

Presence ♥ Compassion ♥ Liberation



**Edmund Rice**  
**FOUNDATION**  
Liberating Lives Through Education

# REACHING OUT



## GET INVOLVED



There are many ways you can be involved and support ERF. Please visit [erf.org.au/get-involved](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



# Supporting through ACTION

Across the Edmund Rice network, schools continue to show what it means to live out their values through action.

Each year, students, staff and the school community rally together to support Edmund Rice Foundation through a range of initiatives. From student-led fundraising efforts within schools, to national campaigns like *Walk for Edmund* and *Doco in a Day*, these communities are passionate advocates for creating positive change.

Educators and staff can deepen this connection through our Into the Heart Immersion program. These experiences allow participants to visit our partner communities, witness the impact firsthand, and bring those powerful insights back into their classrooms and school communities.

What makes this support so powerful is the shared sense of ownership and purpose. Students, educators, and families aren't just participating – they're leading, creating, and championing causes that connect them to communities around the world.

Through their ongoing commitment, Edmund Rice schools are not only raising vital funds but fostering a spirit of solidarity and compassion.

We are incredibly grateful for their continued support and the energy they bring to our shared mission.

To learn more about how your school can be involved, scan the QR code or visit:  
[erf.org.au/schools/](http://erf.org.au/schools/)



## LIFETIME

Our immersion program isn't about giving or observing from afar. It's about walking alongside. Sharing stories. Seeing strength. Building understanding. And returning home changed.

Each year, a small group travels to East Africa to spend time with our project partners — educators, community leaders, families and young people — who are shaping their own futures with courage and dignity.

If this resonates with you, we'd love to start a conversation. Express your interest in joining an immersion in October 2026.

**Walking with others reminds us that we each have a role in creating a more just world.**

Scan the QR code or visit:  
[erf.org.au/immersions/gone-fishing/#expression](http://erf.org.au/immersions/gone-fishing/#expression)





# CLEAN WATER, HYGIENE & *Dignity*

The three year Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) project continues to transform the wellbeing of St Joseph's Kensekka Vocational Secondary School and 11 surrounding villages.

### Overall impact

More than **500 students, 30 teachers, and 51,000+ community members** stand to benefit from access to clean, safe water and improved sanitation.

Girls, who often miss school due to lack of facilities, will experience dramatically improved safety, privacy, and dignity.

### The project will deliver:

- Clean filtered water through a new pump and filtration system
- Safe biodigester toilets and hygienic facilities
- Hygiene training for families across 11 villages

### Why it matters

Access to clean water reduces disease, improves school attendance, and strengthens opportunities for the entire community.

### Looking Ahead

By supporting this project, you're helping young people gain opportunities for dignified work and contributing to a healthier, resilient community for generations.

Your partnership is helping transform Kensekka — through practical skills, sustainable livelihoods, clean water, and improved education.

**\$50** helps provide hygiene education for a family

**\$250** contributes to the operation of a safe water filtration system

**\$500** supports a new biodigester toilet facility

**\$2,000** helps drill a borehole

**\$5,000** contributes to the purchase of a new water purification and pump system





## Community Insights from Railaco

In 2026, Edmund Rice Foundation will re-establish our presence in Timor Leste, returning to communities that have long held a connection to our Edmund Rice network.

As we prepare for this renewed chapter, our priority has been clear: **listen deeply to community voices before any programming begins.**

Partnering with Timor Unearthed, we consulted families across the Railaco Administrative Post in Ermera Municipality. Through conversations with 454 households, we gained a rich insight into community strengths, daily realities, emerging challenges, and hopes for the future.

What emerged is a powerful picture of resilience, ambition, and clear community priorities for the future.

## Strong families facing daily pressures

Families in Railaco are large and deeply interconnected, often spanning multiple generations under one roof. These are strong, resilient family units but, the pressure to provide is constant.

Agriculture is central to community life. Coffee and other cash crops, subsistence farming and livestock are the backbone of local livelihoods. Yet despite the hard work, many families struggle to secure a stable income. Limited access to markets and low profitability mean that farming alone is often not enough. This uncertainty affects every aspect of life, from food security to education.

## A generation determined to learn

Young people in Railaco express a strong desire for education, with four out of five young people wanting to continue their education. But the barriers are real. The cost of schooling, distance and the need to contribute to household income mean that many are forced to leave school early. For families, it's often a difficult trade-off between immediate survival and long-term opportunity.

## Communities ready to grow

Railaco communities demonstrate a strong drive to improve and a willingness and capacity to work together. Women, men, disadvantaged groups and people living with disabilities are actively included in community life. This social cohesion provides a strong platform for locally driven development.

## Looking ahead, communities identified three key priorities:

- Stronger and more reliable livelihoods
- Access to clean water and improved sanitation
- Opportunities to build practical, employment ready skills

These needs reflect practical, achievable steps toward greater stability and dignity.

This consultation is more than a data exercise. It's the beginning of a renewed partnership.

As Edmund Rice Foundation returns to Timor Leste, our work will be guided by what communities have told us matters most, ensuring that future programs are locally led, deeply relevant, and built for long-term impact.





Interview with

# DAGMAR O'BRIEN

Dagmar O'Brien has been a dedicated and deeply valued member of the Edmund Rice Foundation community for over 25 years, generously contributing her time, compassion, and expertise to support marginalised children in Nairobi. Through her longstanding involvement with the 500 Supporters Group, Dagmar has played a vital role in driving meaningful impact, using her networks to create opportunities that directly benefit those most in need. Her unwavering commitment reflects the heart of our mission – walking alongside others to create hope, dignity, and a brighter future.



## When did you first become involved with the Edmund Rice network? What inspired you?

I was fortunate to have worked with Noel O'Brien for many years. When Noel sold O'Brien Catering to Spotless, he remained on the Board, and I assisted him with some of his charity work. He introduced me to the 500 Supporters Group, which raises funds for children living in Nairobi.

I have always loved helping children, and hearing the stories of those living in the slums truly broke my heart. That's what inspired me to get involved in fundraising. It has now been 25 years, and I feel we have achieved so much in supporting these children.

Having spent over 33 years in a senior role at Spotless, I was able to use my contacts and connections to source rare, money-can't-buy items for auction at our events.

## What have you seen or learnt through your involvement?

I've seen just how beautiful these children are, how eager they are to learn, and how grateful they are for the support they receive. They take nothing for granted.

I love seeing their smiling faces in videos and witnessing their appreciation—it's incredibly moving and humbling.

## What inspires you most about the work undertaken by the Edmund Rice Foundation?

It's the compassion and deep dedication they have for the cause. I truly love working with them—they inspire me constantly.

The Edmund Rice Foundation and the 500 Supporters Group have helped me become a better person. They've also helped me put my own problems and sadness into perspective.

## What impact has supporting this work had on your life?

I never had children of my own, but now I feel like I have thousands who need me.

It's incredibly rewarding to see these beautiful children having a better life and a brighter future—and to know that I've been a part of that. There's nothing more fulfilling.

## What would you say to people considering supporting the Edmund Rice Foundation?

I encourage my friends and others to support this incredible cause—to open their hearts to these children and their families, who often have nowhere else to turn.

**We live in a very lucky country, and it's important that we help those who need us most.**



Welcome to the Team!



# SIMON GREGORY

We're pleased to introduce Simon Gregory as our new Fundraising and Marketing Director. Simon brings a strong commitment to building meaningful partnerships and is looking forward to connecting with our community to help grow the impact of your support. His passion for storytelling and engagement will play an important role in strengthening our mission and extending our reach.

**We're excited to have Simon on board and look forward to the experience and energy he brings.**

# Building STRONGER FUTURES TOGETHER



In Kibera, many hardworking families face barriers to financial inclusion, with limited access to banking, credit, and essential business skills.

With support from the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), and in partnership with Edmund Rice Foundation, Mirror of Hope (MOH) is helping change this through its Women's Empowerment and SILC project.

So far, **150 women have gained financial literacy, savings skills, and income-generating opportunities** – leading to a **59% increase** in household income.

We thank the Australian High Commission Kenya for their recent visit to Mirror of Hope and for their continued support to deliver meaningful change in Kibera.

## FUNDRAISER



### Host Your Own

#### Want to make a difference your way?

Our new DIY fundraising platform makes it easy to turn your ideas into impact.

Whether you're hosting an event, taking on a challenge, or celebrating a milestone, you can create your own personalised fundraising page to support Edmund Rice Foundation or one of our project partners.

It's simple to use and ensures the funds you raise go exactly where they're needed most.

If you've been thinking about fundraising, now is the perfect time to get started – every effort helps create lasting change.

Scan QR code to learn more.



# Reflections from **LIZ MWANGI**

We're proud to share reflections from Liz Mwangi, a valued member of the Edmund Rice Foundation community for many years. Liz previously worked as ERF's Partnerships and Evaluations Manager in Africa, before taking on a secondment with Ruben Centre. Today, Liz leads the Centre as Director, bringing deep insight, lived experience, and a strong commitment to community-led development.

In this piece, Liz reflects on her journey of leadership and the evolving understanding of power shaped through her work alongside communities.



Over the years, my understanding of leadership has evolved – not just from books or boardrooms, but from lived experience. I have sat at tables where titles spoke loudly, and I have witnessed moments where the quietest person in the room carried the greatest influence. It made me question: who is really in charge?

In reading *The 48 Laws of Power* by Robert Greene, I was struck by a simple but powerful truth: the person with the highest title is not always the one who holds real power.

Real power belongs to the one who shapes decisions, controls critical resources, influences perception, and builds networks of loyalty. It is the person others cannot afford to ignore.

But as a woman leader, I have also wrestled with what power is supposed to look like.

For a long time, leadership around me looked loud, forceful, and unyielding. It looked like control. It looked like dominance. And at times, I questioned whether I needed to become harder, sharper, or more aggressive to be taken seriously.

**Yet I have learned something deeply personal: power does not have to be loud to be real.**

There is a different kind of strength – one rooted in emotional intelligence, intuition, empathy, and resilience.

**Feminine power is the courage to lead with heart in spaces that often reward hardness. It is the discipline to listen before speaking. It is the wisdom to build trust instead of fear. It is choosing collaboration over intimidation, even when pressure demands otherwise.**

I have learned that some of the most powerful moments in leadership are not in commanding a room — but in mentoring someone who doubts themselves, in holding steady during crisis, in making a difficult decision with integrity, or in creating space for others to rise.

**Titles may grant authority. Control may create power. But trust – trust sustains leadership.**

Being a woman leader has taught me that I do not need to sacrifice compassion to demonstrate strength. I can be decisive and empathetic. Strategic and nurturing. Firm and kind. Power does not diminish when shared — it expands.

Leadership, for me, is no longer about proving I belong at the table. It is about making sure others have a seat too. It is about leaving systems healthier, people stronger, and communities more empowered than I found them.

And perhaps the truest form of power is this: the ability to influence change without losing your humanity.

# YES, I would like to support the work of Edmund Rice Foundation 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](mailto:info@erf.org.au).

## PAYMENT BY CHEQUE

Please make cheques out to Edmund Rice Foundation

## GET INVOLVED

I am interested in information on immersion programs     The business I work for is interested in supporting ERF'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 ERF 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](http://www.erf.org.au)**

  
**Edmund Rice FOUNDATION**  
Liberating Lives Through Education