

Presence ♥ Compassion ♥ Liberation



Edmund Rice
FOUNDATION AUSTRALIA

Liberating Lives Through Education

REACHING OUT



GET INVOLVED



There are many ways you can be involved and support ERFA. Please visit <https://erf.org.au/get-involved> to view our latest events and ways to support.

Use our icons to easily find articles that interest you.



DONOR PASSION



GET INVOLVED



STORIES TO INSPIRE



LIBERATING EDUCATION



More Schools

WALK FOR EDMUND IN 2023

ERFA is so grateful to Edmund Rice network schools who have committed to fundraise in our name this year, using the Walk for Edmund toolkit of practical ideas to help direct events.

A big shout out to **St Patrick's College Strathfield, St Joseph's College Gregory Terrace, St Mary's College Toowoomba, St Patrick's College Launceston, and St Joseph's Nudgee College** for your commitment to walk with vulnerable communities around the world in the spirit and tradition of Edmund Rice. We look forward to more schools joining the campaign.

Schools can use the Walk for Edmund Fundraising model, whenever and however they want. It doesn't have to be a walk. Some schools have chosen to link it to Lenten appeals, others have locked in events at different times of the year. Whatever schools choose to do, and whenever they choose to do it, ERFA will be there to support their efforts. When schools walk with our Edmund Rice brothers and sisters around the world it is a great way to have important conversations about social justice and to raise vital funds for Edmund Rice programs ■



DID YOU KNOW...



A Return to TIMOR-LESTE

ERFA's Programs Director (Emily Faller) and Programs Officer (Alexis Pantazis) visited Timor-Leste in January to re-engage with the people and projects we have supported over many years.

ERFA received a heart-warming welcome and an invitation from the people of the five villages of Railaco sub-district

"to continue the warm friendship of the extended Edmund Rice family in Australia forever".

ERFA is excited about the future and the strategic programming initiatives that will unfold over the next months ■





Vocational Skills FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN UGANDA

Kensekka is an isolated and severely under-resourced rural area in Rakai District, Uganda where around 22,000 people, or 69% of population, are subsistence farmers living beneath the poverty line. Low income, unemployment, child labour, early marriage, and illiteracy are some of the challenges that the community faces.

The area is also recovering from the devastating effects of HIV/AIDS, and child-headed families and children of child-parents are far too common. To support their livelihoods, the community has requested access to quality vocational education and skills development for its youth.

In 2011, St. Joseph's College Geelong year 12 students visited St. Luke Mannya Catholic Parish and were touched by the need and extent of poverty in the area.

They raised funds and worked with the Parish to purchase 17 acres of land and construct two classroom blocks establishing St. Joseph Kensekka Vocational Secondary School (SJKVSS) which started operating in late 2017 and now has around 200 students.



ERFA has been working with the school since 2022 to support it in delivering the Uganda Vocational Qualification Framework. To do this successfully, fundamental resources need to be developed, these include: access to power, water and sanitation; classrooms; computers; a kitchen; agriculture inputs; dedicated training facilities and equipment; and training for staff.

There are so many opportunities to support the empowerment of youth in Kensekka through learning and skills development. ERFA looks forward to this journey with energy and enthusiasm, and appreciates the ongoing support of our generous Australian network ■



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To help our environment and cut unnecessary costs, we invite you to sign up to receiving this newsletter by email at: <https://mailchi.mp/erf/reachingout>





Interview with CLALFFIN ACHIMBA



My name is Clalffin Achimba, the Program Leader for Edmund Rice Eldoret Empowerment Program (EREPP). EREPP is a community-based organization in Eldoret, Uasin-Gishu County whose focus is to strengthen the Langas informal settlement community through empowerment of marginalized children and youth using various forms of education as a key to sustainable change.

My role includes overall responsibility of the program planning and implementation which includes school mentorships for teenagers' life skills education; social empowerment for out of school youth; and advocacy and action for human rights with a main focus on child rights, women and girls rights and environmental care. I manage all key stakeholder relationships and lead a team of over 40 volunteers who run the different projects. I also act as the on-site safeguarding officer.

Can you tell us about your background?

I graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Range Management from the University of Nairobi. I also have a Certificate in Public Accounts and have completed other short courses in advocacy. I am currently working to advance my studies in Project Management.

How did you become involved in the Edmund Rice network?

In 2016, I moved to Eldoret from Nairobi for an accounts job. I've always participated in philanthropy initiatives, so I had friends with whom I was in the same charity groups, who were also volunteering at EREPP, they invited me for the children camps and I've never looked back. From 2016 to 2018 I'd volunteer over the weekends for the Children Educational camps, then early 2019, I became the official full time Lead Volunteer which I did for 2 years. At the start of 2021, I was appointed as the Program Lead by ERFA for EREPP Projects.

What inspires you most in your work?

Having come from a humble background, I've always been passionate about giving back, being actively involved in showing care, making a difference and a positive impact on someone else's life as I believe that my blessings align and always come from me giving back. I am a big believer in Luke 6:38 *"Give and it will be given to you. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."*

Supported by friends who share the same purpose as me, I spend most of my free time participating in charity initiatives, from awareness campaigns for people with albinism, extending love to women behind bars (prison), environmental initiatives like clean ups, and visiting children's homes to share meals and play time with the children.

The blessings spoken from the peoples whose lives we change and touch, a grateful and content heart that comes from this work is what truly wakes me up to keep doing this.

What difference has the Edmund Rice program made to your life?

Working as a humanitarian, I am so grateful that I have been able to live my purpose as work, to be able to do what truly makes me happy. Through this opportunity and funds from ERFA, other Edmund Rice donors and private well-wishers who partner with EREPP, the impact of the work we have accomplished especially over the last 2 years has changed the lives of children and youth in Langas community. The community here, even though faced with adversity, may not always have a comfortable life, and we may not always be able to solve all of their problems at once, but we've helped them realise they are capable, they can do more, be better, they deserve more and they have the ability to grab limitless opportunities to make their community and lives better. We have been able to contribute to transforming and liberating the lives of the marginalised and disadvantaged Langas Community and that to me is living a life of purpose ■

"They say a person needs just three things to be truly happy in this world: something to love, something to do, and something to hope for."



YES, I would like to support the work of Edmund Rice Foundation (Australia) in

*Liberating lives through an
empowering education.*



Please accept my donation for the amount of \$ _____

Donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

OR become a monthly supporter

I wish to show my support and be there for people in need every day of the year. I want to provide ongoing monthly support to Edmund Rice Foundation.

☐ \$20 per month ☐ \$100 per month ☐ \$500 per month ☐ My choice of \$ _____ per month

MY PAYMENT DETAILS

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Amex

Credit Card Number

Expiry Date: (mm/yy) /

Card Holder Name:

Signature:

BANK TRANSFER

Should you wish to make a donation by bank transfer, please contact us on 07 3621 9649 or email info@erf.org.au.

PAYMENT BY CHEQUE

Please make cheques out to Edmund Rice Foundation (Australia)

GET INVOLVED

☐ I am interested in information on immersion programs ☐ The business I work for is interested in supporting ERFA's work

MY CONTACT DETAILS

If your contact details have changed please update them here:

Name:

Email:

Address:

Phone:

Mobile:

Date of Birth:

- ☐ I would like my donation to be allocated by ERFA where it is needed most
- ☐ I would like to receive information about leaving a Gift in my Will to Edmund Rice Foundation
- ☐ I have already left a Gift in my Will to Edmund Rice Foundation

Whenever possible, your donation will be used to support activity that delivers ongoing benefits to communities. However, sometimes welfare (such as clothing, food or medicines for individuals) is a necessary steppingstone to empowerment. Your donation will be used where it is most needed unless you include a comment in the space provided.



Complete the form and return
it in the **envelope provided**



Call us on **07 3621 9649**
with your credit card details



Donate online at
www.erf.org.au





Laurie Larmer OAM passed away on 14 April 2023 at the age of 99 years and 7 months. He had been determined to reach 100 and receive a letter from the King.

He was a friend and generous supporter of ERFA from the very beginning. Laurie was born in Essendon and educated at St Patrick's Ballarat. Finishing school in 1939, he volunteered for the RAAF. After rapid training he graduated as a flying officer and was posted to the RAF Bomber Command. In the last months of WWII, he commanded a Halifax with his crew of 7 on a number of daylight and night-time raids over German cities.

He witnessed the deaths of many of his young colleagues and friends, as a 20 year old. Later in life he did much for post war reconciliation in both Germany and Australia. Laurie was awarded the OAM, the French Presidential Legion of Honour and the RAF Bomber Command award for bravery. Laurie was a great and generous Australian.

We will miss him very much.

Leon Wiegard

THE GREAT MAN AT THE PODIUM!

Edmund Rice Foundation has had few friends as loyal and supportive as Leon Wiegard OAM. A former student of St Thomas CBC Clifton Hill, Leon has fond memories of his education and has always made time in a busy life full of sport, business and family to 'put back in' through his support of ERFA and numerous other community causes and organisations.

A leading radio personality hosting Melbourne's highest rating breakfast show on 3UZ during the 1990s, he was Master of Ceremonies for the first ever 500 Supporters' Group luncheon in 2000 and has hosted many since, entertaining the many thousands of guests and members with his quick wit and in-depth questioning.

Leon's sporting knowledge and network is almost unparalleled having played for Fitzroy Football Club, represented Australia in water polo at both the 1964 Tokyo Olympics and the 1972 Munich Olympics, and been President of Fitzroy FC, the Olympians Clubs of Victoria and the Vingt Cinq Club, as well as a life member of the AFL and the Carbine Club, and a Hall of Fame inductee for Water Polo Australia!

But Leon doesn't just know his sport, he's also a born entertainer. Whether interviewing Kevin Sheedy, Jeff Kennett or Gary Ablett Jnr, Bart Cummings, Michelle Payne or Kurt Fearnley, there have always been laughs aplenty and we've always learned something new.

In 2005 Leon was awarded an Order of Australia Medal for services to sport, particularly the Olympic movement as an administrator and to the community through a range of charitable organisations. Apart from the numerous leadership roles noted above, Leon contributed 15 years as an administrator at Fitzroy and was also a long-time President of Community Clubs Victoria.

The man at the podium has not only entertained and informed with his wisdom, knowledge and experience, he's helped make a huge difference for communities in need, both in Australia and Kenya, for more than 50 years ■





Sadly, child abuse and neglect in slums like Langas in the west of Kenya is common. The Edmund Rice Eldoret Empowerment Program (EREPP) is committed to providing child safeguarding education in schools throughout this region. Through their work, EREPP knows that many teachers have an understanding of what child safeguarding means but there are few who feel confident in addressing it.

Effective safeguarding education in schools is vital for prevention and identifying warning-signs of abuse as well as seeking help for survivors. Empowering education assists teachers in preventing abuse and identifying warning signs, as well as in supporting children on how to protect themselves and advising them on where and how they can get help.

After participating in training, Mrs. Kiptoo, one of the school teachers shares that:

"My greatest lesson is to follow-up on my students who drop out or miss school, especially girls who drop out or attend irregularly. I find out what the problem is and see how to help to ensure the problem does not continue."

Through ERFA support, EREPP trains teachers to understand that children's rights are human rights and teachers have been empowered to create awareness in the community including by discussing child rights issues with the parents in parent/teacher meetings ■

RUBEN CENTRE *Update*

There's been so much happening at Ruben Centre in the Mukuru slum, Nairobi since Br Frank O'Shea's return as interim Director and a joint visit by ERFA Australia and ERD Ireland staff. At a time where government services in Kenya are coming to a standstill and protests against high living costs and government corruption are frequent, things are particularly challenging.

With the Kenyan Ministry of Education's overhaul of the school curriculum, Ruben's government primary school has had to give over a whole building to a new Junior Secondary School (JSS) with close to 500 students. This has placed enormous strain on resources and, to add to the pressure, the government has moved on 10 teachers to other state schools. Ruben Centre has responded by engaging 10 high school graduates to support teachers until suitable replacements can be found.

Ruben's Kurt Fernley Special needs education unit continues to develop the milestones of the learners living with various forms of disabilities.

Four (4) students have transitioned to the mainstream school, bringing the total number of **integrated students to 37**, all the while keeping **an enrolment of 48 learners** at the unit.

At the health centre, there's a new leadership team in place which enhances the efficiency of running this busy facility. During the first quarter, the Centre treated 3,518 patients and 206 healthy babies were delivered, including a set of triplets.



Patient records, together with pharmacy and equipment stock control have been significantly enhanced through software management.

The vocational training unit has **sold over 1,000 items produced by students** at top hotel chains in Kenya. **30 students enrolled** in the beauty and hairdressing courses and **11 have graduated** ready for employment. Adult literacy classes are back in action and **28 youth are enrolled in a 10-week course on urban farming.**

The community radio station, Ruben FM, is updating their website to optimise it for mobile devices and to make it more interactive so that community views can be captured to inform programming.

ERFA's Nairobi office staff are continuing to support Ruben on the ground to assist with work plans, budgets and monitoring and reporting processes. A human resources audit is underway and this will shape the future of Ruben's management structure which is now guided by the new Ruben Centre Board of Trustees ■

Trades Centre

REKINDLING A DREAM



Back in 2017, through the support of the Lions Club of Park Orchards and ERFA, "Eddie's Workshop" a carpentry trades centre, was built at Edmund Rice Catholic Education Centre (ERCEC).

Albert, a parent of students at ERCEC was employed as stonemason for the construction. While working on the building, he asked for the opportunity to learn carpentry and joinery there. Fourteen years before, Albert was working in the Kenya National Youth Service with the hope of learning specialised carpentry and joinery skills. However, when his father passed away, he was told he could stay on in the Service or lose his place if he chose to take time off to attend the funeral.



Albert's love and respect for his father led him to choose to go to the funeral and consequently he lost his place in the Service and was banished from his village community.

Now, through the trades centre at ERCEC, Albert has an opportunity to rekindle his dream. He is enrolled for the National Training Industrial Authority (NTIA) examination and certification in 2023.

Albert is the bread winner for his family of 5 and, through this opportunity, he hopes to specialise in wood roofing and door installation in construction. We thank all Australian donors for continuing to provide opportunities such as these. Amongst them we thank **Project Kenya**, the **Lions Club of Park Orchards**, **Catholic Ladies' College Eltham** and **Steve Graham** for their ongoing support ■

