 December 2023 | \$4,579,207         | \$4,579,207 |
| (Deficit) for the period       | (\$497,079)         | (\$497,079) |
| Balance as at 31 December 2024 | \$4,082,128         | \$4,082,128 |

#### Basis of Preparation

The summary financial statements are derived from the audited financial report of Mary Ward International Ltd for the year ended 31 December 2024 (the "Audited Financial Report"). The accounting policies relating to recognition and measurement applied in the preparation of a summary financial statements are the same as those adopted in the preparation of the Audited Financial Report. The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosure required by the Australian Accounting Standards applied in the preparation of the Audited Financial Report.



# MARY WARD INTERNATIONAL AUDIT REPORT

## FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

### Independent Auditor's Report on the Summary Financial Statements to the Members of Mary Ward International Australia Limited

#### Opinion

The summary financial statements, which comprise the summary consolidated statement of financial position as at 31 December 2024, the summary consolidated income statement and the summary consolidated statement of changes in equity for the year then ended and the related notes (the "summary financial statements"), are derived from the audited financial report of Mary Ward International Ltd for the year ended 31 December 2024 (the "Audited Financial Report").

In my opinion, the accompanying summary financial statements are consistent, in all material respects, with the Audited Financial Report, on the basis described on in the basis of preparation note.

#### Summary Financial Statements

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by the Australian Accounting Standards applied in the preparation of the Audited Financial Report. Reading the summary financial statements and the auditor's report thereon, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial report and the auditor's report thereon. The summary financial statements and the audited financial report do not reflect the effects of events that occurred subsequent to the date of my report on the audited financial report.

#### The Audited Financial Report and my Report Thereon

I expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial report in my report dated 23 May 2025.

#### Other Information

The Directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises commentary and graphs of the financial performance, 2024 income and 2024 expenditure, but does not include the summary financial statements and my auditor's report thereon.

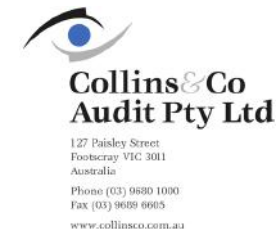
My opinion on the summary financial statements does not cover the other information and I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with my audit of the summary financial statement, my responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the summary financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work I have performed on the other information that I obtained prior to the date of this auditor's report, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact. I have nothing to report in this regard.

#### The Directors' Responsibility for the Summary Financial Statements

The Directors are responsible for the preparation of the summary financial statements on the basis described on in the basis of preparation note.

TOWARDS A VISION SHARED



#### Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary financial statements are consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial report based on my procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Auditing Standard ASA 810 *Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements*.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'FRE', followed by a horizontal line.

Frederik Ryk Ludolf Eksteen CA  
ASIC Auditor Registration Number 421448

Collins & Co Audit Pty Ltd  
127 Paisley Street  
FOOTSCRAY VIC 3011

Dated this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of May 2025

Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation  
ABN 33 614 161 796

# GOVERNANCE

Mary Ward International is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors whose unique skills and experience are united by a shared commitment to creating just and sustainable change with women, children and communities.

# Meet the *Board*



**Dr Leoni Degenhardt AM**  
*Board Chair*

Board member since 2019.  
Board Chair since January 2020,  
resigned November 2024.  
Governance Committee member.



**Sr Elizabeth Rogerson ibvm**  
*Board Member*

Board member since 2017,  
resigned September 2024.  
Governance Committee member.



**Alzira Dos Reis**  
*Board Member*

Board member since March 2024.



**Soulla Nicodimou**  
*Board Member*

Board member since March 2024.  
Governance Committee Chair  
from October 2024.



**Sr Wendy Hildebrand ibvm**  
*Acting Board Chair*

Board member since October 2024.  
Acting Board Chair since  
December 2024.



**Kelly Morrison**  
*Board Member*

Board member since 2018.  
Finance & Audit Committee Chair.



**Felicity Knobel**  
*Board Member*

Board member since October 2024.



**Christopher Dureau**  
*Deputy Chair*

Board member since 2019.  
Finance & Audit Committee member.



**Rebecca Walker**  
*Board Member*

Board member since 2018,  
resigned September 2024.  
Governance Committee Chair.



**Genevieve Walker**  
*Board Member*

Board member since October 2024.



**Nicole Gibson**  
*Board Member*

Board member since 2017,  
resigned June 2024.  
Governance Committee member.



**Mary Cook**  
*Board Member*

Board member since 2019.  
Finance & Audit Committee member.



**Breda Linge**  
*Board Member*

Board member since December 2024.



# THANK YOU



[www.mwia.org.au](http://www.mwia.org.au)



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Mary Ward International



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