TIMOR LESTE
Educating the children of Gari-uai

PLUS
Ways to support MWIA

ZAMBIA: For I was hungry and you fed me

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DECEMBER 2016
PARTNERSHIP FOR 
JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT

Mary Ward International Australia (MWIA) is a registered charity and is the Australian and international development organisation of the Loreto Sisters. Our Mission is to support the development works associated with the Loreto Sisters and their colleagues as they empower women to transform structures and systems that keep them oppressed and marginalised.

Message from the Executive Officer

2016 has been a year of hope and dreams as MWIA continued to strengthen our partnership with the Loreto Sisters working to support 15 sustainable projects across 7 countries. This year we have been witness to moving examples of courage and tenacity by not only our Sisters, but the communities in which they work. Loreto Rumbek Secondary School (LRSS) is one of our newer projects that faces huge challenges. Situated in the world’s youngest nation of South Sudan, progress is almost non-existent, with continuing conflict and the ongoing devaluation of the Sudanese Pound. Poverty and starvation are sadly a way of life. LRSS provides a sanctuary and an opportunity to rise above oppression by successfully educating young women in their boarding school.

The result of poverty often sees education become the victim. In South Sudan, a 15-year-old girl is more likely to die in childbirth than she is to finish secondary school. Of the female secondary school graduates, only 2% will continue with their formal education. However, at LRSS Loreto students have a 94% rate of obtaining employment or continuing their education. Supporting this school enables these young women to have a bright future.

Timor-Leste is yet another young nation stepping out from the darkness of conflict and recognises that education is vital. With half the population under eighteen and one third of them under eight, a quarter of all teachers are volunteers. Schools are being built in many regions but resourcing them with skilled teachers is another issue. The Loreto Sisters as always recognise and courageously answer the call. The remote area of Gari-uai in Timor-Leste, faces similar challenges of poverty and poor education opportunities. The community identified there was a need to bridge the gap in early childhood learning amongst their children. Responding to requests by the community, the Loreto Sisters in collaboration with generous and loyal MWIA supporters are not only breaking the cycle of poverty by building the first Loreto Pre-Primary School in our neighbouring country, our Sisters are also mentoring young teachers in the government school.

These are only two of the stories in this edition of Sustain that tell of the courage of our Loreto Sisters who are enabling life-changing and life-giving opportunities. Whether you are a past Loreto student, parent, friend, staff or committee member or loyal supporter, we believe as a collective group we have an obligation to give back to those less fortunate.

Every country’s future is in the hands of its children. Living the vision of Mary Ward, we work together to empower communities and educate those children most in need.

As the Christmas festivities approach we take this opportunity to extend our heartfelt appreciation and Seasons Greetings to all who have supported MWIA throughout the year.

With Christmas blessing and good wishes for 2017.

Warmly,

Kim Nass
Executive Officer

Have you visited our website yet?

www.mwia.org.au

Cover
Loreto Pre Primary School students in Gari-uai, Timor-Leste, love to pose for the camera.
Walking with TIMOR-LESTE on the road to PROSPERITY

Many ordinary things, in many ordinary places done by ordinary people, can change the world.

Every country’s future is in the hands of its children. In the case of Timor-Leste, a young nation stepping out from under the darkness of conflict, education is vital. Half the population are under eighteen and one third of them under eight. A quarter of the teachers are volunteers. The Loreto Sisters, with the support of generous donors, are planning to break the cycle of poverty one student at a time.

The Loreto Sisters recognise the particular gift which Mary Ward, their founder, gave to the world. Mary and her followers believed in equality for women and education for all. Despite persecution and opposition, they persevered so that these ideals and values could prevail.

Responding to a request by the Bishop and the local people of Garai, a small, remote village located approximately 150 kilometres from the capital Dili, the Loreto Sisters began a project to educate children and provide a place for the community to learn new skills and receive support.

In 2016 the Loreto Sisters began the construction of a Pre-School and Community Centre, but it has been a mix of highs and lows with building disputes delaying the construction for some months. These challenges have recently been resolved and the building will be completed early next year.

Now is the time to support the children of Timor-Leste receive the education needed to transform their lives.

ABOUT TIMOR-LESTE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>1.178 million</th>
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<tr>
<td>Only 17% of children attend a public pre-school</td>
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<td>Human Dev. Index ranked 134</td>
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<td>Average income earned $5,446</td>
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Images
1. Loreto Australia & South East Asia Province Leader, Margaret Mary Flynn ibvm, walking with students from the local Primary School in Garai. The Loreto Pre-Primary School is being built to the right of the Church in the background.
2. Loreto Pre-Primary School students enjoying class time with their teacher, Jovita.
3. Local Primary School students playing at recess time.
Partnership for justice and development

1. Known as kankun, local markets; the staple food of the community is seasonally available in the remote area of Gari-uai.

In early September Loreto Kimbili Junior School Principal, Alison Brent, accompanied by another teacher, Gabby Smith, visited Gari-uai to work with Sr. Diaan to determine how best they can provide in-service training to the teachers and their two assistants.

Throughout the year Sisters Natalie Houllihan and Francine Roberts have supported the Grade 1 teachers in the local government Primary School. A strong relationship has been established with staff at the school and the hope is this support will continue with the Grade 2 teachers next year.

Living in Gari-uai is challenging. Despite the village being just 15 kilometres south of Baucau, the roads are such that it is a 30-minute drive. Being without running water on tap, the community is dependent on a tanker to deliver water every week. The community consumes whatever food is seasonally available in the local markets; the staple food of the Timorese being rice and water spinach known as kankun.

2. In the meantime, the interim Loreto Pre-Primary School is progressing well with the two local teachers, Sonia and Jovita, continuing to develop new skills under the leadership of Sister Diaan Stuart ibvm.

MWIA volunteer, Katrina Slingo has recently returned from Timor-Leste where she spent one month volunteering with the Loreto Sisters who are building the first Loreto Pre-Primary School in the remote area of Gari-uai.

As a 20-year-old student still unsure of my vocation, the decision to take a Gap year was an easy one. I wanted to incorporate work, volunteering and travelling into my year off study, and Mary Ward International Australia, very kindly, facilitated a five-week volunteer experience with the Loreto Sisters in Timor-Leste.

I arrived in Dili and was greeted by Sisters Natalie Houllihan and Margie Bourke ibvm. After driving up the mountain passing the beautiful setting sun of Timor, we reached the Loreto houses in Baucau, where we met with Sister Diaan Stuart ibvm and the friendly Belo family who live next door. The following few days were “Orientation” as Sr. Natalie introduced me to the community. The welcome in each place was filled with kindness, overwhelming friendliness and interest, making me excited to begin volunteering.

3. Time spent at the Gari-uai local Primary School was a roller-coaster indeed! The Grade 1 Students were all so keen to learn and take everything in, which meant they loved to touch everything, answer questions very loudly and colour-in vigorously! I became aware that developing a strong relationship with the students and their teachers was vital for progress. Very quickly I was inspired by their love of learning and their persistence, especially when it came to creating their beautiful art work. Similarly, in the Loreto Pre-Primary School, it was amazing to see the hard work and dedication of the Loreto Sisters reflected in the way the children conducted themselves – eager to help, kind, constantly laughing (even after a rare episode of tears), and creating wonderful work.

I was grateful to develop good friendships with the young women at Canossa and was lucky enough to attend one of their birthday parties which involved lots of dancing, cake and games that ended in many of the girls on the floor in stitches!

4. Helping others is the gift that keeps on giving

Each afternoon the Ponte Leste English Club was often filled with excited students who loved learning phrases such as ‘My favourite sport is...’ or ‘Profassão, can I please go to the toilet?’. I was extremely privileged to experience their generosity of spirit, especially if I was lucky enough to run into them in the market outside of class.

5. Outside of all these wonderful commitments has been the constant mentoring and guidance from the Loreto Sisters with many cups of tea, snacks with the beautiful girl Patricia who lives next door, walks and community visits. Sr. Natalie (with whom I spent most of my time) was the most incredible host – she welcomed me into her life and the life of the Timorese community, generously giving so much of her time.

6. Images

4: Children sitting on a wall of the new Loreto Pre-Primary school currently under construction.
5: Each morning the pre-schoolers love helping collect the water to wash their hands.
6: Loreto Sister Francine Roberts ibvm helping a Grade 1 student with English.
7-8: Pre-schoolers love to show off their new new school uniforms and craft skills!

Images 1-3: MWIA volunteer, Katrina Slingo, enjoying time with the Gari-uai community and helping to teach children in the local Primary School and Loreto Pre-Primary School.

7. KEEPS ON GIVING

Thank you for supporting us on this journey to make a sustainable difference by helping the children of Gari-uai receive an education that will undoubtedly impact the lives of future generations.

Volunteer update: Katrina Slingo

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Creating
BRIGHTER FUTURES
in South Sudan

Loreto Rumbek Secondary School in South Sudan is making a huge impact with the quality of education it delivers despite the internal fighting which continues five years after independence brought an end to two decades of civil war with the north. Loreto Rumbek has two schools: a day Primary School for 542 boys and girls; and a Secondary Boarding School for 201 girls. Loreto also offers a Masonry Vocational Training Program, amongst other Accelerated Learning Programs, which MWIA is proud to support. This project aims to improve employment opportunities for females in a traditionally male dominated profession.

Through this program Loreto Rumbek makes its own concrete blocks to be used in future construction. 15 senior girls stayed behind over the recent holiday period to participate in the Masonry Vocational Training Program. On the first day they made 300 blocks, 50 more than the men!

Australian Loreto Sister Maureen Burke ibvm recently returned from Loreto Rumbek, where she has been volunteering. Having worked in western Sydney, with many families from South Sudan, Maureen was drawn to offer her skills, for a few months each year, teaching students in their war-torn homeland. Each day they pray for peace and just leaders. Below Maureen pens her experiences:

By boarding the students, the school has greatly reduced dropout rates due to early, forced or child marriages, and has eliminated any chances of teen pregnancy while at the school.

My remit has expanded to include physics and chemistry: the physics is a joy, the chemistry is straining my brain. Recently, I was helping a student, Abuk from Yambio, with a question about sinkers, water and corks.

After explaining the use of sinkers when fishing - irrelevant and meaningless - Abuk asked, “What is a cork Sister?”. What am I doing?! How can I teach? Our world is on another planet. So we went to the lab to find a piece of lead and a cork. Neither could be found. Last night another Sister found an old cork in the back of a drawer. The next day when I gave it to Abuk it was like an early Christmas present. Oh, what I wouldn’t give to have a container of resources - of very simple things.

I took a photo of Abuk at marching practice as they were getting ready to celebrate Independence Day. The entire school will march into Freedom Square in Rumbek. The students have organised practices after school for a few days now. They love marching. When I asked why they only swung one arm I learned “so you can carry your gun in the other”. I should have known.

To add to the limited resources I made a class set of Tangram puzzles to extend the students ability to see shapes. The kits are so successful that I use them as prizes. The students want to keep a set but I want to use them for other classes when a teacher is absent.

We have finally learned the truth about the troubles in Wau, caused when rebels attacked the army. The government is claiming 40 deaths but the true number is at least 400, including civilians. There are also 40 children missing with no information about why and where. Many homes were destroyed causing 70,000 people to be displaced. We were told that the Jesuits who ran a school there (it has since closed), were arrested but released when it was discovered they were priests. Wau is about 200 kilometres from Rumbek which is at least six-hours away so it is further than it seems.

Meanwhile we do maths under trees, look for corks, wear wellies and eat beans and rice. This year we look for corks, wear wellies and eat beans and rice, but released when it was discovered they were priests. Wau is about 200 kilometres from Rumbek which is at least six-hours away so it is further than it seems.

New MWIA Project: Masonry Vocational Training Program

Young female adults boarding at the Loreto Girls Secondary School and youth from the Rumbek area have the opportunity to participate in a three-month vocational program to learn the skills of brick-making and laying of foundations and superstructures. This program allows females to explore a traditionally male dominated profession which will significantly improve their employment opportunities and income earning potential.

1. Loreto Sister Maureen Burke helping students with their homework.
2. Abuk with her school friends at marching practice for Independence Day. They March wearing only their target arms, their left arms are free to carry their guns.
3, 5, 7. Loreto Rumbek Primary School students.
4. Loreto Rumbek Senior students gathering after Mass.
6. Masonry Vocational Training students embracing their new skills.

QUICK FACTS

National literacy rate: 27%
Primary School completion rate: 7%
Female literacy rate: 16%

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Partnership for justice and development

For I was hungry and you fed me

Twins Sikota and Ngene

Baby boy Sikota and his twin sister Ngene lost their mother at just three months of age. They are now being raised, with their five siblings, by their father who is a subsistence farmer living on less than AUD$2 per day.

Loreto Sister Patricia Hanvey, who lives and works in Lukulu, a very poor and remote township in Zambia, recently visited their village. “Sikota was sitting alone on a mat, crying. I picked him up and he immediately stopped and was very content in my arms - I think he just needed that little bit of tenderness,” Sr. Patricia recalls.

“The father is doing an amazing job caring for his children despite the odds. To make life a little easier for him I allow him to come to our Baby Milk Project every two or three weeks to collect the milk for the twins instead of having to walk for 12-hours each week.”

This means he only needs to bring the babies to the program once a month so they can be weighed and their growth monitored to ensure they are receiving the milk formula. They are still small for their age but growing well!

Baby Njamba

Njamba was referred to the Baby Milk Project at five-months by a local hospital. Severely underweight he was described as ‘starving’ by hospital staff. His mother, admitted to hospital with sores on her breasts, was, for some time, unable to breast-feed him.

Living six hours from Lukulu far across the Zambezi River, his family had to stay in town, while Njamba was on the program. At 18-months and growing well he was discharged from the program on 23rd August 2016 and allowed to go home.

Njamba is just one of 170 babies who, each year, are assisted by the Baby Milk Project which has been operating since 2006. Sr. Patricia, works tirelessly every day to support those most in need, and firmly believes many of these babies would not have survived without this project administering vital milk formula.

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.

- Mathew 25, versus 34-35

A special thanks to Loreto College Coorparoo and Loreto Mandeville Hall Toorak for their generous donations towards this life-giving project. We invite others to journey with us as we work to empower women and children with the support they need to transform their lives.
Current MWIA projects

Australia
1. EMPOWERED TO WORK PROGRAM

Timor-leste
7. LORETO GARI-UAI PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL

Vietnam
12. CHILDREN’S LIBRARIES
13. JOHN XXIII SCHOLARSHIPS
14. IBVM SCHOLARSHIPS

India
2. COLLECTIVE VOICES PROJECT
3. ETHICAL ENTERPRISES INITIATIVE FOR YOUTH PPP
4. ETHICAL ENTERPRISES INITIATIVE FOR YOUTH SJP
5. LORETO TEA PLANTATION SCHOOL
6. BRICK FIELD SCHOOLS

Zambia
8. BABY MILK PROJECT
9. LUKULU TEACHER TRAINING SCHOLARSHIPS

Kenya
15. TERMINATION OF FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION
16. NYUMBANI SCHOLARSHIPS

South Sudan
10. SECONDARY SCHOOL CAPACITY BUILDING: LORETO RUMBEK SCHOOL
11. MASONRY VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM

Project funding by country
- AUSTRALIA: 1 project
- TIMOR-LESTE: 1 project
- INDIA: 5 projects
- VIETNAM: 4 projects
- KENYA: 2 projects
- SOUTHERN SUDAN: 1 project
- ZAMBIA: 2 projects

Source of revenue
- Individual donors: 58.78%
- Corporate/Group donors: 7.47%
- Loreto schools: 28.10%
- Other schools: 1.66%
- Loreto network: 3.98%

Value of projects by theme
- Education: 35.25%
- Ethical Economic Opportunities: 28.60%
- Violence Protection, Shelter: 20.51%
- Health: 15.64%

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Ways you can help

There are a number of ways you can show your support for the work of Mary Ward International Australia.

Give

Mary Ward International Australia (MWIA) relies on the generosity of donors to support the development projects carried out by the Loreto Sisters. By making a donation you are enabling those most in need to receive the education, skills and support necessary to transform their lives.

Make a personal donation, or raise funds in your community for our life-saving work.

Volunteer

MWIA invites you to leave a gift in your Will to support women and children in disadvantaged communities across the world.

By making a bequest you are enabling MWIA to grow and respond to the changing needs of our world now and into the future. Please contact MWIA to receive further information.

Leave a bequest

Learn

Staff at MWIA are delighted to share information and resources on all of our projects. Contact us to receive educational materials for yourself or school community. You can also explore online: www.mwia.org.au/get-involved and find us on Facebook.

SUSTAIN

Mary Ward and her followers believed in equality for women and education for all.

Donate today

Promote sustainable change in disadvantaged communities worldwide.

With your help we are making a difference! Donations of $2 or more are tax deductible

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By phone: 03 9813 4023

By mail: complete this form

Send to: PO Box 4082, Auburn South, Victoria 3122

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Promote sustainable change in disadvantaged communities worldwide.

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Mary Ward and her followers believed in equality for women and education for all.
$40 PROVIDES ONE MONTH’S WORTH OF NUTRITION FOR ORPHANED AND VULNERABLE BABIES IN ZAMBIA

MWIA is the Australian and International development organisation of the Loreto Sisters

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