



REACHING OUT

PRESENCE | COMPASSION | LIBERATION

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Walking Together

Over 1000 supporters of the Mary Rice Centre in Nairobi joined the Walkathon through the Kibera slum. They were supported by a group from St Virgil's College, Hobart, who observed -

"The joy amongst walkers was infectious and it was a privilege to walk with people of all ages and backgrounds. The sea of blue winding through Kibera captured the attention of local residents who came out of their dwellings to engage with walkers."

"It was amazing to see that even from so far away we can help the Mary Rice Centre. They just loved that we were present in their lives and made the effort to come and visit."

EAST TIMOR



East Timor *Comunidade Edmund Rice*

Over the last 20 years, Comunidade Edmund Rice (CER) has worked closely with the Edmund Rice Foundation Australia (ERFA) to support education, health and development projects in East Timor. The program has worked in the remote hill areas of Dili with 5 village communities, to collaborate and to provide responses to local needs and the people's rights to education, health and improved food security.

The work undertaken over the years has built local capacity and has empowered communities to determine their own futures. It is a wonderful example of the effectiveness of partnerships resulting in local ownership and autonomy. ERFA extends heartfelt thanks to the many wonderful donors who have made significant contributions to support this work. We also recognise the great work of Brothers Dan Courtney (founder of CER), Bill Tynan, Frank Hennessy and Peter Coe for their outstanding dedication to the people of East Timor.

With many noteworthy achievements resulting, the Christian Brothers have determined that 2018 is a logical time to hand over their work. Some of it will be

managed by government, some by local and international NGOs and some by the communities themselves. The legacy from this period of Christian Brothers' leadership and Australian donor support is most significant. Impacts include a vocational training centre which is now the full responsibility of the government; a coffee growing project which is the full responsibility of local coffee farmers; access to water, enabled through partnerships with local villages, is now managed by local NGOs; solar power that has been installed in the villages through Inverell Rotary Club; and building skills that have been acquired by locals to improve home construction and maintenance.

In the area of education, 9 Tekas (pre-schools) and 3 primary schools have been built, renovated and maintained in the 5 villages. Teachers were provided with ongoing training in classroom practices and the national curriculum; learning materials for classrooms were provided; effective student evaluation systems for government and parents were introduced; and teachers were hired and trained from local communities, increasing a

Liberating Lives in East Timor

sense of ownership and improving local economies. A computer training centre was also established and students received certificates on completion of set tasks.

Working in partnership with the Government Health Clinic staff, CER employed a nurse, mid-wife and ambulance drivers, with much needed services being provided to the remote villages.

Terrace Timor Network, formed in 2005 following St Joseph's Gregory Terrace's first immersion to East Timor, is comprised of dedicated parents, past-parents and friends of the school. They have supported much including a greetings card-making project employing 63 women, which has provided them with both income and important social engagement in their community. More recently, they have also been integral in delivering an intensive agricultural training project in vanilla growing for 21 local farmers; with the first crop due this year.

ERFA will continue to support the work in East Timor in conjunction with Mary MacKillop International.



Philippines

Edmund Rice Services

At both Kabankalan and Maasin, Edmund Rice Services are conducting a range of Education, Health and Community Development programs. Staff and volunteers have been progressively trained to provide valuable services for the poor of these areas.

Alternative Learning brings students who have dropped out of school with no prospects to classes where they are given good learning experiences and prepared for examinations. Many then have the opportunity to go onto college or vocational courses. School learning materials were supplied to other needy alternative learners.

In advancing eye and ear health care, over 1,000 men, women and children were screened and treated. Further medical monitoring and assessments have enabled over 100 poor people to be identified and referred to health services.

A group of volunteers was organised to join with an NGO attempting to plant a million trees on the island of Negros over the next 10 years. The group made a good contribution by planting 500 native trees.

Through the Youth Development Animation program some great successes have been achieved with wayward youth being brought into better relationship with their families and focusing on productive employments.

“A stubborn and mischievous son; we almost gave up on him,” exclaimed the mother of a boy. Weeks after the Animation activity, the team conducted a follow-up and had a conversation with his mother. She said that her son really fulfilled his promise to change his ways little by little.

South Sudan

Star Support Group, Yambio

Vecesio Merce is a widow from Congo who came to Yambio with her elder sister but, sadly, her sister died. Vecesio has six children, three of whom live with her. She is a member of SSG and decided to join the microfinance group late last year. She was given a start-up loan of 6,000 SS pounds, in order to begin a small business selling food items such as rice, palm oil and dry meat. She was also able to invest some of the start-up loan into her garden by buying seeds and obtaining help in clearing the garden. Not having a permanent place to sell her items at the market, as some others do, she sells her goods from her own home.

The inflation rate is very high which makes a small business like hers more difficult to succeed because prices go beyond what customers can afford. Even so, she has repaid the original loan and was encouraged to take out a further loan in order to continue with her small business and buy non-perishable items in bulk, so as to pay less before the prices go up. With the small profits she made from the first loan, she was able to pay the school fees of her children. Vecesio is very grateful to SSG for this microfinance programme as it has helped make her life much more manageable and interesting.

AFRICA

Comboni Hospital, Nzara

An important development project is well underway to provide two surgical theatres and obstetric and surgical wards together with a Blood Bank to St Therese Nzara Hospital. Getting building supplies in from Uganda and co-coordinating tradesmen and volunteers presents difficulty but all is proceeding to plan.

Sarah Rubino is a nurse and midwife volunteering at St. Therese Hospital with her husband, Martin. Sarah writes about what she has learned so far about the reality of motherhood in South Sudan. It is a story of loss, love, and hope. It speaks to the complexity of healthcare in places like South Sudan. In the first week of living in Nzara, she saw firsthand how heart wrenching, devastating, and beautiful motherhood can be. “I began my first full day at St. Therese hospital with volunteer, Dr. Matthew Jones.

As he made his rounds at the children’s ward, it was a bright and cheery morning, but even the light couldn’t quite reach all the corners of that building. As a bell rang, signalling the parents to gather their children, I looked around and saw 45 beds in one room, all lined up with little between them. The doctor began rounds, efficiently examining each child while talking to their mothers in the local Zande. An aid was there to clarify the nuances of the language. Everything went by in a blur as my mind worked to understand words that I had never heard before.”



AFRICA



Kenya

Education for Life, Eldoret

During the last quarter I was very touched by the sharing from one middle aged woman on how EFL had impacted on her life. During the visit of some of our supporters she narrated how she and her only sibling were abandoned after their parents died. She never bonded with her only sister as they parted ways to look for casual work during which she met her husband to be, who later abandoned her when she was diagnosed HIV positive. In that desperation, one of her friends referred her to EFL which according to her had become her home. She shared passionately how EFL had helped her to deal with the stigma & discrimination and that now she was living positively with HIV. She said she never imagined that her children would reach secondary school which has made her proud and given her reason to live long so that she can experience the joy of her children. This and many other stories motivate me and other staff and give us fulfilment in the service we offer. In the past 18 years of my work in EFL, I have experienced clients who come in pathetic situations but through the programmes offered in EFL they have renewed meaning in their lives. My experience has been that the education of their children has been top priority as most of them attained minimal education.

Angeline Obuto – Director of EFL

Kenya

Br Beausang Catholic Education Centre, Embulbul

Eight students who completed their secondary education in 2017, including the Head Boy and Head Girl, volunteered to assist in the school until their university courses commenced. They assisted in a number of areas: supporting teachers in lower primary classes; marking and preparing of work; mentoring the elected primary student leaders; assisting in the library and providing technical and secretarial support in data collection.

“The school has been important in my life for the past 13 years – thank you and I hope my volunteering has helped in at least a small way.” (Josephine)

Very exciting news came that Brian Nzuki (2016) had been offered a full scholarship to study for a Bachelor of Science degree at Harvard. Brian did all his schooling at Brother Beausang, a total of 15 years, living only a few hundred metres from the school. He faced a number of challenges over this period but the support and sponsorship he received from the school played a key role in Brian’s successes.

His commitment and determination always meant Brian was a great role model for his peers as was his involvement in school activities - Choir, Journalism Club, Debating and Basketball. His journey from a very humble background to one of the most prestigious universities in the world is quite remarkable. Before leaving for Harvard, Brian was interviewed on national TV and was a motivational speaker in a number of schools including BBCEC.

Nairobi

Ruben Centre

Children in the slums live under extremely harsh conditions that deny them many opportunities that their peers in privileged communities enjoy. This reduces their competitive advantage and if no measures are employed to enrich their lives they end up in the poverty cycle with impoverished minds.

Children at the Ruben Primary School continue to amaze through innovative and inquisitive minds and their willingness to explore opportunities presented to them. The slum and the poverty does not deter them from living fuller lives. It is this drive that persuades the management to engage all possible partners that can collaboratively enrich the education experience.

A year ago two young men from Ghetto Classics walked in, offering to teach our students music. The idea seemed bleak but we gave it a go as long as the students showed interest. Starting with just a few recorders the class took off. The training progressed from one instrument to another ranging from wind, string and percussion instruments. We now have an orchestral ensemble and the students can put on a superb show. Very few public schools in Kenya have such opportunities and we are proud that the Ruben Primary is able to achieve such. Ghetto Classics are trying to provide a better option for the children, showing them that they can be involved in something that is interesting, educative and meaningful. Learning to play musical instruments also teaches how to be attentive, disciplined and to uplift oneself.



IMPACT 2017



IN 2017 ERFA:



Directly impacted
the lives of
141,420
PEOPLE
(and hundreds of
thousands more indirectly)



Worked in
10
COUNTRIES
(Australia, Kenya, PNG, South Africa,
South Sudan, The Philippines, Tanzania,
Timor Leste, Uganda and Zambia)



Partnered in delivering
35
PROGRAMS




Disbursed to programs
\$2,287,476
GLOBALLY



THROUGH
ERFA PARTNER
PROGRAMS:

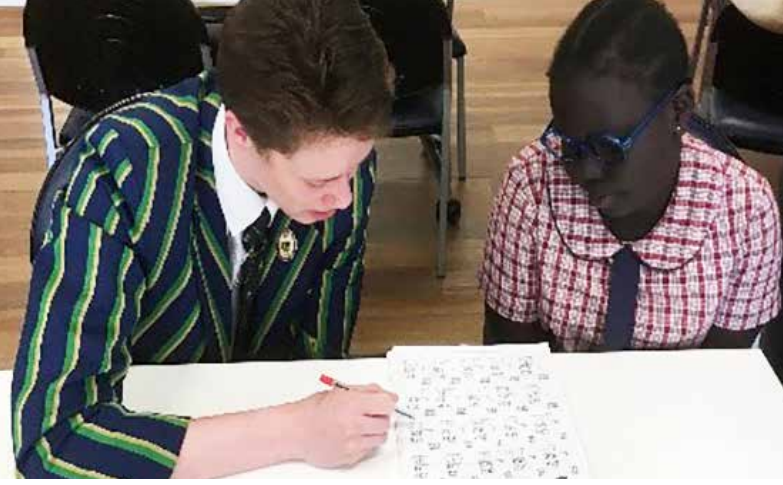


5,909
CHILDREN
received an education

2,237
PEOPLE
with disability and
living in poverty were
directly supported



61,414
WOMEN
were supported in economic
empowerment, health, vocational
training and mentoring



EDMUND RICE REFUGEE SERVICES

ST ALBANS

A Vietnamese mother has brought her Grade 4 son to Homework Club for the past two years. She also has a 14-year old daughter with non-verbal autism, an intellectual disability, and little responsiveness. Initially she refrained from enrolling her daughter in Homework Club, but she gently requested if ERCRS would be willing to include her in the program. She needed assistance with basic writing skills, handwriting and dexterity. Brother Trevor Gibbons took great care to include and support this young woman for almost a term, sitting beside her each week and helping her progress.

Since then, we have been blessed to find patient and compassionate high-school tutors who have worked closely with her. It has been discovered that she is far more capable than first thought. She has improved in literacy and numeracy. A small smile can now be seen on her face upon greeting, and her body language suggests that she feels immensely valued by the care and support she is receiving. This seemingly minor story reflects the giant heart of our ministry. Our programs exist for the forgotten and most vulnerable of society, and it is in these places that our work shines the brightest. The story of this student is representative of students across our programs. ERCRS is passionate about working with young people of all backgrounds, faiths and abilities to help each individual reach their unique potential. Our expanding programs continue to reach new heights. Across our three primary school programs, two secondary school and two mentoring programs, ERCRS continually witnesses delivery of meaningful and inspiring outcomes on both an individual and community level.

Gudrun Philipp
Program Coordinator

EDMUND RICE CENTRE

Homebush, NSW

The Syrian and Iraqi Refugees Empowerment Project (SIREP) aims to assist newly arrived refugees in Sydney to articulate their needs and concerns. Volunteer mentors from Edmund Rice Centre work with the person they are assisting to assess their overall situation, identify their concerns and expectations, evaluate their professional needs, and assist them in finding a way forward. In doing so, mentors work with mentees to set short-term and long-term goals and to identify and access the resources and services needed to achieve these goals.

'My mentor from SIREP pushes me to be strong and more confident. She helped me write my resume and change it many times. She also helped me to talk with employers and prepare for job interviews. She thinks about what I might need to know and to do and prepares for our meetings. She helps me with the language and words I need by preparing notes and vocabulary lists. She keeps in touch with me and encourages me to keep going'. Janeen from Iraq

'The SIREP project has helped me learn about living and working in Australia by encouraging me to welcome and feel like I could make a life in this great country. With providing continuous support, mentoring and encouragement, SIREP gives me a kind of strength to know what I am doing now will help me to plan for my future and build successfully my professional life' Sandreen from Iraq.

THANK YOU SUPPORTERS

On behalf of those spoken about in the earlier pages we express thanks for the generous responses that came following the last edition of Reaching Out.

To all our supporters, please accept our heartfelt gratitude. The individual donors, schools and events are the pillars upon which the aid given depends. **Our gratitude goes to all.**

COMING EVENTS

October 14

Villa Verde Garden Party – Melbourne

October 30

The 500 Supporters' Group Spring Racing Luncheon – MCG

For booking details visit www.erf.org.au/events



Edmund Rice Foundation (Australia) is an accredited member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID)