



**World Villages
for Children**



IMPACT REPORT 2023

Ending poverty through education

UK Registered Charity Number: 1058973



Alirah in the centre with her new friends, now safe at school in Biga, the Philippines



ALIRAH

On our cover is Alirah.

She is 14 years old from Angono in Rizal, the Philippines. She has two brothers and her father works as a soya vendor. He earns very little in this role and struggles to support his family. Alirah helps by spending her spare time helping her aunt and cousins to sell vegetables and clean out their pigs.

During the pandemic, Alirah had no access to schooling for two years. Without electricity for internet, access to online classes was out of the question and although lessons were delivered to her home she says

“learning through modules was a little bit difficult since we could not understand the lesson and nobody could explain well to us the topics”.

She got further and further behind and so she just spent her time trying to raise money for food for the family by selling vegetables or fishing with her grandfather – hard and laborious work. The family’s future looked extremely bleak until they met the Sisters last year and they were able to offer Alirah a place at our school in Biga, Philippines. She says

“I wanted to show that even though we are not rich, we can reach our goal by our mind and heart. I entered this school to reach my goal and to become an engineer. I need to become a scholar so that I can go to college since we do not have money to buy what we need”.

Today, thanks to your support, Alirah is safe and happy at school with the Sisters of Mary in Biga. Now in grade 8 she is well fed, has made lots of new friends and is learning all the skills that will help her find a job when she leaves school. She says

“I learned that if we become professionals later on we can help others like the donors help us at the Sisters of Mary School. I can also be helpful not only to my family but to my own country.”



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children meeting the Sisters during their community work

About our work



World Villages for Children supports the worldwide education programmes of the Sisters of Mary (SoM) to provide a free, quality education to the poorest children in the world.

At the end of 2022, approximately 8.4% of the world's population, or as many as 670 million people, were living in extreme poverty and the majority of these were in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. If current trends continue, only one third of countries will halve national poverty by 2030¹.

Children are the most vulnerable, they lack food, water, shelter, medical care & education. They are often exposed to neglect, violence, abuse, malnutrition and early marriage. Access to education for these children transforms their lives and that of their families.

Our fundraising provides school places for the children in the Philippines, Mexico, Guatemala, Brazil, Honduras and Tanzania. In a safe and loving environment with the Sisters of Mary, the boys and girls receive full time care and an accredited education which gives them technical skills relevant to local employment and helps them to find stable, fairly paid employment. These children are the focus of our fundraising work.



¹ The target date for the UNSDG – no poverty



About the Sisters of Mary Education Programmes

The Sisters education programmes started in 1964 and have grown at the invitation of governments to the poorest regions in new countries and communities.

They now operate;

13 live-in secondary schools for children aged 11-17

Philippines, Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Brazil & Tanzania

5 day-care centres for toddlers aged 3-5

Mexico, Guatemala, Brazil (2), Tanzania

1 elementary school for youngsters aged 6-11

Brazil

3 medical centres

Philippines (2) & Guatemala

1 training centre for out of work young women

Tanzania

Together we provide places for nearly 20,000 of the poorest children each year. The programmes are low cost and generate huge operating efficiencies and in 2023 it cost an average of just £1,200 to educate and care for one children for the year.

The Sisters provide holistic support for each child, helping them to recover from their early lives, grow healthy and well, to become confident, independent, skilled enough for work and able to help their families and contribute positively to society.

Education is provided by professional teachers, accredited by the national education authorities in each country and also covers technical subjects relevant to local jobs most recently including Care giving, Cyber security and Digital jobs training.



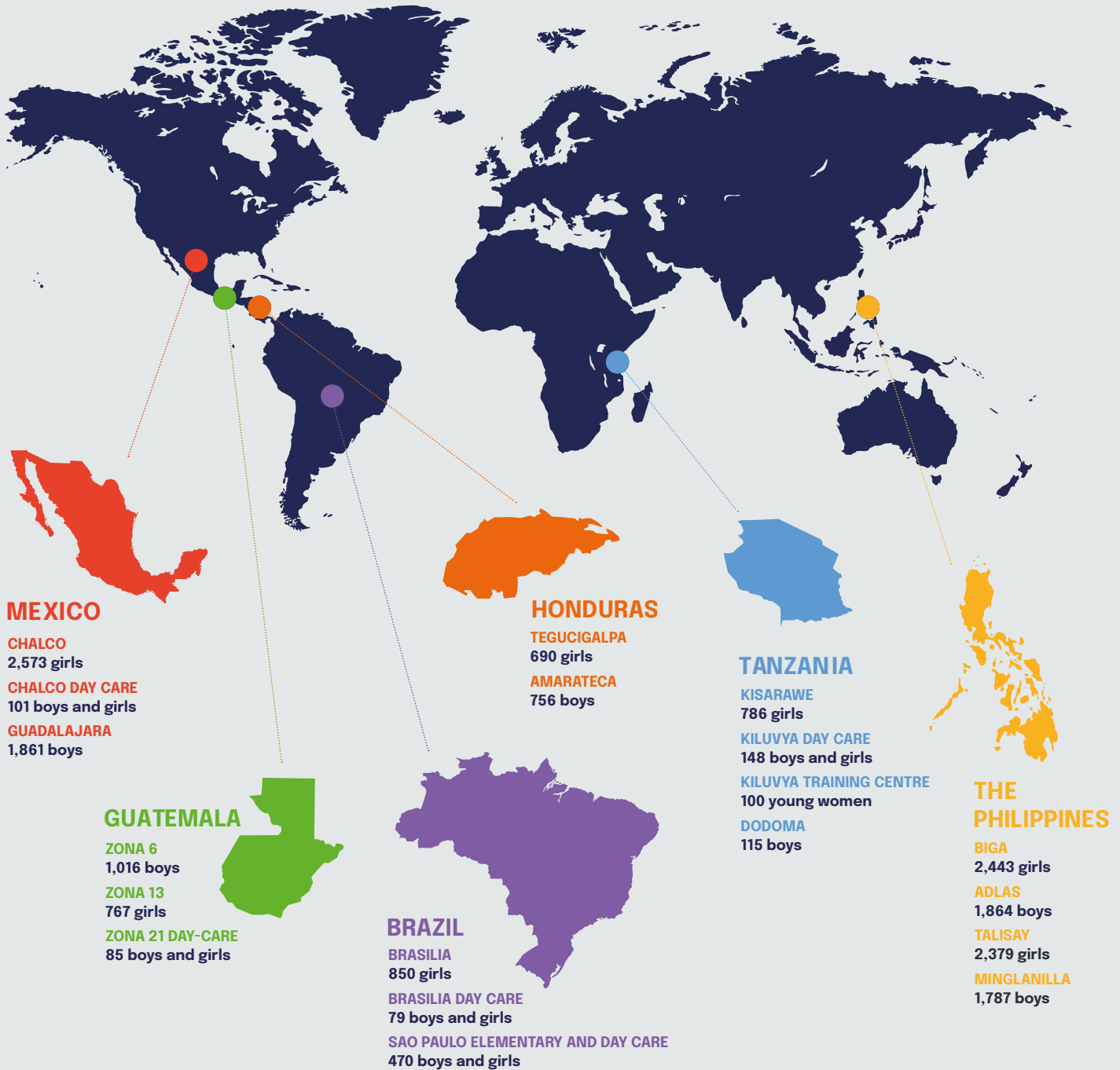
The values of the UNSDGs underpin the Sisters' work. They use their dedication and in country expertise to access the poorest communities. They regularly put themselves in harm's way to reach the most deprived children and offer them the comforts of a normal childhood.



Quality education is the foundation of the childrens' future. The schools, which are run on a modest and sustainable basis, focus on provision of care and nutrition to help boys and girls equally. The accredited education and vocational training equips them for employment after school and lifts them, and their families, out of poverty in line with UNSDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 12.

WHERE WE WORK

SISTERS OF MARY PROGRAMMES AROUND THE WORLD 2023





INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR

As I look back at 2023, I am so grateful to you, our dedicated donors for your continued support of our charity programmes. Without you, our work educating the poorest children in the world would not be possible. In 2023 you truly helped us face a year of great challenges but also allowed us to make good progress.

As I took over the baton of leadership from Sister Maria Cho in March 2023 and the Chairmanship of WVC in July, my heart has been so touched by the words of support and encouragement from all our friends and supporters.

With your support and the dedication of my Sisters of Mary, along with WVC's staff and trustees, we joyfully opened Tanzania's first school for the poorest boys. Introducing this new facility to Dodoma ignites hope within the children, envisioning a future where they can secure employment, become productive individuals, and support the needs of their impoverished families. We were fortunate to receive the first cohort of 115 young boys at the school in August.

Your generosity also ensured that we were able to accept new children at our other schools around the world and to provide all the food, clothing and educational supplies needed for a total of 20,879 children in our care at the mid point of 2023 so they could recover, grow healthy and thrive with us.

During the year 1,381 final year students passed their exams and graduated from our schools ready for work. So very many of these are already employed, able to be productive, help their parents and siblings financially and provide support for members of their community.

The heartbreaking desperation of children in poverty continued to increase in 2023 with malnutrition, violence, abuse and early marriage much witnessed during our community work in the poorest regions. In 2023 we ventured further to more remote areas to reach these most vulnerable children and your support allowed us to bring them into a safe place at our schools.

The rising cost of food and basic commodities during the year was a constant concern. As for you all, we have seen the cost of food for our children rise, in some cases by more than 30%. With your help and continued support we hope that we can continue to address this challenge and find new ways to run our programmes and feed our children whilst protecting the planet's resources.

We remain so grateful to you for your commitment to our mission, your humanitarian interest and care for the welfare and future of our poorest children and your longstanding generosity towards their care.

Sr Elena Belarmino
Chair of Trustees



INTRODUCTION FROM THE UK MANAGER

In 2023, we were so grateful for the kindness, interest and continued financial support from our friends, individual and organisational donors, trusts and foundations.

We were thrilled to meet up with more of our donors during the year and to celebrate our lasting bonds with them. We are so touched by the enormous lengths (and heights) they go to by fundraising for us and to hear the emotional stories of their visits to the schools overseas.

During the year we were again blessed with the hard work and good guidance of our WVC board who gave their time so generously. We were delighted to welcome Sr Elena as our new Chair in July and thrilled Sr Maria remains as an active member on our board. During the year we were also delighted to welcome Sr Margarita Abeja and Fr Fretch Ballesteros onto the board, the latter joins as a graduate of the Philippines school.

It was a very difficult year for our fundraising but with your good will and constant kindness we were able to keep our strategic focus on fundraising, good governance, and effective use of resources, exceed our budgets and continue sending regular grants to the Sisters of Mary to help them in their poverty relief work. I am particularly grateful to the WVC team for their hard work during the year - their diligence, understanding of the SoM programmes and motivation to succeed is much appreciated.

As in previous years, we focused on raising flexible use, unrestricted funding to help with the full range of the children's needs. Food was a high priority in 2023 as the costs continued to rise around the world. We also provided funds for the vocational training so new courses could be added and tailored to the needs of local employers.

We were buoyed up by the support of the alumni of the SoM during the year whose honest engagement with us speaks volumes for the transformative power of the Sisters programmes. We continued gathering data and measuring impact, and closely followed the progress of the children in the schools, especially two in Brazil who are featured later.

Our fundraising is driven by profound respect for the Sisters' poverty relief work. We were privileged to witness the new boys' school opening in Dodoma, Tanzania, spend time with local families, and support new children at all the schools. It is our joy to contribute to the annual growth of this programme, providing education and care to the world's most impoverished children.

Thank you

Nicola Lawson
UK Manager and Trustee

Highlights from our work and how your gift helped in 2023



◀ Our first boys' school in Dodoma, Tanzania, finished phase 1 construction and welcomed the first boys from the region in September.

▲ At the midpoint of the year prior to graduations there were 20,879 children aged 3-17 being cared for in places at the programmes, the highest ever.

We helped to provide over 62,600 meals a day so all the children at our schools around the world had the balanced nutrition needed to thrive.



Graduation in Tegucigalpa, Honduras



▲ 1,848 senior grade children finished school during the year, equipped and ready for work. In the Philippines 99% of graduating children are already employed.

▲ Girls in Brazil with new reading books. We continued to support with educational supplies including for the 881 girls at Brasilia girlstown who received the vital text, reference and reading books needed for grades 7-9 to help their learning and get them ready for employment.

Vocational training was expanded across all programmes to enhance job prospects for all, including care giving, electrical and solar technology, digital skills, medical transcription, cyber security and automation.



New boys in Guatemala

◀ 5,393 new children and trainees were welcomed into a place in our care during the year.



Girls in Philippines - Care giving course 2023



Our supporter Enrique climbed Mount Iztaccihuatl in Mexico

◀ Our graduates and supporters went to extreme lengths (and heights) to help us with fundraising for future generations, raising vital funds to support our work.



Our graduate Ross, completed the London Marathon 2023









▲ Sr Elena was elected as the new Superior General of the Sisters of Mary.

PROGRESS AT THE COUNTRY PROGRAMMES

Thanks to the support of our friends and donors in 2023 we continued to ensure the Sisters had the regular funds needed to welcome the most deprived boys and girls in the world.

Thanks to you the most neglected children were safe, well fed, healthy and educated ready for a better future.

	COUNTRY ²	NUMBER OF CHILDREN	TEACHERS	ANCILLARY STAFF	DOCTORS & NURSES	SISTERS	NEW CHILDREN ACCEPTED IN 2023
	PHILIPPINES						
	Biga Girlstown	2443	63	76		34	638
	Adlas Boystown	1864	66	55		21	489
	Talisay Girlstown	2379	82	73		22	558
	Minglanilla Boystown	1787	70	69		14	362
	Medical Centre Biga	112 ³		12	4	2	
	Medical Centre Minglanilla	76 ⁴		7	1	2	
	MEXICO						
	Chalco Girlstown	2573	100	67	6	51	779
	Guadalajara Boystown	1861	65	42	4	21	559
	Day Care centre, Chalco	101	8	12	2		62
	GUATEMALA						
	Zona 13 Girlstown	767	26	43		14	173
	Zona 6 Boystown	1016	35	45	4	12	260
	Day Care centre Zona 13	85	8	7		1	54
	Medical Clinic Zona 13	59 ⁵		2	7	1	
	BRAZIL						
	Brasilia (Girlstown)	850	28	14	2	16	172
	Day care centre Brasilia	79	4			1	44
	Sao Paulo Elementary	317	14	6	2		70
	Sao Paulo day care	153	8	3		4	45
	HONDURAS						
	Tegucigalpa (Girlstown)	690	28	27	2	16	173
	Amarateca (Boystown)	756	32	38	2	10	205
	TANZANIA						
	Kisarawe (Girlstown)	786	32	22	3	18	192
	Kisarawe (Day Care)	148	1	3		2	108
	Kisarawe Training centre (Kwa Komba)	100	8	8		2	200
	Dodoma Boystown	115	2	3		6	151
	Total	19476⁶					

² Total student numbers vary due to new starters and graduations so these are the average recorded for the year

³ Average out-patients per day

⁴ Average out-patients per day

⁵ Average out-patients per day

⁶ Average number of children during the year – does not include medical centre. Totals move significantly during the year due to new arrivals and graduations

COUNTRY FOCUS PHILIPPINES



Joriz at his home



- There were 9,741 children in the care of the Sisters in 2023, from the most deprived communities of the country.
- 2,047 new youngsters were welcomed during the year into the four schools in Biga, Adlas (near Cavite), Talisay and Minglanilla (Cebu).
- Increasingly, the Sisters are travelling to more distant rural communities to reach those families which experience the greatest deprivations.⁷
- Malnourished and lacking adequate shelter, their children have little or no access to secondary education. A place at the Sisters of Mary school for these youngsters provides vital education and brings profound change for their families and entire communities.



ACCESS TO A LIFE CHANGING EDUCATION

- Thanks to our donors, we were able to send grants totalling £692,444 to the Philippine schools in 2023, 46% of our total grant.
- The majority of these grants were spent on food, medical and essential living expenses for the children as well as clothes, shoes, learning supplies and vocational training equipment. We also helped with the repairs needed to maintain these schools some of which are now nearing 40 years old.
- In 2023 the children had everything they needed to learn and thrive in the care of the Sisters, including three healthy meals a day and academic and vocational teaching accredited by TESDA⁸ and tailored to the skill needs of local employers.
- The children worked hard in class and also enjoyed a variety of spare time clubs and sports. They were enthusiastic competitors, succeeding in a vast array of regional, national and international competitions⁹.
- Making the most of their new found childhood and this precious opportunity provided by our donors, our student Joriz says *“living at the Sisters of Mary is like paradise”*.



Joriz in class at Adlas

FOCUS ON EMPLOYMENT & INDEPENDENCE

There was no graduation in 2023 as the schools aligned their school timetable with the nationwide curriculum but all the senior children had on the job training (OJT) with local employers, a vital ingredient towards their future employment.¹⁰

The Sisters built on their wide network of relationships with local employers to ensure vacancies for the children and a fast track into good jobs after graduation. Recent employers include Mercedes, Audi, Samsung, Ernst & Young, and Epson.

7 Including city slum dwellers or regions like Palawan, where families survive by farming or fishing
 8 Philippine Technical Education & Skills Development Authority
 9 Competition successes were extensive across all schools including Talisay girls who won bronze in the Philippine International Math Olympiad (Asia Digital Challenge), September 2023.
 10 The Sisters now report nearly 99% employment rate for the graduates from these programmes.


COUNTRY FOCUS MEXICO



ACCESS TO A LIFE CHANGING EDUCATION

- Thanks to the kindness of our donors we were able to send grants totalling £343,903, to the programmes in 2023, 23% of our total grant. 39% of this grant was spent on essential food and medicines to nourish the children and keep them healthy.
- 37% of the grant helped with educational costs, salaries of teachers, books & pens etc, and the remaining grant funded clothing, school and kitchen equipment, repairs, paid utility bills for the school and resourced their security services to ensure the safety of the children.
- In 2023, the Sisters were able to provide additional teaching and emotional support to help the newest children to recover from their early childhood and catch up with their lost learning. All the youngsters enjoyed an accredited education, vocational training relevant to local employment and three balanced meals a day to help them grow strong. Their time at school was joyful under the nurturing care of the Sisters.
- They were successful in and out of the classroom. The boys in Guadalajara qualified to represent Mexico in the VANDA International Science competition to be held in Bali and the Chalco girls received first place in the Handball national competition and second place in their first Chess competition.



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- There were 4,770 children in total cared for at the Sisters of Mary programmes in Chalco (Villa de las Niñas, girlstown), Guadalajara (Villa de los Niños, boystown) and Chalco day care.
 - Demand for places was again unprecedented and the Sisters met thousands of children in need of a place during the year. They were overjoyed to be able to welcome 1,400 new children in August 2023.
 - These youngsters come from complex and sometimes violent family and community situations living in deep poverty in areas like Guerrero, and Wahaca¹¹. Earning meagre income through menial jobs or farming, children are often malnourished, neglected, exposed to the danger of drug gangs and deprived of basic education. These vulnerable children¹² were the priority for the care and educational support of the Sisters.¹³



FOCUS ON EMPLOYMENT & INDEPENDENCE

The focus at school in 2023 continued to be eventual employment and the children enjoyed additional vocational courses including care giving and agriculture to equip them for future employment locally. They also enjoyed a period of OJT with local employers. In July 674 senior boys and girls graduated ready for work for employers including TATA Industries and Hyundai.



Growing crops at school in Guadalajara (Sept 2023)

¹¹ Sr Martha, Sisters of Mary Chalco Girlstown, November 2023

¹² Girlsnotbrides.org 21% of women in Mexico are married or in a union before the age of 18 and 4% before their 15th birthday

¹³ 'Sold for a six pack of beer'. <https://www.worldvillages.org.uk/iwd-2024/>

COUNTRY FOCUS BRAZIL



Esteffany with her mother and sister



“These girls are not just financially poor but intellectually poor”¹⁴

- There were 1,461 children in the care of the Sisters at their Brazil programmes in 2023. 881 at the girls’ secondary school in Brasilia, 332 in the elementary school (ages 6-11) in São Paulo and 248 in the two day care programmes in Brasilia and São Paulo (for toddlers aged 3-5).
- They welcomed 331 new children into places at the schools during the year, 172 of these were girls in Brasilia.
- Later in the year the Sisters’ community work took them even further into the interior of the country than ever before. They witnessed great poverty, many families living on the edge of survival with little access to education for their children. They saw families in a pitiful state and their young girls vulnerable in every regard. So for January 2024 they have stretched capacity at the girls’ school to welcome 224 of these children.
- All the new students in 2023 were well below the level needed for their grade. The country’s education system has failed to recover after the Covid-19 pandemic and education levels are low. The older girls arriving now need considerable help and support to catch up to the basic level needed to pass their exams.

ACCESS TO A LIFE CHANGING EDUCATION

- At all the programmes, the children have started to receive the care they need to recover from their early lives. The Sisters nurture the children carefully, providing the necessary physical and psychological support to help them recover and thrive. With three regular meals a day, safe shelter at school, and accredited academic and vocational teaching, school has been a joyful revelation for all the youngsters and they are so thankful for their opportunity.
- Two girls who have been particularly touched by the programmes in Brazil are **Isabella and Kethelyn** who have progressed all the way from day care and elementary in São Paulo and joined the secondary school in Brasilia last year.
- With the help of our kind donors we sent grants totalling £96,216 (6.5% of our total) to the Sisters’ programmes in Brazil in 2023. 56% of these funds were spent on food, medicines, utilities and security.

- The remaining 44% of these funds were spent on education and learning supplies; this particularly included vital text, reference and reading books for Brasilia girls, grades 7-9 which were provided thanks to the generous donors who responded to our Big Give 2023 appeal.



Isabella and Kethelyn at our day care centre in São Paulo in 2018 and at school in Brasilia in 2023.



Isabella (right) and Kethelyn (left)

FOCUS ON EMPLOYMENT & INDEPENDENCE

The children worked hard in class and in their vocational courses in 2023. Nursing students enjoyed internships at the Public Health centre readying themselves for future employment and in December 144 girls graduated from senior school equipped and ready for work.



Girls with the vital books funded by our 2023 Big Give appeal

THE STORY OF JORIZ PHILIPPINES



Joriz's parents separated when he was young. Joriz and his four siblings lived with their grandparents for a while until their mother could care for them again. His mother worked collecting rubbish but struggled desperately to feed her young family. Joriz worked on the rubbish dump after school helping her to recycle waste to earn a little but it was a terrible life and left them hungry and poor. When his mother remarried, his stepfather was cruel towards Joriz and his siblings. Seeking safety and a chance of an education, Joriz was delighted to meet the Sisters and be offered a place at their boys school in Adlas, Philippines.

With the Sisters, Joriz has finally found safety. A place where he does not need to work to help his family put food on the table, but can rest securely and focus on his education. He loves learning, especially languages, and dreams of providing a more stable future for all his family. Joriz has the chance to make a better life, free from poverty and deprivation, thanks to the education he is receiving.

“The Sisters of Mary School became a beacon of hope for me. It offered a haven for aspiring students like me, providing free education, food, shelter, spiritual education, and a supportive community.” (Joriz)



THE STORY OF ESTEFFANY BRAZIL



Esteffany lived with her mother and stepfather in a small village in Pará (Northern Brazil). She has six siblings and her mother is pregnant with another child. They had little money and life at home was not easy – just eating one meal a day if they were able. Her stepfather works in a plantation of beans and cassava, he earns so little that her 15-year-old brother has now left school to work with him, too. She says:

“I really love to study but unfortunately, I am not that good in studying because I was absent, caring for my siblings and if I have not eaten something, I could not concentrate.”



“When I heard about Sisters of Mary, and the School in Brasilia, I wanted to join them. I said to myself ‘this is my only salvation.’ It was a great miracle and now I am here. I am so happy that I did not have chance to be lonely and sad. This is a big chance to devote myself to studies with no worries.

The Sisters welcome us with joy, the teachers are doing their best to share their knowledge to us. I already made friends. I feel that I am in heaven. I will do my very best to be a good student and be a better professional someday. When I grow up, I want to be a Police Chief. I am so grateful for the chance to live in this wonderful place. I thank our dear friends and benefactors for being so kind and generous to all of us. May God bless you always.” (Esteffany)

COUNTRY FOCUS GUATEMALA



♥ *"The girls of Guatemala are living in precarious poverty"¹⁵*

■ 55% of the population live in poverty in Guatemala and young women are the most affected.¹⁶ With corruption and high levels of inequality there are few ways out of poverty for the most vulnerable families. In their community work, the Sisters see that families can rarely afford proper food or access to school for their youngsters. This lack of education denies the children any hope of a better future and underlines the urgency of the Sisters' work.

■ There were 1,868 children at the SoM schools and day care centre in 2023. 767 at Villa de las Niñas (Girlstown, Zona 13), 1,016 at Villa de los Niños (Boystown, Zona 6) and 85 at the day care centre.

■ 487 new children were welcomed during the year into the three programmes and at the end of the year the Sisters extended their usual community outreach to the more remote communities including the heavily forested hills of Cahabon in Alta Verapaz¹⁷. These deeply deprived children will start school in 2024.



ACCESS TO A LIFE CHANGING EDUCATION

- Thanks to the kindness of our donors we were able to send 10% of our grant to Guatemala in 2023, totalling £156,422.
- 59% of this grant was spent on food and medicines for all the children, with the remainder spent on educational supplies, clothing, shoes, utilities and repairs.
- In 2023 the children had everything they needed to learn and thrive at school and for the newest youngsters who joined in January the opportunity was hugely emotional for them.
- The Sisters at Zona 6 reported that many of the new boys were overwhelmed to see the nutritious food that was available to them for the first time and so thrilled with their first new clothing, educational and sport supplies, colouring pens, board games, and sports shoes.



FOCUS ON EMPLOYMENT & INDEPENDENCE

The children at school all studied hard in 2023. They worked diligently, played hard outside of class and competed against their friends and peers, locally and nationally.¹⁸ In September, three girls at Zona 13 were recognised for their outstanding academic performance by the Industrial Bank of Guatemala.

Getting ready for the world of work, all the senior grade 12 children in Guatemala enjoyed a period of OJT during the year with the girls from Zona 13 doing internships at Banc Rural. Graduation was in October and 333 boys and girls graduated from school ready for employment or further education equipped and ready to work hard and help their families onto a better life.¹⁹



¹⁵ Sr Jasmin, SoM Guatemala Zona 13, 14th December 2023

¹⁶ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/guatemala/overview>, 2024

¹⁷ These remote communities were accessed with the help of a local company who provided helicopter access for the Sisters to reach the families and then transport for the 20 children who were offered places to reach school in January 2024.

¹⁸ Two girls in Guatemala won the Maths competition and represented the country in Costa Rica and in El Salvador, they also took first place in Guatemala's national Hockey competition

¹⁹ Two Guatemala girls secured permanent positions working in the Office of the National General Comptroller

COUNTRY FOCUS HONDURAS

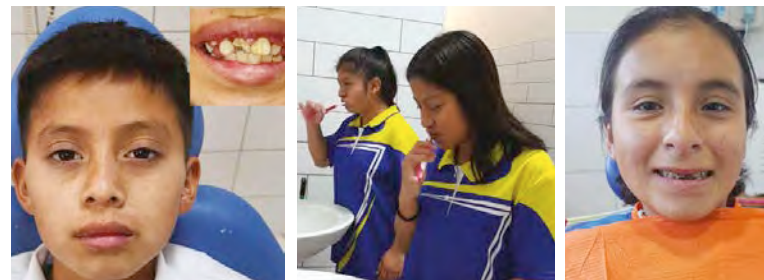


- Throughout 2023, the Sisters journeyed extensively in Honduras to connect with impoverished families, focusing on the rugged mountain regions of Comayagua and Lempira (which is known as the poorest department of the whole country).²⁰
- Children within these profoundly impoverished families face exposure to violent crime and exhibit the enduring effects of stress and deprivation, through malnutrition, stunting, and premature mortality. Poor nutrition has also affected their bone and teeth development and so when the children come into the care of the Sisters they are urgently in need of dental and medical intervention to support their recovery. This is a focus for our fundraising in 2024.
- From their community work, the Sisters welcomed 378 children newly into the school in January 2023 and cared for an average of 1,446 children in their two schools during the year. 690 at the girls' school in Tegucigalpa and 756 at the boys' school in Amaratéca. Following their outreach over the year they will strive to increase capacity and welcome another 435 in January 2024.



ACCESS TO A LIFE CHANGING EDUCATION

- Our generous donors helped us to send £129,346 (9% of our overall total) in total grants to the schools in Honduras. The majority of these grants (56%) were spent on food, medicines and medical supplies and supplements for the children. The remainder of our funds were spent on educational supplies (particularly supplies for the vocational training courses), clothing and school maintenance.
- In 2023, the new youngsters had everything they needed for school life and had a lot to learn. They struggled with Maths and Spanish but with additional teaching and the support of the older students they quickly caught up. Your funds ensured all the boys and girls enjoyed their time at school and had the full curriculum of accredited academic teaching which will prepare them for an independent life.
- Outside of class, the children at both schools grew strong, had fun and were energetic and successful in a variety of activities, competitions and challenges. The children loved their increasingly vital agriculture classes and had success with a bumper crop of mangoes for the school.
- The Tegucigalpa girls came second in the National Physics Olympiad and their soccer team took first place representing Honduras in the Central American games in Belize. In Amaratéca, the boys took first place in national competitions in science, soccer, basketball and volleyball.



The newest children suffer dental problems as a result of their early malnutrition



FOCUS ON EMPLOYMENT & INDEPENDENCE

In vocational classes, our Honduran boys and girls focus particularly on practical skills in computing, electronics, tailoring, welding and auto mechanics for which local jobs are plentiful. The SoM school training with experienced, qualified teachers, gives them a head start with employers who regard them as skilled and reliable. 54% of last year's graduates from Amaratéca are already in work in these roles²¹, earning a steady salary and helping their families.

In December 2023, 230 senior year students graduated from these schools and many are already working in roles with employers including Toyota, Sherwin Williams and Fruit of the Loom.

²⁰ In terms of Human Development Index <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/human-development-index#/indicies/HDI> which measures life expectancy and access to education.

²¹ Sr Liliana Martinez, SoM Amaratéca Update 23 Feb 24

COUNTRY FOCUS TANZANIA



- In 2023 there were 1,149 children and trainees from the most deprived regions of Tanzania in the care and education of the Sisters, 786 girls at school in Kisarawe, 148 toddlers aged 3-5 at the day care centre in Kiluvya, 100 young women per term at the training centre there and 115 boys at the new school in Dodoma.
- During the year, the Sisters travelled extensively to reach the most vulnerable children including to Morogoro, Iringa, Zanzibar, Mwanza, Kilimanjaro and Hombolo to meet girls and, for the first time, boys, in desperate need of a place at school. They met thousands of children.
- 43% of the Tanzanian population remained in extreme poverty in 2023²² deprived of the basics for survival particularly access to the protection and support of education. The majority of these poor families rely on farming²³ for their income but they were affected by drought through the year and heavy rains at the close of 2023 destroyed many precious crops.
- The boys and girls from these families were the focus for the Sisters and the priority for our care.



ACCESS TO A LIFE CHANGING EDUCATION



- Thanks to our donors we were able to send grants totalling £81,774 (5.5% of our total) to the Tanzania schools in 2023.
- Expenditure of the grants was spread across the array of needs of the children in 2023 including food, clothing, shoes, educational supplies, equipment for the kitchens and learning areas, and utilities so that the children had all the essentials needed to access a vital education.
- 2023 was a significant year for Tanzania with the opening and inauguration of the new school for the boys in Dodoma. The first 115 boys were welcomed and in September, the WVC team were thrilled to join the ceremony, meeting these new youngsters so grateful for their life-changing opportunities, courtesy of our donors. Professor Adolf Mkenda (Tanzania Education Minister) who attended the opening thanked those involved for *"offering privilege that would have been impossible for kids like these to enjoy. I can only say Asante sana, thank you very much."*
- Throughout the year the children at all the programmes were able to study and enjoy their time at school. The boys in Dodoma got straight down to their learning and the senior girls in Kisarawe, now in Form 4, passed their exams in November. All the children in the schools were happy and content, making new friends and enjoying a variety of activities and sports.²⁴
- The youngest students in day care also had a fulfilling 2023, enjoying their early learning, playtime, and nutritious meals supporting their growth, ready for primary school.

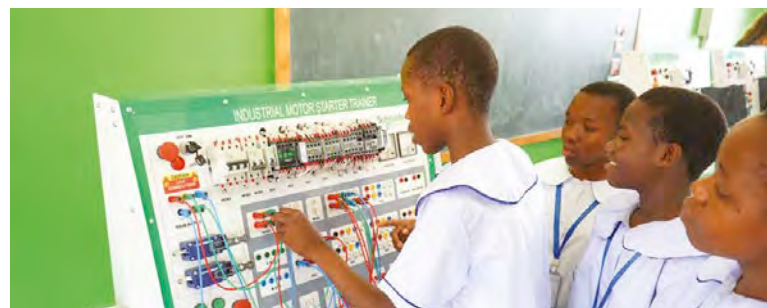


FOCUS ON EMPLOYMENT & INDEPENDENCE



Now in their final two years, the senior girls at Kisarawe will have 2 years of advanced study which includes specialising in VETA²⁵ accredited vocational subjects including electrical installation and solar technology, computer system services and tailoring. The Ministry of Education support and recognise the unique blend of academic and vocational studies²⁶ being offered at the school which equips girls for locally available job opportunities.²⁷

At the ladies training centre, two hundred young women completed vocational skills courses in 2023. Many have already secured employment in tailoring or baking, earning steady salaries that sustain their families, all made possible by the Sisters' efforts in establishing a network of new employers.



²² World Bank Tanzania Briefing 2024

²³ Sr Merry Jane, SoM, Kisarawe Girlstown, December 2023

²⁴ Kisarawe girls triumphed in the volleyball, basketball and netball regional championships

²⁵ Tanzania Vocational and Educational Training Authority

²⁶ Sisters of Mary, Kisarawe Update, December 2023

²⁷ www.worldvillages.org.uk/making-national-news-in-tanzania

THE STORY OF BARACKA TANZANIA



Baracka is 11 years old and lives with his mother in Hombolo village, on the outskirts of Dodoma. She has been severely affected by polio and is unable to walk. She found it challenging to work and raise enough money to feed her two children.

Now that Baracka's sister has grown up and left home, his mother supports Baracka by taking in sewing. Work is infrequent and so there is little money to support them both and Baracka frequently missed meals. There was no money to send him to secondary school.

The Sisters met Baracka and his mother in early 2023 and were troubled by their difficulties. He was one of the first young boys to be offered a place at the new school in Dodoma and he joined as the doors opened in August 2023. We met him in September.

In the care of the Sisters he is recovering from his difficult early life, studying hard, eating everything that we can provide for him and growing fast. He is a happy little boy, and loves his time at school, determined to pass his exams and be successful so that he can help his mother.

We were privileged to also meet Baracka's mother during a visit to his community and the pride shown by his mother at the progress of her son shines through.

Thank you for your help in making this life changing chance possible for this young family.



THE STORY OF DARELY HONDURAS



Darely is from Lempira in Honduras. She is 14 years old and she has two sisters, one of whom is her twin. She doesn't know her father and her mother left her when she was five to take a new life and start a new family. Darely went to live with her grandmother. Darely is also separated from her twin. At the age of 12 her twin ran away from their home and had a baby, when she was just 13 years old.

It was a difficult life for Darely living with her grandmother who cared for her deeply but there was never enough money for food and she was constantly hungry. Darely couldn't afford to continue school after 5th grade (age 10). Her aunt offered to help with additional schooling to grade 6 in return for cleaning and household chores. So Darely would wake early to do her housework and then complete her chores after homework in the evening.

Last year her grandmother told her about the mission of the Sisters and in November the Sisters were able to meet Darely. They were moved by her difficulties. Thanks to the support of our donors we were able to offer Darely a place at the Sisters' girls' school in Tegucigalpa. She joined them in January 2024.

Now that she is in the care of the Sisters, Darely is beginning to recover from her difficult start in life and thrive in the care of the Sisters. With the regular food at school she has overcome her terrible hunger and is growing fast. Although her education level is very low she is having additional teaching and support to help her catch up. She is happy at school, receiving special care from the Sisters and enjoying a childhood, making new friends and developing skills and talents which will give her a dignified, poverty free, independent future.

"Now that I am here, I am very fine, happy and contented, living and learning a lot of things. With a grateful heart, I would like to say, thank you very much for helping me and my companions and the Sisters of Mary School."




Your Impact

This year, thanks to our supporters we have

CARED FOR
20,897 

children who learnt the skills they needed to transform their lives

SUPPORTED THE SISTERS OF MARY TO HELP THE POOREST BOYS & GIRLS IN 6 countries worldwide 




ENABLED 5,393
 NEW BOYS & GIRLS TO HAVE A PLACE AT SCHOOL

HELPED WITH FOOD FOR 62,600 

meals a day so the children at school could thrive

PROVIDED
 FOOD, EDUCATIONAL & VOCATIONAL TEACHING EQUIPMENT, LEARNING SUPPLIES, CLOTHING, SHOES, MEDICINES & HYGIENE SUPPLIES, UTILITIES, SECURITY SUPPORT AND SUPPLIES, TOOLS, REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE

to help the long-term efficiency & sustainability of the schools



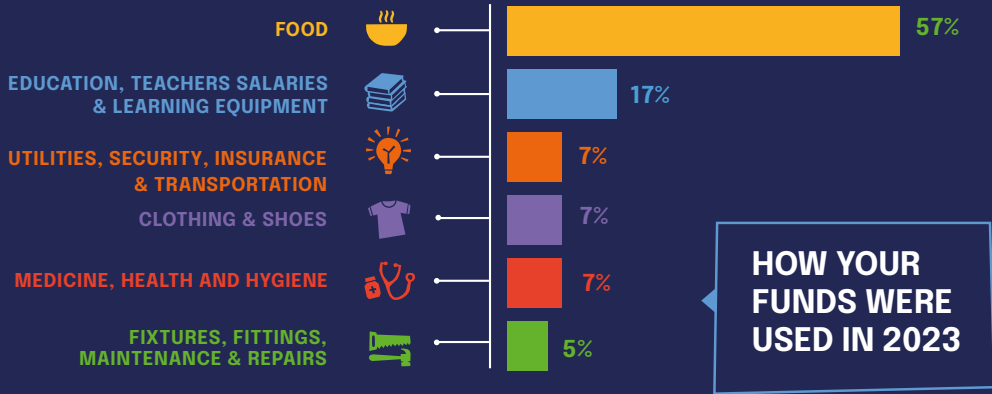



 **PROVIDED FUNDING TOWARDS**

13 SECONDARY SCHOOLS
1 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
5 DAY-CARE CENTRES
3 MEDICAL CENTRES
1 TRAINING CENTRE

HELPED 1,878 

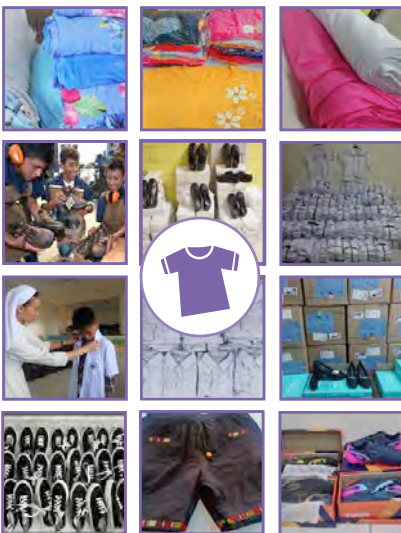
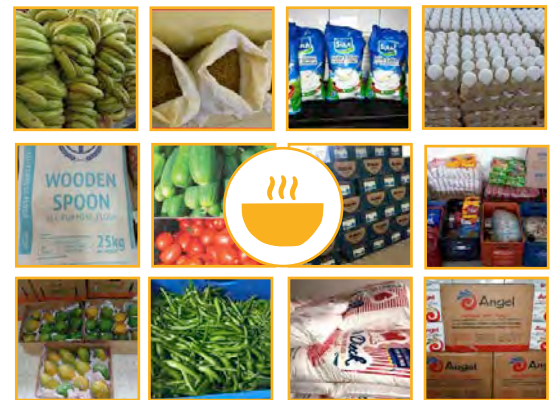
children to graduate from school into work or further education equipped and able to help their families and generations of their loved ones.

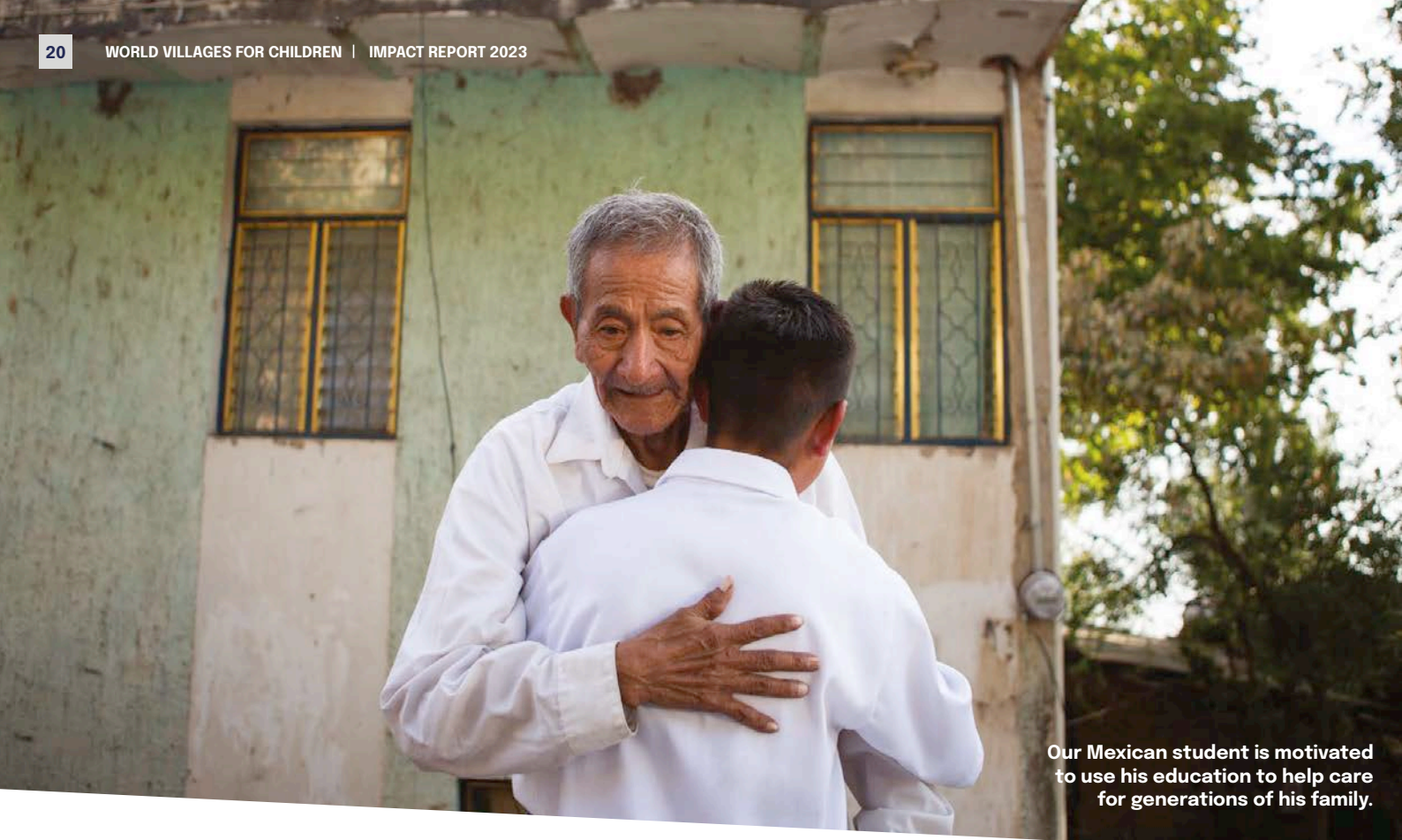


Your support helped us with the essential costs of caring for the children in 2023 including food, clothing, shoes, health and hygiene supplies and educational equipment and supplies. Without this generosity our work would not be possible.



The Sisters report monthly on their expenditure of your funds and these are just a fraction of the items you generously helped us to fund for the children during the year:





Our Mexican student is motivated to use his education to help care for generations of his family.

The Multiplier Effect



When we are able to fund a place at our schools for just one child living in desperate poverty it creates a profound and lasting change not just in their lives but for generations of their family and community members.

When the child is able to finish school with the skills they need to secure stable, fairly paid work they are able to build new independent lives for themselves and are strongly driven to help their families. They typically help with healthcare, housing, and medical support for families as well as paying for education for their siblings and sometimes generations of their extended families, lifting them out of poverty - permanently.

We call this wide ranging, long lasting impact on poverty relief at community level, the multiplier effect of your support.

Through their alumni groups like Gravini in Mexico, Asevigua in Guatemala and ASMSI in the Philippines, the young graduates also become a huge source of support for the Sisters and graduating children. They help with the Sisters' outreach work to new communities to connect children in need with the Sisters, they support the children in the schools with gifts and support, and connect new graduates with employers. Many graduates have now become large employers in their own right.



This is our graduate Johnny at his company with his employees, many of whom are graduates of the Sisters of Mary programmes.

The individual stories of our children, their journey from poverty to an independent, poverty free life and the contributions they are now able to make in the world convey the transformative power of the Sisters of Mary programmes and the impact of your support.





Our graduate Diana and her family

Diana's Story



Diana was born in Mexico City in 1996. She was raised by a single mother and spent time living with her mother in her grandmother's home. Her mother then remarried and had two more children. Both her parents worked very hard in a local flea market to care for the family but despite this there was little money and the children often went hungry. Diana didn't have much chance to go to school as she needed to care for her siblings whilst her mother worked, in fact her education had all but stopped when she met the Sisters of Mary in 2008.

The Sisters accepted her on the spot and she says: **"this marked the beginning of a new chapter of my life. I arrived in Girlstown in July/August 2008".**

Learning to seize and be grateful for every day, at school Diana made friends with girls from many states and had the opportunity to learn more about other cultures in Mexico. Her favourite subjects were English, Maths and drawing and she loved the food!



"the school was a very happy place, it was a wonderful place. Father Al built a beautiful place, I love the Sisters I love the food, I love the friends. This place, all the activities nurtures desires"

She finished school in 2013 and became a sales and customer services agent at Air Mexico and then Interjet, at the same time as studying for a degree in Graphic Design. In 2022, after several years running her own graphic design business she founded her first venture, Albbus, a collaboration with her husband who is a computer engineer. They joined up to establish a company, his expertise is in software and complemented her digital product design. They also have two children aged 8 and 6.

With the skills she learnt at school her life was transformed and now she has been able to help her mother with healthcare and her siblings with financial support for schooling. She also sometimes helps her grandparents and of course she continues to visit the Sisters and provide support for the new children in their care, paying back her original opportunity many times over.



Diana with Sr Margarita

OUR IMPACT DATA

In addition to the stories of the children that we collate and the lives that we follow, in 2023 we were also delighted to be able to report further results from a survey carried out amongst the graduates and alumni of the schools across the world in the Philippines, Guatemala, Mexico, Honduras and Brazil.

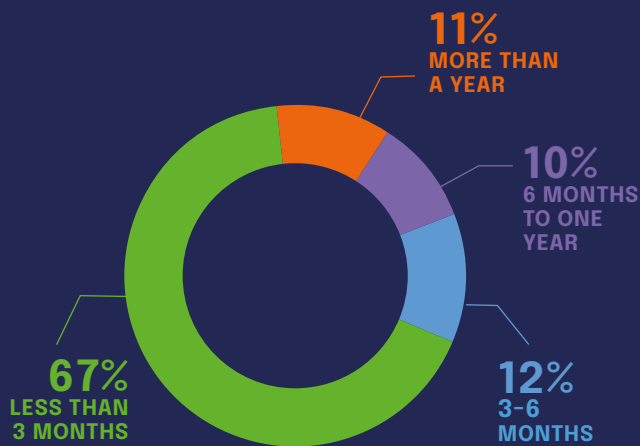
This new research which provides valuable insights on the outcomes of our work and the wider impact of the mission shows the fundamental difference our

supporters are making to poverty relief in these regions. As last year, we focus on the employment of the children who leave our schools as a key priority of our activity. Stable, fairly paid employment allows the children to build a dignified productive existence where they can help themselves and their families.

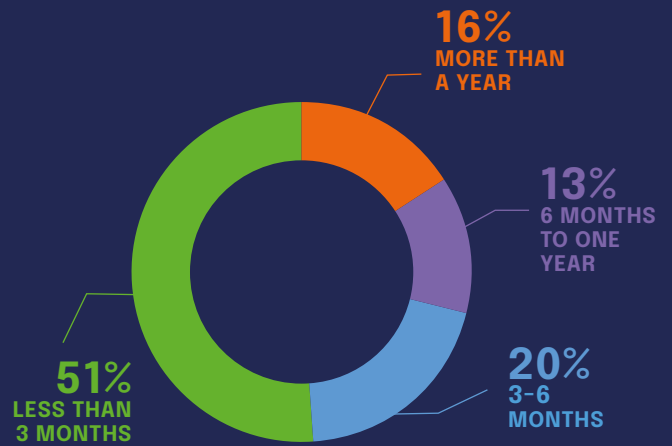
The largest graduate data set was received from alumni of the Philippine programme where there are the highest number of graduates.

89% of the graduates who responded on this revealed that they were fully employed by 12 months after leaving school. The majority of these young graduates, 67%, were employed less than 3 months after leaving the schools and many had job offers prior to leaving. We had more data in 2023 from the other schools and in Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Brazil similar trends are seen.

Q: HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU TO FIND YOUR FIRST JOB AFTER GRADUATING FROM THE SISTERS OF MARY SCHOOL PHILIPPINES?

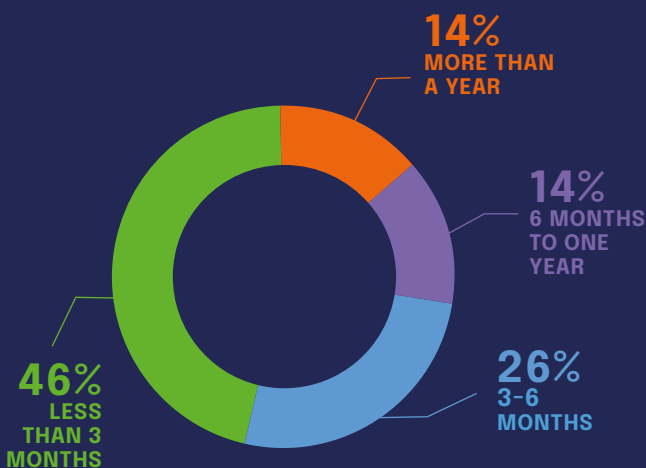


Q: HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU TO FIND YOUR FIRST JOB AFTER GRADUATING FROM THE SISTERS OF MARY SCHOOL GUATEMALA?



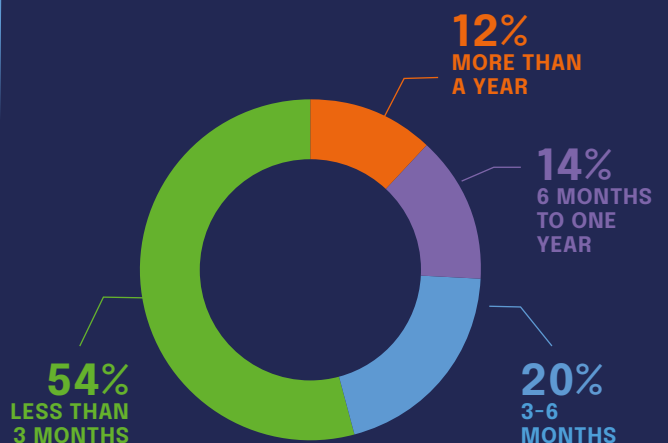
In Guatemala 84% of respondents were in employment within a year and 51% of these within 3 months.

Q: HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU TO FIND YOUR FIRST JOB AFTER GRADUATING FROM THE SISTERS OF MARY SCHOOL HONDURAS?



In Honduras 86% of the graduates were employed within a year with 46% taking less than 3 months

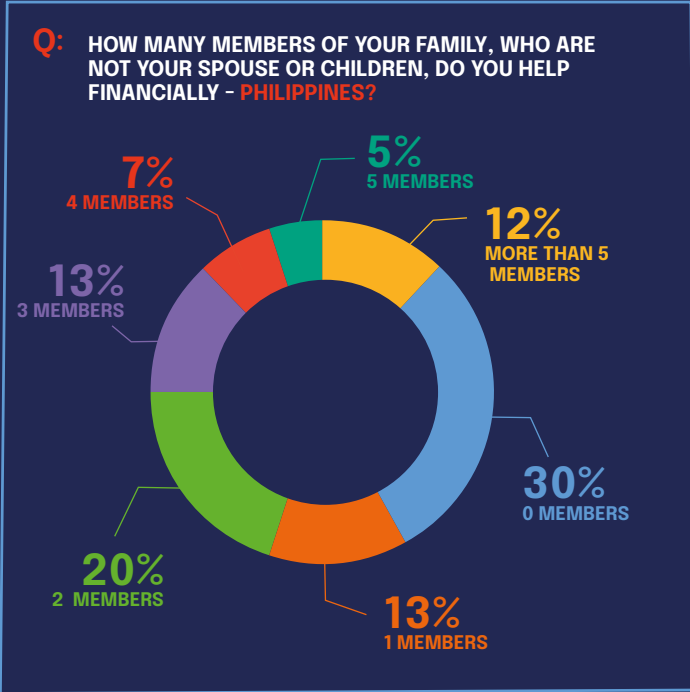
Q: HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU TO FIND YOUR FIRST JOB AFTER GRADUATING FROM THE SISTERS OF MARY SCHOOL MEXICO?



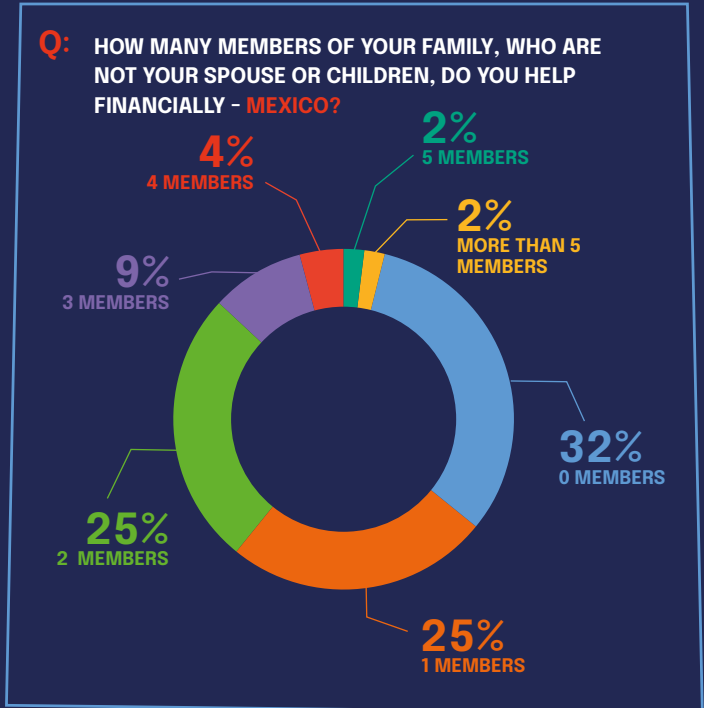
In Mexico, 88% of the children who graduated were in work within 12 months, 54% within 3 months.

OUR IMPACT DATA

When our children graduate from school able to find stable employment they are active in supporting their extended families. This lifts many generations out of poverty and multiplies the impact of your support many times over.



70% of these employed Philippine graduates are helping at least one member of their extended family with living costs, education, access to healthcare and housing being the highest priorities for help needed within the families, with 12% helping more than 5 members.



68% of those employed in Mexico are helping at least one member of their extended family with living costs, housing and education the key areas of support.

Gathering this data to measure our impact ensures that we are moving in the right direction. It shows that the outcome of educating a child is an improvement in the lives of families and communities. When children have the skills necessary for employment and secure stable jobs it means their families can afford proper housing, access to nutritious food, healthcare, education and a life which is profoundly changed for the better, permanently.





Growing crops in Adlas, the Philippines, helps to supplement the food budget and sustain the children

Financial Summary

INCOME for 2023 was £2,365,435. It was another challenging year for our fundraising due to the economic difficulties experienced by our donors. However we remain so touched by all the support we received, the new relationships made and the many sacrifices of our loyal friends who continued to give generously throughout the year to help the Sisters with the care of the children.

Despite the challenges, we were pleased to conclude the year ahead of our target by 15% and ahead of 2022 by 7.3% and to maintain our key efficiencies generating £6.48 for every £1 donated during the year and utilising 84% of our funds on our charitable activities.

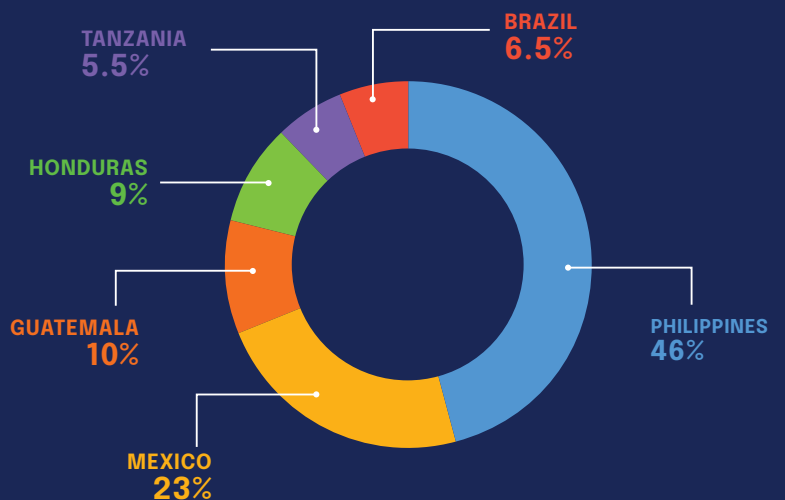


EXPENDITURE IN 2023



Expenditure in 2023 was £2,238,877, a 9.64% decrease on 2022. This represents a slight decrease in the grants to the Sisters but also savings across a number of cost centres in fundraising including response handling. Whilst maintaining investment for future fundraising but with better utilisation of existing resources we are pleased to record these savings, given the rise in the costs of some of our supplier contracts during the year.

OUR GRANT OF £1,500,000 WAS DISTRIBUTED IN 2023 AS FOLLOWS:



Our Plans for 2024 and beyond

Our annual planning and objectives underpin the mission of the Sisters of Mary programmes. In 2024 we will continue our focus maintaining and increasing the funds we provide to the Sisters so they can care for more children living in poverty worldwide. By building the profile of the charity and growing the momentum of fundraising across a variety of income streams, we will continue our focus on raising unrestricted income to be used across the range of needs of the children at the schools. Flexible support is crucial in their care as the cost of essentials like food is rising.

SUPPORTING WITH THE ESSENTIAL EVERYDAY COSTS OF CARE

Our priorities in 2024 are to support the Sisters in caring for the children currently in their schools and to help them welcome new children in need. We will particularly focus on provision for essentials like food, medicines, school supplies, teaching equipment and salaries. 2023 has seen a rise in the cost of food worldwide. Some essential components of the children's diet have risen by nearly 30% and the impact of this is keenly felt in all the schools where an average of 57,000 meals per day must be provided to the malnourished children who join us. Hungry children can't learn. We commit to providing every child with three balanced meals daily to help them grow and thrive.



PREPARING THE CHILDREN FOR EMPLOYMENT

Like last year, our focus in 2024 will be help for the Sisters to progress the children towards employment. We will raise funding for the specific academic and vocational training tools and equipment that are needed by the children to learn the new skills required by local employers. Across the 13 secondary schools, courses continue to evolve in response to industry needs. Up to date tools and equipment for training in digital skills, cyber security, care giving, agriculture, robotics, computer programming, solar panel installation etc are all desperately needed across all the programmes.

SUSTAINABILITY

Some of the 13 schools operated by the Sisters of Mary are now nearly 40 years old and require urgent repair and maintenance. In addition operating costs at the school, particularly utilities, continue to be an enormous cost burden. The Sisters have already started a programme of sustainable practices at the school aimed at maintaining the schools, lowering operating costs, optimising budgets and protecting the planet. We will support them with this including help with their new agri-farming initiatives at some of the bigger schools like Adlas.





Thank you

None of this life changing work would be possible without the generosity of our individual donors, regular Guardian Angels, organisations, churches, and Trusts and Foundations whose commitment and interest through the year have enabled us to continue caring for the world's poorest children.

We thank them all for their donations and grants to us in 2023 including:

- The Bryan Guinness Charitable Trust
- C&K Sommer Trust
- Cork of Ashbourne Trust
- Daughters of the Heart of Mary
- Diocese of Wrexham
- Ecton Trust
- Forest Hill Charitable Trust
- Gordillo Coleridge Charitable Trust
- Hall Hunter Foundation
- Living Water World Outreach
- Marsh Charitable Trust
- S&F Goodman Charitable Trust
- ShareGift
- Sherer Family Trust
- Souter Charitable Trust
- The Coles Medlock Foundation
- The Northern Trust
- The Tula Trust
- UBS UK Donor Advised Foundation
- Van Mesdag Fund
- William Jerome Charitable Trust





“After visiting the houses of the children here in Tanzania, I felt pain in my heart and I was really convinced to do more for these young generations. With your support we can continue to give our life to these poor. Thank you for this great opportunity to serve and serve with joy”

(Sr Margie, Sisters of Mary)

On behalf of us all, thank you to every one of our friends who takes the time to support us with funding for these boys and girls around the world. We can offer hope to these children and to their families because of the kindness that you have shared.



Ending poverty through education

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