

Innocents Relief



Newsletter November 2023

Seasons Greetings

In September, our two Centre Managers Clare Carter, Mary Seymour and I had the opportunity to make a self-funded trip to Timor Leste to see first-hand the poverty and conditions under which children were living and learning in one of Australia's closest neighbours. The teachers and students of all the schools were very appreciative of IR's support, however, the almost complete lack of what we would consider basic resources was still very evident at all the schools we visited. Each school wants a library, not only as a knowledge resource but also to provide a large room for students to use in class time and at breaks. It will likely cost \$80,000 to build, equip and furnish each library. To achieve this goal, we need your help.

As we are approaching the Christmas season, may I thank all our members, sponsors and supporters without whose remarkable generosity we would be unable to carry out our raison d'être. May you all have a safe and happy Christmas and please consider "Giving the gift of knowledge" and support our appeal.

Gregory J Seymour AM
President





Timor Leste School Library Appeal

BSB No: 084-034 **Account No:** 851082278 **Account name:** Innocents Relief Ltd **Reference:** Your name

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All donations over \$2 are tax deductible



Your donation at work: Timor Leste

IR now supports eight centres in Timor Leste.

Getting an education in Timor Leste is a challenge. Poverty, remoteness, lack of infrastructure are the norm. Teachers often have limited training and many are not paid. The need is great. In recent years IR has worked with the Timor Leste Companions Group (TLCG), an initiative of St Williams parish, Grovely; the Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem (OLJ); and, Rotary to supply resources to schools in Timor Leste.

In September 2023, three Board members made a self-funded visit to Timor Leste to deepen relationships with the schools IR already supports and to forge connections with other schools and institutions in need. They were joined by Fr Harry Reuss, from the OLJ and two TLCG members.



The Dom Gabriel Manek Orphanage, Liquica (TLEO9)

Sister Leonarda has established an orphanage for 19 girls aged 3 to 15 years. The building is very basic but provides a safe place for girls who might otherwise be at significant risk. With Fr Harry's guidance, beds were braced, plywood was cut to support mattresses and mosquito nets were installed. The girls entertained by dancing and singing. Sister Leonarda plied the workers with coffee and biscuits. Helping the orphanage is now a joint venture with OLJ who have funded building a security wall, which incorporates a small store to sell refreshments. IR has approved a grant of \$10,000 for food, school and medical expenses for a year.



Your donation at work: Timor Leste

St John de Brito Primary School, Bazartete (TLE04)

Situated in a rugged, remote location the school's major priority is to provide a library for its students. Like educators around the world, the teachers appreciate the benefits children experience when they lose themselves in books that can take them far away from what they know, and help them to think beyond their current time and place.

In 2024, IR will provide desks and chairs for this school in collaboration with Rotary Australia's Repurposing Equipment program.



St John de Brito Secondary School, Liquica (TLE06)

This school in Liquica is attended by many students who attended primary schools supported by IR in the local area. Girls boarding with the Redemption Sisters in Liquica also attend. Much of Liquica was damaged or destroyed in the violence before the independence referendum in 1999. Classrooms at the school built in 1996 escaped the damage but have had little maintenance since then. At its October meeting, the Board approved funds to replace ceiling panels and to paint the classrooms.



Your donation at work: Timor Leste

Redemption Sisters Boarding Facility, Liquica (TLE07)

There is an urgent need to provide safe boarding places in Liquica for students (particularly girls) from the mountain villages so that they can attend school. Violence against women aged 15 to 49 is the highest reported crime in Timor Leste with over half Timorese women experiencing physical or sexual violence. Girls boarding in Liquica can also be at risk of being poorly treated by their host families. The Redemption Sisters have established a boarding facility for girls. The sisters know that many more girls need a safe and supported environment to finish school. At its October meeting, the Board approved \$55,300 to construct boarding facility so that 20 more girls can attend secondary school in Liquica.



Meet Alianca Ribero

Allie is a newly graduated English teacher. English is a fourth language in Timor Leste, coming after local dialects, Portuguese and Indonesian. Most school directors have very basic English. In recent years, Allie translated for TLCG and assisted IR's visits to Timor Leste in 2022 and 2023.

Allie has extensive local knowledge as she grew up in Liquica and attended schools that IR now supports. She gave IR visitors deep insight into life and work in Timor Leste. Allie is respectful and assertive. Despite her young years she has good experience having delivered classroom repairs funded by TLCG to budget and on time!

The 2023 visit highlighted the need for improved communication and local coordination of IR's projects. To this end, Allie has accepted the Board's offer of a twelve month contract to provide on ground assistance. Her primary goal remains to secure work as a high school English teacher, which the Board recognises and strongly supports.



Your donation at work around the world

Holy Family Care Centre, Limpopo, South Africa (SAF03)

There was great excitement for 45 children at the Holy Family Care Centre when their new uniforms arrived, just in time for the new school year. No child likes to look different from their peers, and thanks to IR's generous donors, these orphaned and abandoned children looked spic and span - at least until morning tea time!



St Matia Mulumba Parish, Kampala, Uganda (UGA01)

St Matia Mulumba Parish supports children who are living with HIV/AIDS. Their families rely on IR for their school fees. Any extra funds are used to buy food and medication. The Parish desperately needs more funds to better support these families. The director writes "It is painful to meet the tuition requirements for a child who is unwell healthwise, or one that slept on an empty stomach".



Your donation at work around the world

Kindergartens Malawi (MAL01)

The delight was evident for a group of kindergarten children in Malawi, who received their very own blankets in June. Thanks to our donors, winter was far more bearable this year. In recent years IR funded the construction of a new kindergarten in a remote village in Malawi replacing a makeshift shelter. It is one of ten kindergartens provided by the team. IR also funded repairs to a local primary school so that kindergarten children could progress to primary school.



Prithipura Communities for the Disabled Sri Lanka (SLA01)

The economic situation in Sri Lanka remains dire. Prices for essential foods such as lentils have increased by 190%. The farms at Prithipura Communities grow rice, tumeric and buckwheat with the resident's help. IR's funds are being used to purchase food that cannot be grown at the farm. In spite of major challenges, the Prithipura team ensure that important events are celebrated throughout the year.

Manuel Duarto School, Lima, Peru (PER01)



These little people do not have a care in the world! In a country with many challenges, the school is determined that the 531 intellectually disabled students in its care are free to connect, explore and learn in an environment of inclusivity and without want. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, the Manuel Duato School in Lima has help to cover its electricity and food bills.

Your donation at work around the world

Batase Secondary School, Nepal (NEP01)



A donation from the Ubuntu Foundation to IR has facilitated major building work at the school. The construction project is in its final stage which will deliver improvements to the grounds and will create a garden. The bare grounds have started to green up thanks to the donation and hard work by the students. IR has also funded the wages of science and mathematics teachers.

India

IR continues to support the education of remote students in Arunachal Pradesh (IND62). It also helps more than 100 students in years 10 -12 at St John Vianney Girls Higher Secondary School Palliyadi (IND 77), with tuition fees, note books, dictionaries, bags, uniforms and shoes. Laptop computers were provided for girls attending the Convent of Our Lady of Lourdes Lourdepuram, Kerala (IND54).

Financial Snapshot

At the Annual General Meeting held in July, the President reported that \$585,035 had been transferred to schools and centres in the preceding year; all due to the generosity of our wonderful donors and sponsors. In the past five or so years, IR has regularly granted around \$500,000 to the schools and centres it supports around the world. Last year administration costs were just \$6,601. Costs included subscriptions to website, accounting and other software packages, postage, insurance and printing. Bank transfer fees comprise about 30% of administration costs. IR Ltd is a volunteer run organisation so administration costs are kept to a minimum.

Governance

Innocents Relief Ltd is a company limited by guarantee with a Board elected annually. IR Ltd is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission which registers and regulates Australian charities.

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