



Keeping in touch

Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart
OVERSEAS AID INCORPORATED

NOVEMBER 2020

SOUTH AFRICA

Nzhelele

Greetings to all the readers of Keeping In Touch. Due to the Coronavirus restrictions, the Orphan & Vulnerable Children's Friday gathering has had to be suspended. Cases are seriously spreading throughout the country and the Health Department has not the capacity or infrastructure to deal with this pandemic. Rural villages are even less equipped to cope with COVID-19 as the people live very close to one another, sharing water from the corner pump, having many family members dwelling in the same site, not getting fresh deliveries through to the local shops and unable to travel outside their area. Lockdown is difficult and local clinics have little medications – even aspirin is in scarce supply.

This photo was taken before the activity afternoons were cancelled. You will see the carer and group of children gathered in the local Catholic church which is a place of safety and a venue that is welcoming. They always begin with a prayer and remembrance of all whom the children say are in need.



It will be good to renew these peer support groups as soon as the pandemic runs its course, as the children have sport and traditional dance outside or craft and sharing of problems to help them to cope better within the stressful environment they find themselves in. Of course, afternoon refreshments are also greatly missed, along with health checks and homework help.

The adult carers and co-ordinators are trying to keep an eye on those children whose extended families are struggling financially. They are organizing some food drops and trying to encourage hope and support of one another. These are difficult times for all.

Sr Christine Martin

**Gifts of \$2 or more
are tax deductible**

SOME PROJECTS YOUR DONATIONS HAVE SUPPORTED IN 2019

Angola

Education for disadvantaged girls

This project provides accommodation in a safe compound and hostel for girls from extremely poor families in remote areas so that they can attend school in Cazombo. As well as accessing a formal education, girls have the opportunity to learn life-skills, such as growing vegetables, keeping poultry, baking bread, sewing and cooking.

Life-skills & income-generating project

With this project, single, young mothers who, due to poverty have had no education, are taught how to read and write, to sew and to cook. They also learn how to start and manage a small business so that they can earn some money to support their family.

Kiribati

Empowerment of Women

This ongoing project provides funds to support girls in completing secondary education and young women to undertake a tertiary education in areas such as health and education. On completion of their studies, they will be equipped to help their own people. Many families do not have the money needed to support their children (especially girls) in the final years of secondary schooling or in undertaking further studies. In the long term, this project will be of benefit not only to the women but also to the wider community.

Papua New Guinea

Amenities at nursing school

New amenities for the female student nurses were constructed at St Gerard's School of Nursing.

Philippines

Community Centre, Surigao

The new Community Centre is a community venue which provides educational opportunities for the women and children of the indigenous Badjao tribe who are illiterate, very poor and disadvantaged.

Formation of youth, Surigao

Three young women who are active in the community and also assist in the work with the indigenous Badjao tribe were given training in areas such as communication skills, basic teaching skills, basic accounting, food processing and handicrafts.



Community Centre

South Africa

Bakhita Outreach Project is committed to the

ongoing care of 18 vulnerable and orphaned girls in their villages – most of whom were resident in Bakhita Village. A caregiver and one of the Sisters visit them twice a week to ensure the general well-being of the girls in their situation.



Bakhita girls' gathering

They also monitor the girls' educational progress by checking their homework and liaising with their schools, ensuring that they are performing to the best of their abilities. The hope is that as they each finish primary school they will continue onto St Brendan's Secondary School in Dwars River.

OLSH Outreach Nzhelele

The orphans and vulnerable children across many villages of the Nzhelele Valley continued to be monitored and supported through:

- Home visits to check on the family and to see if there are any significant problems.
- Activities on Friday afternoons, run by the carer – schoolwork challenges, cultural practices, craft, sport, health checks.
- Special monthly support groups held for the children with HIV+ health issues.
- Meetings with guardians to share information.



Completed classroom in Aluakluak, South Sudan



Learning to crochet
– Nzhelele, South Africa

South Sudan

Education

- Education for young women – assisting 20 young women from remote areas to have a secondary education by provision of dormitory-style accommodation
- Education resources – includes salary support for some of the elementary, primary and secondary teachers in Mapuordit. All teachers are grossly underpaid by the South Sudanese Government.
- Construction of a permanent classroom for a Satellite school
- Small home office for the Primary School Director to help him manage after school hour's work.
- Learning materials for Satellite schools – e.g. textbooks for teachers

Local Community

- Administrative support – purchase of a computer, printer and materials for an office which serves schools and several other projects
- Emergency rations – for over 200 destitute, abandoned, house-bound, homeless, lepers, the blind
- Rehabilitation of five boreholes and pumps, and construction of one new borehole
- Support for five young widows – food, clothing for children and school and registration fees

FUNDS DISBURSED IN 2019

Angola	\$28,500	Philippines	\$ 45,500
Fiji	\$ 7,500	Samoa	\$ 22,108
Kiribati	\$50,468	South Africa	\$135,000
Papua New Guinea	\$ 6,800	South Sudan	\$282,466

TOTAL \$578,342

COVID-19 IN SOUTH SUDAN, 2020

COVID-19's entry to South Sudan was initially delayed beyond what the international community first experienced – isolation, lack of tourism and other features deterred COVID-19's entry. However, finally through some UN staff entering Juba (the capital), the first positive test results were confirmed. Since then Juba has remained the epicentre, with other towns like Wau and Rumbek being somewhat affected.

COVID-19 in Mapuordit: Throughout the year, life in and around Mapuordit has continued its normal lifestyle – market routines have continued; domino players still take up their places at table; traditional greetings of handshakes and embraces continue. Social distancing is an unknown. Hand washing facilities are available at every point of entry to all compounds. Senior medical staff, teachers and the local authorities have made efforts towards awareness, but the grassroots people of Mapuordit actually disbelieve in the existence of Coronavirus. Have there been symptoms and deaths? It seems not. Has its appearance been discouraged because of the isolation of Mapuordit or the high temperatures? Whatever it is, may the protecting elements remain in place.

At the end of May, we witnessed a wonderful injection of purposeful living. The three young men studying Agriculture in Uganda returned to South Sudan due to the closure of schools there. They immediately went to our agriculture garden and have totally transformed it into a hectare of living green vegetables. Their attitudinal change and dedication to hard, constant work has been most remarkable.



Thank you, Donors, for supporting development.

Sr Rita Grunke

Dear Donors,

On behalf of the Board of the OLSH Overseas Aid Fund, I thank you for allowing us to be the vehicle by which you have assisted many of our sisters and brothers in Angola, Kiribati, Philippines, South Africa, South Sudan and Vietnam. As always, the Sisters working in these countries express their deep appreciation for your concern and support for those to whom they minister.

As the COVID-19 pandemic persists, we pray for you and your families as you continue to face the challenges it brings to many aspects of our lives. May you all stay safe and healthy.

Thank you for your generous support of our missions. May the gift of God's love bless you and all those dear to you this Christmas and always.

*Sr Bernadette Koning
Executive Officer*

Would you like to make a bequest in your will to OLSH Overseas Aid Fund?

Two possible ways you can make a significant difference to the lives of people in need in the areas where the Sisters work:

- By including the work of the Fund in your will. We would gladly advise your solicitor of the specific terms of the bequest. Alternatively, Michael O'Dea AM of Carroll & O'Dea Lawyers would be happy to advise you at no cost. He may be contacted directly on (02) 9291 7104.
- By requesting mourners at your loved one's funeral to donate to the OLSH Overseas Aid Fund in lieu of flowers.

**If you wish, donations can be made online through the OLSH Australia website
www.olshaustralia.org.au/overseasaid
or through this link: <https://secure.donman.net.au/client/olsh/donate.aspx>**