

Mary's World

February 2018



Handwashing saves lives in Timor-Leste
Creating livelihood opportunities for women in Peru
Crowdfunding books for kids with disability in PNG

Dear friends and supporters of MMI

Welcome to the February 2018 edition of Mary's World.

This will be an exciting year at MMI. There are hundreds of teachers in Timor-Leste who we plan to train and hundreds of women in Peru we will help to earn an income...and so much more! Doing all this life-changing work is only possible with your help, and I thank you in advance for your support.

As you may be aware, on 1 July we will be merging with the Mary MacKillop Foundation and the Josephite Foundation to form the powerful single ministry, **Mary MacKillop Today**. This exciting transformation demonstrates our renewed commitment to ensuring that your gifts are put to work in the most effective way possible. Thank you to all who participated in the

questionnaire about this merger. Your comments were so helpful in ensuring we create a new organisation which is stronger, and which meets your needs and the needs of those we serve. You can keep updated on our journey towards **Mary MacKillop Today** through our website blog. If you have any questions or feedback, please feel free to call me personally on 02- 8912 2765 or email kirsty.robertson@mmi.org.au

I hope you enjoy reading about what we have accomplished together in this edition of **Mary's World**.

With gratitude,

K. Robertson

Kirsty Robertson - CEO



Education ... helping families learn together

In Timor-Leste, many parents never had the opportunity to attend school themselves and now struggle to play an active role in their children's learning and development at home. Maria (pictured on our cover) was excited, thanks to your generous support, to attend MMI's Parent's Training Program in Fatuberliu. While Maria knew how to look after her two children and prepare food for them, she had no idea how to help support her children's education. After completing MMI's training, Maria has now learned how to teach her kids using songs, story-telling and games. Maria was so thankful to have the chance to learn new skills and activities that she could apply at home in her daily life, where she lives in a village far from town and very isolated. Maria now encourages other parents to attend MMI's training so they also have the chance to support their kid's education.

"Before I joined this training I was totally blind about how to teach my kids at home but after the training, I now have real confidence and want to apply these new skills in my daily life with my children."



Crowdfunding success

In Papua New Guinea, MMI, in partnership with Buk Bilong Pikinini, provides vital books and educational resources to remote communities. MMI recently ran a crowdfunding campaign to collate, print and distribute empowering stories by children with disability to elementary schools and libraries. It is estimated that only 2% of people with disability have access to services they need and more needs to be done to ensure all children have access to quality education. Thanks to your gifts and sharing of the campaign, we raised **\$18,192** which means that **8,874** children will now receive books!

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ACFID
MEMBER

Mary MacKillop International is a signatory of the Australian Council for International Development Code of Conduct reflecting MMI's Compliance with industry Standards of good practice, transparency and accountability.

Inspired by Australia's first saint, MMI empowers communities overseas to realise their dignity through education, health and livelihoods. MMI's approach to development is shaped by the principles of our organisation. These principles are Human Dignity, Common Good, Participation and Subsidiarity and Options for the Poor.

Mary MacKillop International acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of the land, past and present, on which all our offices are located.

*With your help,
we transform lives
around the world through
our education, health and
livelihoods programs.*

*We thank you for your generous
ongoing support and
commitment to continuing
the legacy and spirit of
Mary MacKillop.*

Ines & Julie

Health... teaching skills that saves lives

In Peru, children with disability face significant challenges accessing basic services and affordable health care. Ines has three children and her youngest daughter Julie, seven years old, is autistic. Ines and Julie have been attending MMI's Community Health program for just over a year for two days a week to access a number of therapies in language, psychology, physical therapy and everyday living skills. These therapies are usually out of reach for so many but due to your ongoing commitment to MMI, they have been made available in the poor and underserved communities on the outskirts of Lima.

"She (Julie) has changed so much, she knows how to speak, can recognise herself and recognise her mum and dad"

In Timor-Leste, MMI recently supported the Timor-Leste Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education for a Global Hand-Washing Day event that was held at Sede Suco Comoro on October 18, 2017.

The purpose of the celebration was to promote the best practice of washing hands with soap, with the slogan of the day being "Our Hands, Our Future". This slogan aims to encourage children to be aware of the importance of daily hand washing to prevent illness and disease.

This is important as Timor-Leste continues to have one of the poorest outcomes for health in Asia. Preventable diseases and conditions such as tuberculosis, diarrhoea and mosquito-borne diseases are all endemic, and basic sanitation and hygiene is lacking. Health assistance is limited and access to health resources is poor, particularly in the more rural and remote areas. The level of knowledge on preventative health among the general population is extremely low, leading to the high prevalence of many illnesses that could be prevented through a very basic knowledge of good health and hygiene practices.

Every year 1.4 million children worldwide do not live to celebrate their 5th birthday. Handwashing saves lives and with your continued help MMI's Health Literacy program will continue to train teachers to teach their students these lifesaving skills. MMI's contribution to health education in schools, is paramount to combating preventable disease in Timor-Leste.



"Our hands, our future"

Livelihoods... creating new futures

In Peru, less than 60% of women are active in the workforce, with those in remote and rural communities further disadvantaged by a lack of education and limited opportunities to earn a living. MMI partners with and supports a number of associations to provide regular skills development and livelihoods through the production of Fair Trade products that are made available for sale in Australia through our social enterprise entity, **ethica**.

Ethica has recently partnered with a new organisation called Mantay, a social project that gives teenage mothers the confidence and support they need to be mums, so they can keep their babies that are at-risk and be part of a healthy environment that guides and trains them, so that they and their children reach autonomy. When the young mothers turn 18, they learn to make leather goods, which allows them to earn a fair income and have a better future.

You can easily support these young mums, by visiting our website www.ethica.org.au to view the range of high quality leather shoulder bags, clutches and keyrings now available. It really doesn't take much to make a real difference in our world, with one keyring alone feeding a baby for three days!



Mantay

"Do all you can to work in unity."

Mary MacKillop
1882

Launching... new beginnings

We are on the cusp of an historic moment.

On 1 July 2018, Mary MacKillop International will join with the Mary MacKillop Foundation and the Josephite Foundation to form a powerful single ministry: **Mary MacKillop Today**.

The uniting of these three ministries into one is the culmination of many years of prayerful deliberation and planning. It will intensify the impact of each outreach by reducing administrative overheads and concentrating resources where they can best meet the needs of the poorest of the poor.

As a single ministry proudly continuing the works of the Sisters of Saint Joseph in the spirit of Australia's first Saint, **Mary MacKillop Today** will support our existing programs

in Timor-Leste, Peru and PNG, along with other programs including Indigenous scholarships and No Interest Loan Schemes.

As Sister Monica Cavanagh commented when she wrote to our supporters in September:

"The Sisters of St Joseph are determined to ensure that the wonderful work that Mary MacKillop International does with your help, continues to expand in its reach and impact in the years ahead. Please be assured your support will continue to be directed specifically to the projects you know and love."

Pray with us for Saint Mary's Blessings on the transformational change ahead.



Thank you for your ongoing generous support of MMI. If you'd like to join us by becoming a Parish Ambassador, speaking for MMI, organising a prayer group or running an ethica stall please contact MMI:
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Staying Connected

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Photos by MMI Staff

*where required, names have been changed for privacy