



REACHING OUT

PRESENCE | COMPASSION | LIBERATION

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Health through education

These innocent children are victims of overpopulation, corruption and exploitation. They live with disease and poverty. In developing countries such as the Philippines hope is hard to come by. Above, they are being instructed in the basics of clean water and hygiene.

The pages within tell of some of the programs funded through the Edmund Rice Foundation which offer education and medical services to the most disadvantaged, giving them hope. There are now more such programs in different parts of Africa and Oceania that we are able to support through your generosity.

OCEANIA



East Timor

Comunidade Edmund Rice

Comunidade Edmund Rice (CER) has been operating in East Timor for 20 years. In this time a war-ravaged landscape, devoid of services in health and education, has witnessed the gradual emergence of civil organisation and services. For over 15 years CER has been the central organisation in the development of primary education in the villages of Railaco Criac, Deleso and Samelete. Over that period CER with support of numerous benefactors from Australia joined the local village communities in building, renovating and maintaining the schools. In consultation with the Basic Education Department (BED) CER has provided training for primary teachers with input from staff from Australia, funded the teaching positions for 17 teachers in the schools, supplied teaching materials for the classroom and books, pencils and other materials for the children. Over recent years BED has accepted responsibility for many of the areas in education listed above. In 2014 up to 10 teachers received contracts from the Department. The Government began to add classrooms to each of the schools and added extra classes. With this growth in responsibility of the local authorities it became the logical time for CER to arrange to hand to the Department a system that is growing but with more challenges in all areas of its program. CER will include a small amount of funds in the 2018 budget to support the schools in the transition in 2018.

Philippines

Edmund Rice Services Kabankalan

Bulad Community is located at Salong, Kabankalan City. This place is composed of 115 households. The name Bulad, was taken from a person who a long time ago committed suicide through exposing himself to the sunlight for the whole day. In the last few years the NGOs serving this area gradually withdrew. Last year Edmund Rice Ministries conducted a visit to provide eye services to the area. They found out that many families there were very poor and depended on sugarcane field work which gave a very meagre salary. It was decided to invite the locals to form a development community. After a month immersion and 3 months community formation, 29 members joined the community livelihood program. According to the members, they are very thankful to Edmund Rice Ministries for giving them a privilege to borrow money without interest to start a general store. This was really a big help for them because they no longer have to Kabankalan to make purchases as they now have a general store in their area. Their store is selling rice, feed for poultry, oil, sugar, and groceries which are their basic needs. Through their hard work, unity, and cooperation, they were able to make good savings after five months and they are paying off their loan gradually. Their dream is to become a successful community who are united and helping for the common good of all.

Philippines

Edmund Rice Services Maasin

Julius is in his seventies residing in Padre Burgos, Southern Leyte. He had been suffering from cataracts on his both eyes for the past 10 years. He had not received any medical assistance on his condition due to financial constraints and there are no eye care services available in their municipality.

Last year, ERM went to Padre Burgos to conduct a free eye check-up that lasted for 2 days, that was the time when the ERM team met Julius and his wife. Out of the 44 who were screened only 10 were chosen, and out of 10 only 6 passed the cardio pulmonary exam to have the free surgery and one of them was Julius which his wife was very happy about. As of now Julius was reported to have no complications after the surgery and is taking his time adapting his operated eye to see clearly, ERM will do a post-operation visit to him and the others who had the surgery. Julius' wife was thankful that ERM visited their municipality and provided her husband the treatment they had long waited for over the past 10 years. As his new life story progresses, ERM together with the help of local government and other NGO partners, will continue to provide this kind of service and development for those people who need our services, especially those who are poorest of the poor.



AFRICA

South Sudan

Star Support Group, Yambio

SSG was started in 2005 as a small outreach to a few women who presented with psycho-social needs. It grew in response to associated needs such as material support for school fees for their children and other orphans, as well as more medical needs such as medicines and social support. Since 2005 the numbers have increased to 1,100 adults and over 500 children. The political situation of South Sudan can only be described as highly volatile. Many innocent civilians have been killed, allegedly for harbouring rebels or having some association with them. Many people have been displaced from their homes, even within a few kilometres from the town centre. Economically the country is in a dive.

The World Bank listed the inflation rate for 2016 to be 380%. These two factors have meant that the cost of living has become intolerable for most people and this has led to an increase in thefts and insecurity. It has been observed that some members of Star had been reluctant to take the antiretroviral drugs because of seeing other people who had died of AIDS who had been taking these drugs, making an erroneous link between the two. The strategy to combat this is to keep up the momentum of ongoing education, through medical professionals giving talks, and fellow members giving testimonies of the importance of drug adherence. Thankfully, the infection rate is falling.

Comboni Hospital, Nzara

An important development project has been planned to provide two surgical theatres and obstetric and surgical wards together with a Blood Bank to St Therese Nzara Hospital. Although South Sudan has seen a reduction in child mortality rates, the infant mortality rate is still extremely high. One in seven women die due to pregnancy related complications; 55% of deaths in infancy occur during the first 28 days of a child's life. Planning for the improved obstetric facilities at St Therese's Hospital in Nzara continues. Power will come from the solar system provided by the Foundation in 2016 and planning will include a proper operating theatre and blood banking facilities.

Comboni Missionary Sisters, the Catholic Diocese of Tombura-Yambio and the Ministry of Health, lead by the Catholic Medical Mission (CMMB) New York, with support from Sudan Relief Fund and Cross International, the Noel & Carmel O'Brien Family Foundation, Parade College, the Abruzzo Club, Villa Verde and other donors. This development has been made possible by prior projects of ERFA including nurse training, laboratory upgrades and the solar power system. The project will go a long way in preventing maternal deaths in child birth and providing lifesaving blood transfusions. The isolation of St Therese Hospital together with the political turmoil brings many problems, and certainly with security. We hope that the project can proceed to completion.

The Edmund Rice Foundation has entered into partnership with the

Papua New Guinea

Callan Services National Unit (CSNU)

With PNG trying to provide the most fundamental of eye and vision services, it is in great need of competent optical services technicians. The clinical training and refresher training provided by Callan Services responds to a very significant service delivery need in PNG. It enables the referral of adults and children for higher level eye care as needed, the provision of spectacles to children and adults as needed, and so allows for children to enter or return to participation more fully in education, and for adults to participate more fully in social, business or civic life.

The network of Callan Services centres for providing services to persons with disabilities has grown to 20 sites. The annual conference of the network of Callan Services is one of the key activities for the development of the knowledge and skills of both the leaders themselves and of all the staff on the 20 sites via the leaders and follow up visits by lecturers and CSNU officers. The focus of the last conference was on the establishment of consistent, jointly agreed, data collection and reporting on the key aspects of the Network of Callan Services Strategic Plan and then the transparent sharing of that information with other members of the Network. This is highly relevant as it has been hard to validate the amount of service delivery and its quality across the geographically widely dispersed sites.





Kenya

Education for Life, Eldoret

The EFL programs have continued on a regular basis in which education and food rations were offered to between 200-300 beneficiaries each week. The beneficiaries also participated in the economic empowerment activities such as SILC and the poultry project. Fee payments were made for over 200 pupils in pre-school to tertiary. Uniforms were purchased for 145 students, while 50 guardians/ parents contributed partially to the school fees and 100 purchased uniform and other school needs. 30 of our sponsored students for tertiary obtained partial scholarships while the parents contributed a minimal amount and paid examination fees. 5 of the college students got full scholarships. Academic follow up was done for 450 students.

The livelihood of the beneficiaries has improved. This is evident through the joy expressed in their singing on meeting days. Most of the beneficiaries attribute this to the SILC programme where they save to take loans to trade to support their basic needs. Those who initially came in tattered clothes now dress decently, raising their self-esteem. They are now open about their HIV status. More beneficiaries have been able to participate in the fees payment of their children giving them a sense of pride and responsibility. Due to reduced stigma and discrimination, the members are now able to disclose their HIV status to their children giving increased knowledge on HIV and AIDS which contributes to reduction of new infections and re-infection among the beneficiaries.

Kenya

Br Beausang Catholic Education Centre, Embulbul

Monicah Chirop obtained 422 in the KCSE (Form 4) examinations, the highest result ever achieved by a BBCEC pupil, placing Monicah in the top five pupils in Kajiado County. The KCSE saw three students achieve an A grade and being placed in the top 1%, as well as an increased number of students gaining entry to public universities. The KCPE (Form 2) results showed a marked improvement

A highlight of the year was the celebrations to mark the Feast Day of Blessed Edmund Rice on May 5. The Bishop of Ngong was the celebrant at the Mass and also blessed and officially opened "Eddie's Workshop".

The earlier finish to Term 2 and the changes to the Term 3 calendar and scheduled activities due to the national election dramas proved to be both challenging and somewhat disruptive but the support and co-operation of all in the school community minimised the impact.

A break-in at the school in early Term 3 resulted in two security personnel being injured as well as the loss of all the 24 new computers in the computing room. This has been a setback for the school but fortunately the impact on the Form 4 KCSE students was minimal. Even allowing for this disappointment, it was a good year and finished on a high note with a wonderful closing Mass and farewell celebration for the KCSE and KCPE candidates.

Tanzania

Edmund Rice Sinon Secondary School, Arusha

Last year Edmund Rice Sinon Secondary School (ERSSS) made its first attempt in the Young Scientist Tanzania (YST) competition and managed to rank number three nation-wide. Nancy and Grace, both Form 3 students, drew much attention with their invention, *A Simple Vegetable Cutting Machine*. YST is an annual exhibition and competition in Tanzania involving school students across the country in demonstrating their innovative ideas and showcasing their scientific talents.

This year the same scenario happened again in Dar es Salaam in August. Nadia Kabwe and Lameck Benista, Form 6 and 4 respectively, excelled with their project entitled *A Simple Hot Shower Invention for Large Groups*, which is ideal for schools, prisons and refugee camps. Their project heats large amounts of water within a short period of time. The water is heated as cooking is going on. Their project is aimed at saving cost, time and energy.

After demonstrating the effectiveness of the project before the judges, the two students made themselves and the school proud as they secured third position nation-wide in the category of chemistry, physics and mathematics. They were awarded a trophy, medals and certificates.

A grand farewell was extended to Br Clem Barrett who completed his 10 years of service to the students of ERSSS and moved to a new appointment in Zambia. His contributions as Headmaster and then as Registrar were highly appreciated, especially by the students.



Kenya

Ruben Centre, Nairobi

Beneficiaries come from a highly impoverished area due to lack of systems, proper infrastructure and economic opportunities. Mukuru slum is the second biggest slum in Kenya with an estimated population of about 700,000 residents. The area is characterized by high poverty levels, poor sanitation, lack of or limited economic opportunities, low education levels, crime, and high HIV/AIDS.

Ruben Centre benefits over 3000 people daily accessing our diverse services in education, health, advocacy, and social and economic development programs.

Our beneficiaries include: 2,700 children in primary school, 40 students in the special needs children's unit (including children with disabilities such as cerebral palsy, cognitive conditions, physical disabilities, and others with multiple disabilities), 120 in vocational training, an average of 250 patients daily accessing health services, over 2500 orphans and vulnerable children receiving services, and a radio station reaching more than 450,000 people in its geographical coverage. Ruben FM is the only radio community radio in the Mukuru slum. It provides the only way of knowing what is happening outside of their community. Within a short period of time the radio has generated a good deal of audience ownership. Listeners feel that Ruben FM is intimate to their lives, and also beginning to give them power in their unified voices, especially women. A successful outcry against the introduction of gambling machines, with the consequent wave of crime and tragedy, gave a win for the voice of the community.

Kenya

Mary Rice Centre, Nairobi

Meet Sammy. We received Sammy at Mary Rice Centre this year in January when he was brought to us by a guardian because his parents disowned him due to his physical condition. Sammy has a physical disability called AMELIA where an individual is born without either upper or lower limbs. In Sammy's case, he doesn't have upper limbs; they are reduced to just a shoulder joint without the elbow and wrist joint. He uses his feet to feed, dress and even write. Whoever said, "disability is not inability" was very right. Despite being physically handicapped Sammy is mentally strong and is a very charming boy who is very happy and has interesting stories to tell. Because

of my contact with Sammy, I have come to believe that children with disabilities need opportunity and not sympathy. When the Australian High Commissioner visited, he expressed how humbled he was to witness the great work that Mary Rice staff are doing in serving the needy children. He thanked them for their generosity and commitment in their service of the children and their families for the warm welcome extended to him and his family. In a very moving testimony, a parent of a child of Mary Rice explained how his daughter who is handicapped and was not able to stand up on her own is now able to walk. He thanked the donors in Australia who have made this possible.





EDMUND RICE CAMPS

Over the recent holidays camps were held in every state in which children from disadvantaged backgrounds were mentored by young adult volunteers in a range of recreational activities. During last year over a 1000 volunteers worked with 1000 participants in 80 camps across Australia. 80% of participants felt more confident because of the camps and 90% said that ERC has helped them feel happy. Over 90% of volunteers believe that ERC has increased their ability to contribute to their broader community and they are now more likely to contribute to other community groups.

Some responses from the camp in Perth were:

Camp made me feel really safe and happy. I like getting to know the volunteers and would like to be one when I'm older. – Participant

Camp was an eye opening experience about the world, values and things that you take for granted. – Volunteer

My grandchildren absolutely love Edmund Rice Camps! A huge thank you to all of the volunteers, staff and sponsors who make these camps possible. My grandchildren's lives have been enriched with camp experiences. – Guardian

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 3 pillars upon which the aid given depends. Our gratitude goes to all. Beneficiaries of this aid in 2017 went to a total of over 110,000 people, including 43,000 children and 45,000 women.

WHAT DOES THE FOUNDATION DO?

Edmund Rice Foundation (Australia) is an international development organisation that works with the impoverished and disenfranchised to liberate lives. Its embrace of presence, compassion and liberation is taken up by supporters throughout Australia who share the desire to support people and their communities to develop the life skills to change their own world and be a force for positive change.

The Foundation (ERFA) enables the work of the programs to continue providing education, health and community development opportunities for those otherwise denied. ERFA monitors and evaluates all programs it supports to ensure the best outcomes.

ERFA funding supports programs in 6 African countries, Papua New Guinea, East Timor, the Philippines and Australia. Program leaders make application for funding. These are analysed for potential effectiveness of delivery, impact on the intended beneficiaries and each program's capacity to implement. Programs provide to ERFA an annual acquittal and audited financial statements.

FUNDRAISING EVENTS 2018

March 18

*Zimele Community Walk
– St Kevin's College
Melbourne*

May 15

*The 500 Supporters' Group
– AFL Luncheon – MCG*

June 3

*St Therese Hospital Nzara
Luncheon – Abruzzo Club
Melbourne*

August 24

*Brisbane dinner
– Royal International
Convention Centre*

September 8

*Zimele Dinner – St Kevin's
College Melbourne*

September TBA

*Mary Rice Luncheon
Melbourne*

September 15

*24 hour Challenge
– St Kevin's College*

October TBA

*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)