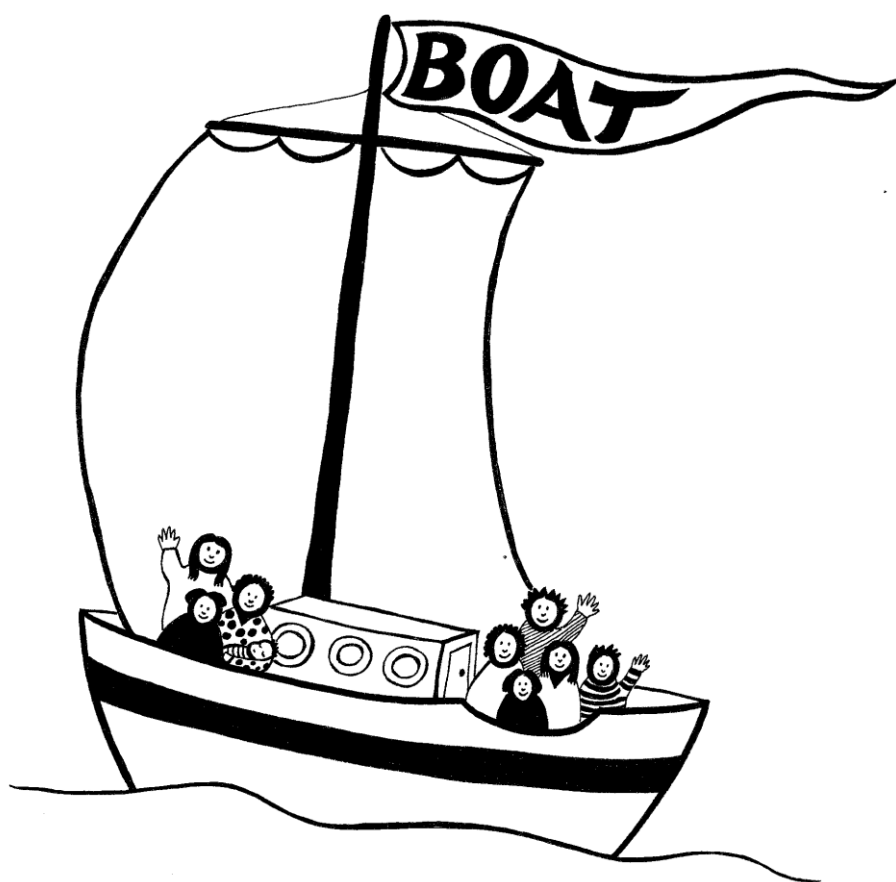


BLACKFRIARS OVERSEAS AID TRUST

Founded 1984 by Members of 9.30 Family Mass Congregation



ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS 2024

Registered Charity 288585

BOAT COMMITTEE

January to December 2024

Trustees (voting)

Geraldine Johnson	Chair of BOAT
Liz Oberle-Robertson (took over from Anna Lucas in 2024)	Secretary
John Thanassoulis	Treasurer
Filomena Nave	Asst Treasurer, <i>Brazil</i>
René Bañares-Alcántara	<i>Ethiopia (Zizencho and Arekit)</i>
Mick Conefrey	<i>Zimbabwe and Uganda</i>
Jenifer Dye	<i>Ethiopia (Mission of Hope) and Sierra Leone</i>
Helen Ghosh	<i>Peru (Lima and Ayacucho)</i>
Ag MacKeith	Annual Report, <i>Nicaragua</i>
Rosaleen Ockenden	<i>Uganda (Bulindi and Kigumba parishes)</i>

Committee Members (non-voting)

Anna Lucas	<i>Peru (Iquitos)</i>
Julie Lynch Bridson	<i>Myanmar, Philippines</i>
Rinaldo Caprotti	<i>Cameroon and India (Allapalli)</i>
Nicolette Michels	<i>Peru (Amantani), Uganda (Cancer Trust)</i>
Dominik Eynaud OP (took over from Augustine Chen OP in 2024)	<i>Jamaica and Rwanda</i>
Autumn Rowan Hull	<i>India (Sugandh)</i>

Italics indicate the projects for which members are responsible.

**Everyone in the 9.30 congregation has a part to play in keeping
BOAT's large fleet of projects afloat. We are very grateful
for the generous responses to our appeals for help and for our
community's initiative, skill and hard work in
raising funds in so many creative ways.**

Registered Charity No. 288585

CHAIR'S REPORT 2024

Dear Friends of BOAT,

The Constitution of the Blackfriars Overseas Aid Trust (BOAT) includes as one of its objectives 'the advancement of education.' Reading through this year's Annual Report, it is striking to see just how many of the projects we support – thanks to your generosity – prioritise this goal. As Sr Silvy, a Bethany Sister working in Ethiopia with funding from BOAT, put it: 'Education is a powerful tool that can improve individual lives. Your support educates, motivates and gives our students hope, helping them to rise above social and economic barriers to achieve success in their lives.'

A number of the groups that benefit from BOAT's donations are directly involved in providing safe, nurturing, and effective education, including the Bethany Sisters who run kindergarten and primary schools with nearly 1,300 children in rural Ethiopia. Also in Ethiopia, Mission of Hope, under the guidance of Sr Mary Joachim, educates the children of some of the most vulnerable women, many with a history of prostitution and often infected with HIV-AIDS. In Sierra Leone, the school we support in Koindu has had remarkable success, with all the pupils it prepared for national exams in 2023–24 passing, despite often being in dire need of such basics as shoes, uniforms, and books.

In Jamaica's August Town, a vibrant but often violent community, the Christ the King Basic School supported by BOAT has recently been asked by a government agency to expand its coverage to include two-year-olds. The school is now converting one of its rooms into a 'Brain Builders Centre' to allow even the youngest children to begin achieving their academic potential. In the Philippines, the indefatigable Sr Winnie Apao uses funding from BOAT to run seven pre-schools for the indigenous Subanen people with instruction provided in the local language, thereby helping to preserve native traditions alongside ensuring that the children develop essential skills.

Rather than directly providing teaching themselves, several BOAT charities help to lay the groundwork so children can learn effectively in the first place and then make the most of the opportunities afforded by their education. For instance, in Nicaragua, BOAT underwrites a pre-school with a focus on providing nutritious food for children so they can fully benefit from their education. In Myanmar, where BOAT in 2024 underwrote the installation of three new 5,000-gallon water tanks, a very welcome bonus has been that children who used to spend hours walking long distances to fetch water can now instead spend the time learning, with new schools set up to accommodate the demand.

A number of BOAT-funded projects focus on helping older students and young people transition to higher education and employment. In 2024, for example, the Amantani programme in Peru developed a new initiative that helps disadvantaged students from Amazonian and Andean communities succeed in their exams and then apply for much-needed government scholarships to continue their studies. Also in Peru in the San Benito area, the Warmi Huasi project likewise is working with vulnerable teenagers to help them continue their education and find employment.

The 2024 Lenten Appeal similarly focused on empowering girls from some of the poorest migrant families in New Delhi to achieve their potential in school and beyond by equipping a new Computer Lab overseen by the Sugandh charity. We can already see the impact our donations have had, thanks to these resourceful and resilient young women learning essential IT skills, as well as serving as powerful role models for the younger children who attend Sugandh's tuition centres.

We are able to support these and many other projects in Asia, Africa, and Latin America focused not only on education, but also on combatting the negative effects of poverty around the globe, thanks to your ongoing generosity through regular donations, responses to the annual Lenten Appeal, and contributions to our 9:30am Mass cafés – the latter also providing much joy to our own local community. Thank you for opening your hearts and sharing your resources to make all this possible.

I would also like to thank my fellow Trustees and BOAT Committee members for the care and effort they put into raising funds and communicating with our far-flung projects. I am particularly grateful to our Treasurer, John Thanassoulis, for managing our accounts so professionally and our Assistant Treasurer, Filomena Nave, for reclaiming over £16,000 in Gift Aid, as well as to Liz Oberle-Robertson, who stepped very ably into the role of Secretary in 2024. We are also grateful to Stefan Enchelmaier for taking on the crucial task of reporting on our accounts. Jenifer Dye and Joshua Dubin continue to provide lovely crockery for our cafés, complemented by Helen Ghosh's tablecloth-ironing skills, Autumn Rowan Hull's spectacular cakes, and Yinghui Carraro's fabulous breads. Gilli Robbins's weekly e-newsletter allows us to communicate with the Congregation about BOAT's work, and we thank Ag MacKeith for her skill in editing the Annual Report. Thanks also to the Dominican community and Br Dominik Eynaud for being so welcoming. In 2024, we established a new and productive connection with the Blackfriars graduate community through the efforts of Maura McKeon. But, as always, the most important thanks go to the dedicated, brave, and loving individuals 'in the field' who oversee the projects BOAT supports thanks to your generous donations.

BOAT's Public Benefit

All charities, including smaller ones like BOAT, are required to report on the 'public benefit' they bring through their activities and to describe how they have achieved their objectives.

Our Purpose

Under our constitution as a registered charity, which we updated at the 2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM), the purposes of BOAT are to 'provide support for the charitable activities of Christian parishes, organisations or societies, situated or working outside Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, in (i) the relief of poverty, and (ii) the advancement of education.' Everyone attending Mass at Blackfriars or giving to BOAT on a regular basis is regarded as a member of the Trust. The formal Trustees consist of up to ten people, elected each year at our AGM, with additional members of the Trust, together with the Trustees, comprising BOAT's Committee. A representative from the Dominican community – in 2024, Br Dominik Eynaud took over this role from Br Augustine Chen – also sits on the Committee, as a link to the Priory which is home to BOAT.

The Benefit We Bring

We have paid due regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance. Under our Principles for Giving, updated at our AGM in 2007, we have a very clear set of criteria for the projects we support and for assessing the public benefit that support will bring. On the key principle that we want our funding really to 'make a difference,' we aim to support relatively small-scale or grass-roots projects with regular grants of £4,000. Some funding will be one-off, particularly in the case of our annual Lenten Appeal. But in most cases, projects will be funded for three years and then considered for renewal on a rolling basis.

We always look for projects with some link to the 9.30am Mass congregation or to the Dominican Order. Although most projects we support have Catholic leadership or a strong Catholic connection, this is not a requirement, and we do not fund any form of proselytizing. We ensure that there is regular personal contact with our projects, partly so that we can identify priorities and needs quickly, but also so we can better help the Congregation and other supporters understand the challenges faced by the charities we support. We aim to help communities find long-term solutions to their needs, rather than short-term fixes, even if, from time to time, we do give money to help with emergency situations. As you read through this report, you will see that our projects fall broadly into three areas:

Health: especially primary health care and preventive medicine;

Welfare: especially for children, people with disabilities, refugees, and victims of war, poverty and violence or exploitation of any kind;

Education: particularly practical skills, women's education, and the provision of basic educational needs for children.

Thank you again for your support of BOAT in 2024.

Brazil

São Paulo da Cruz, Calvário Church



The Centre for Children and Adolescents (CCA) São Paulo da Cruz is in the district of Pinheiros, in the city of Sao Paulo. This area attracts many domestic and other non-skilled staff who travel long distances to work there, often leaving their children unattended, many roaming the streets while the parents work. At CCA, children aged 6 to 15 years old, from low-income families, are kept off the streets outside school hours. CCA operates two half-day shifts, as schooling in Brazil is only half-a-day. Healthy meals are provided on each shift, breakfast and lunch, or lunch and tea, for the children that attend morning or afternoon, respectively. The children are occupied with social, recreational and educational activities in



a safe environment that complement state school education. The skills learned at CCA give them a real chance to escape poverty. The families are helped too, through regular talks and workshops. CCA's manager, Mrs Ida Oliveira, sends us very detailed reports about the children's activities (examples shown in the photos) and their achievements, noting the beneficial impact of BOAT's annual donation on the quality of meals and the activities provided. As mentioned in a previous report, BOAT's 2022 donation was used to adapt CCA's facilities to improve accessibility for children with disabilities. The number of children could then be increased from 106 to 127, to include 28 children with a wide spectrum of special needs. In 2024, these included children with heart problems, Parkinson's disease, alopecia, digestive problems, Down's syndrome, attention deficit and hyperactivity, learning difficulties and various levels of autism. CCA worked with the families to co-ordinate medical treatment. Specific activities were designed to help these children achieve autonomy and improve social participation.

Filomena Nave

Cameroon

ARCH, Dibanda

The Associated Rehabilitation Centre for the Handicapped (ARCH) was founded in 1986 and provides professional rehabilitation services to people living with disabilities to enable them to become re-integrated into society. Some patients are disabled at birth or suffer birth trauma, others have developed disabilities or deformities because of malnourishment, disease or accidents. The centre has grown over the years. They now treat around 2500 patients, who come from the local community and from hospitals in the southwest region of Cameroon. Children account for nearly 50% of all the cases treated.

The activities range from preventing physical deficiencies and deformities, consulting and treating people with special physical needs, and counselling families and people living with disabilities to follow-up and follow-through activities for physically handicapped persons once they have been rehabilitated. ARCH also promotes, explains and furthers the rights of physically handicapped persons through local and national campaigns.

BOAT has supported ARCH over the years by providing funds to improve the facilities at the hospital, to increase food production used by carers and patients and to re-build their incinerator, now a modern furnace designed for burning hazardous materials and general hospital waste.



In 2024 we sent money for the purchase of a second-hand 4WD vehicle, which enabled ARCH to visit remote communities and treat handicapped people that otherwise would have little or no support. Their objective was to treat an additional 1000 cases a year – over 80 a week. In the five months since receipt of the new vehicle, they treated over 600 cases, nearly 80% of them children under five. The healthcare benefit for persons with disabilities living in remote villages is clear to see. The conditions treated ranged from spina bifida and cerebral palsy to acute injuries such as fractures and amputations... I was able to witness via video call two clinics held in a remote village, where a queue



of people waited to be seen (*see photo*). ARCH normally uses the local church and the primary school as the treatment/meeting points. However, as usual in critical areas, success brings new challenges. The dramatic increase in the number of patients treated means that ARCH now needs more funds to purchase

materials and tools for making assistive devices – potential projects for BOAT to consider in 2025.

Rinaldo Caprotti

Ethiopia

Zizencho and Arekit

The Bethany sisters from the Zizencho and Arekit communities send greetings and thanks in the name of the students and families of their schools.

The congregation of the Sisters of the Imitation of Christ, commonly known as Bethany Sisters, was founded by His Grace Mar Ivanios in Kerala, India, in 1925. The sisters started their missionary

activities in Ethiopia in March 2005, at the invitation of His Excellency Abune Musie Gebregheorgese, Bishop of Emdibir.

The Lord Jesus Catholic Kindergarten and Elementary School located in the village of Zizencho was founded in 2005 and currently has 550 students; the Infant Jesus Catholic Kindergarten and Elementary School in the village of Arekit is more recent and has 710 students. Both schools provide free education and other services such as school uniforms, stationery and clothing items, shoes, medical help, and food. (The picture shows mealtime in Zizencho.)

Both villages are very poor. For instance, there is no electricity in Zizencho and the children have to read and do their homework by the light of oil lamps. Around 75% of the students from both schools come from very poor families, and many are orphans living with their grandparents or other family members. In many cases they have to work in the afternoon to help their families by carrying water, collecting firewood, feeding animals, or selling produce and bread in the market.



Despite these enormous challenges more than 3,000 students have finished school over the years in Zizencho, and the first batch of 8th grade students is graduating this year in Arekit. Students from both schools are obtaining excellent results; for example, this year all the 65 students from Arekit who sat the Ministry Exam in 6th grade passed, two of them obtained 1st and 2nd position in the district, and the school got a good performance award. The impact of these schools extends to improvements in the village after many of the alumni attend higher education in various colleges and get good jobs afterwards.

There are many challenges to overcome: financial problems to maintain the operation of the schools, high annual inflation rates (23.3% in April 2024), ripple effects from the civil war in other parts of the country, high unemployment in the region resulting in internal migration from the country to the cities (mainly Addis Ababa), etc.

In the words of Sr Silvy: "Education is a powerful tool that can improve individual lives. Your support educates, motivates and gives our students hope, helping them to rise above social and economic barriers to achieve success in their lives. We thank our donors for their compassion and kindness, it has touched countless lives and will continue to enrich future generations."

René Bañares-Alcántara

Ethiopia

Mission of Hope, Gode

Sr Mary Joachim and a group of volunteers provide housing, basic healthcare and education to destitute women in a rural part of south-east Ethiopia. These women often have a history of prostitution due to the absence of any prospects for employment, and many are infected with HIV-

AIDS. Some have young children – who might also be infected. Due to the very limited social and medical care in this part of Ethiopia, these women and their children have no-one to care for them. Much of this work is done via the work of the Mission of Hope.

The armed conflicts in Tigray and Somalia, along with the general global financial climate are causing additional local economic hardships in the area that the Mission of Hope serves.

This year BOAT gave £4,000 to the Mission. Due to generosity of BOAT and other donors, Sr Joachim and her volunteers can continue to provide support to the local people. This includes the following:

- Pastoral, practical, and healthcare provision for approximately 30 women.
- Education of 35 pupils, aged 3–13.
- Provision of a floating water pump to secure clean water for those supported by the Mission and its volunteers.
- Medical and personal care and basic convalescence for ill adults in the local community, who otherwise would be left to fend for themselves.
- Medical evacuation of seriously ill people (adults and infants) for treatment/ surgery in Addis Ababa. One example of this provides a clear illustration of the way in which the Mission operates, and how donors' funds are spent. Out on errands one day in October 2024, Sr Joachim was approached by two men and a girl, Birtukan. Birtukan had a large growth protruding from her right eye; the local hospital couldn't treat her because of its limited resources. Sr Joachim treated the eye as best she could, gave Birtukan and her family some food, and arranged for her to go to Addis Ababa, to be treated (for free) by Dr Kjell in his hospital, the Nordic Medical Centre. But this also required Sr Joachim and her community to advise the family on how to obtain the documents they would need for the journey; to buy Birtukan and her father clothes and shoes to wear in much colder Addis Ababa (16C rather than Gode's 32C); to arrange their flight; and to host them overnight before their flight and go to the airport to help them check in.
- Running a training programme in weaving to provide the women with a bona fide way of earning money.
- Ongoing progress to develop the Mission's kitchen garden, including irrigation projects, to increase the sustainability of their work.

It is worth noting that the Mission's administration costs in the UK amount to less than 0.3% of its current annual income (the annual subscription for the website/domain name registration); and Sr Joachim's costs in Ethiopia were the equivalent of £66), representing less than 0.2% of total expenditure, and were incurred in visa fees, driving licence, and similar.

Sr Joachim provides an occasional and moving newsletter, *Fragments from the Frontier*, to which supporters may subscribe. BOAT's UK link is Miles Maxwell, Chair of the charity's Board of Trustees.

Jenifer Dye

India

Allapalli, Andhra Pradesh

Allipalli Mary Matha Boarding Home and School is in the diocese of Eluru, in the Indian region of Andhra Pradesh, one of the poorest regions in India. It was established in 1989 with 15 children.

Today, some five hundred children who are orphans or destitute are given free shelter, clothing, food, and education. The aim of the centre is to help the children build a bright future for themselves. They also support the inhabitants of villages close by. The activities undertaken range, amongst others, from running health awareness courses, providing free health consultation and food to running women empowerment programmes.

The main 2023 project, an additional water well, is having a major positive impact. All at the centre are very grateful, as they now have enough water for their needs, particularly during the dry season.

In 2024 the project supported by BOAT was the refurbishment and modernisation of their kitchen.



The preparation and handling of the food had been sub-standard and generated a large amount of noxious smoke. Now, there is a purpose-built cooking area containing modern catering equipment like stock pots, hot cabinets and a large vessel that provides hot water and steam for the kitchen. As per the water well, the benefits will be enjoyed at the centre from now on, as the new equipment makes the preparation of the food more hygienic and reduces the level of air pollution from cooking. In the pictures you can see the contrast between the old kitchen and the new one.

Currently, all the rubbish generated at the Centre is burnt in two open pits, close to the buildings where children live. Smoke from plastic, discarded medical material and similar is harmful to inhale. Therefore, the project for 2025 will probably focus on the safe disposal of waste material using a new purpose-built incinerator.

Rinaldo Caprotti

India

Sugandh, New Delhi

Sugandh charity is a grassroots organisation working in some of the most disadvantaged urban slums of Delhi. Sugandh seeks to transform the lives of marginalised women, children, and families through holistic community development and self-empowerment. Its work focuses on the neighbourhoods of Madanpur Khadar and Holambi Kalan, where it supports child education, vocational training for women, healthcare access, and advocacy for basic rights. Through tuition centres, Sugandh continues to provide free educational support, school supplies, and a nurturing environment for children in these areas.



In parallel, more than 1,000 women are now active in 88 Self Help Groups (SHGs), receiving training in tailoring and crafts, and accessing microloans to launch small businesses and support their families.

Thanks to the generosity of BOAT supporters, the 2024 Lenten Appeal made a transformative impact by funding the establishment of a dedicated computer lab for teenage girls and children. This initiative was developed in direct response to the community's own vision: that digital literacy is now essential for both academic progress and future employment. The lab, equipped with refurbished computers and accompanied by IT training, typing classes, and online safety education, is already empowering young women to pursue higher education and career pathways previously out of reach. These girls are now not only acquiring critical skills but also becoming role models for others in their community – a powerful ripple effect made possible through the appeal.



In addition to its education and training work, Sugandh continues to offer vital advocacy support. Its staff make thousands of outreach visits each year to help families navigate India's complex systems and gain access to entitlements such as ration cards, pensions, and school admission. BOAT's continued partnership enables this deeply compassionate and practical work to thrive, and we are profoundly grateful for the hope and opportunity it brings to so many lives. (The photos show the author and her family on their visit in 2024.)

Autumn Rowan Hull

Jamaica

Christ the King Basic School, Kingston

Christ the King Basic School, located in August Town, Jamaica, serves approximately forty children aged three to six years. This community, while vibrant and full of potential, faces significant socio-economic challenges and limited resources. Despite these hardships, the school is committed to providing quality education and essential support to its students, fostering hope and opportunity in an under-served area.



A key aspect of the school's mission is to provide warm, nutritious meals to its students. Many children arrive at school without having had breakfast, which severely impacts their ability to

concentrate and learn. To combat this issue, the school offers balanced meals, ensuring that every student begins their day with the nutrition they need. This initiative not only enhances the children's health but also alleviates some of the financial burden on families who may struggle to provide adequate food.

Thanks to BOAT's support, Christ the King Basic School has maintained some of the lowest fees in the area, which allows more families to afford sending their children to school. This affordability ensures that education remains accessible to all, regardless of financial circumstance.

In 2023, the school benefited from significant improvements to its facilities, including the installation of a new roof and the resurfacing of the playground with asphalt. These developments, made possible through BOAT's generous support through the Lenten appeal, provide a safe and durable environment for children to engage in physical activities. These improvements have enabled the school to host successful Sports Days.

The school has received a request from Jamaica's Early Childhood Commission to accept two-year-olds. In response, they are in the process of converting one of the rooms into a nursery, a 'Brain Builders Centre'. However, this room requires repairs to its ceiling. Furthermore, ongoing support is needed for necessary repairs to the fence and the refurbishment of a second playground area, where the slides have become rusted.

BOAT's support is making a transformative difference in the lives of the children and families at Christ the King Basic School. The generosity of BOAT helps to support and feed the children attending the school, to maintain its affordability, and to improve the school's facilities.

Dominik Eynaud OP

Myanmar

Living Water Myanmar

Bringing Life Through Water: BOAT's Support for Living Water Myanmar.

Since 2017, BOAT has proudly supported the life-changing work of Living Water Myanmar (LWM), a grassroots initiative founded in 2011 by Rosemary Breen. LWM funds, builds, and installs water tanks in the Dry Zone of Central Myanmar, providing communities with a reliable source of clean water.

Under the leadership of coordinator Soya Toe, LWM collaborates with local communities to identify villages with the most urgent water needs. With the help of dedicated volunteers, water tanks are constructed on the grounds of schools and health clinics. These tanks – owned and maintained by the community – capture rainwater during the monsoon season or, in some cases, store water from boreholes.

Beyond providing year-round access to clean water, these tanks have transformed daily life. No longer forced to trek for hours along dusty paths to fetch water from distant rivers or streams, villagers now have the time and freedom to focus on education and community development. The presence of water has even enabled the establishment of local schools, allowing more children to attend classes.

To date, LWM has built over 495 tanks. BOAT's 2024 donation funded the construction of three new 5,000-gallon tanks. Tanks 493 and 494 are for the community of Si Yin Zu, a village of 405 people from 110 households. Tank 495 is for the village of Tran Nga Gan, with a population of 680 people, from 210 families.

Although Rosemary is no longer able to visit Myanmar, Hayley Rodgers has been going in her stead to check on the most recent tanks.

Rosemary Breen expresses her heartfelt gratitude to BOAT supporters: "Thanking all those donors who have supported LWM down the years – it has been a miracle from that first water tank built in a restricted area of Myanmar ... to nearly 500! I wish you could visit Myanmar and see for yourselves what you have helped to achieve ... and the difference you have made in a forgotten part of our world!"

Julie Lynch Bridson

Nicaragua

Guadalupe, Leon

Our project in Nicaragua is a tiny preschool run along Montessori



lines by our contact Gioconda and her team. Five different organizations from Oxford to Hamburg have a part to play, and between them cover the salaries, costs of registration, accountant, bills, building costs, etc. Our part is the provision of a

mid-day meal, and it is much appreciated by the 29 children and their parents.

Family involvement in planning and preparation of the meals gives an opportunity to expand parents' understanding of what constitutes a healthy meal. Parents help with keeping the kitchen clean, which has a knock-on effect on home hygiene, and they are encouraged to allow their sons and daughters to lend a hand in the food preparation, building confidence in both children and parents. The children really appreciate the variety of what they get to eat, often unavailable at home because of the extreme poverty of their circumstances.

Here are a few comments from grateful mothers: "I have two children in the project, they are twins, and I thank those who help us with the snack, it is a great help for our family economy. Life is getting more expensive every day, and it is difficult for me to guarantee a lunch box for each one every day when they go to school." And "my daughter loves the project because she can eat healthy food and there is always fruit, milk, cereals. On weekends she wants us to give her the same food, but we can't afford it."

And from the children: "the food is very tasty. I like the milk with cereal, my grandma can't buy that, I live with my grandma because my mum and dad went to work in another country" (age 4 years old) and: "here in the project I have learnt to eat fruit and vegetables, and chicken. At home we only eat rice and beans, that's why I like my project" (age 3 ½ years old).

Our little school has been asked by the Nicaraguan authorities to register as a place of education. After much discussion, the Ministry of Education gave them the name 'Hypatia'. We rather like this name because in ancient times Hypatia was the lady warrior who guarded the entrance to the library of Alexandria. Registration must be renewed every year, and it is no simple matter as the rules are constantly changing. Many well-intentioned organisations operating in Nicaragua have gone under due to not following the registration process to the satisfaction of the authorities.

The infrastructure of the country (such as communications, roads, schools and hospitals) is now much improved compared to just a few years ago. However, the family economy is still very tight as you can see from the children asking for milk and cereal at home and the parents saying that they can't afford it. Furthermore, many parents leave their children with grandparents or other relatives while they go abroad to find work.

The children love coming to the centre where they can receive an education in a safe and secure environment. We are glad to do our bit to help, and long may the little school continue to flourish.

Ag MacKeith

Peru

Amantani

The Amantani project that we support in Peru has a stated mission of promoting inclusion and equality for rural Peruvians through opportunities in education, employment, and fair trade.

In Peru, there is a huge rural–urban divide in the quality of education and in access to tertiary education. Amantani's work is delivered in Cusco and Loreto where the need is great. Loreto is eight hours by boat to the nearest city, Iquitos, and in Loreto 85% of rural residents live in situations of poverty, 80% of participants are from indigenous Amazonian communities and only 5% of rural residents in Loreto study after school. In Cusco, 97% of participants are native Quechua speakers, 85% live below the poverty line, and in the communities where Amantani work just 10% of rural residents in Cusco go on to further education.

Amantani believe that everyone deserves access to decent education and work opportunities, regardless of where they come from. The team support passionate, resilient and talented young people, who have so much to give back to the world, working alongside them and their families to achieve their dreams.

We have reported previously on the 'Transitions Project' which supports young people from rural communities to prepare for life after school, continue their studies, and access fair/formal employment. The project has three main strands: 'Pathways'; 'Scholarships' and 'Employability'. 'Pathways' prepares young people in the last two years of school to study away from home and pass entrance exams, through personal development workshops and academic reinforcement. The workshops strengthen identity and resilience, as well as helping young people to develop the skills and knowledge needed for independent life. The 'Scholarships' Programme supports young people to access and complete tertiary education courses through providing financial aid and psycho-social support. It also involves parents at the youth hub. (The photo shows David and Ada on their graduation.) Amantani also offer a safe space to live in Iquitos, for students whose communities are very remote. The 'Employability' Programme empowers participants to enter the world of work through group workshops and individual tutoring. It helps them develop essential tools and supports them to find relevant work experience, as well as jobs after graduation. Last year's evaluation shows that 85% of project finishers are in employment, and that 86% of those who are working earn at least the minimum wage.

The Transitions project has been running for eight years, and has started to log how the Amantani project has affected the lives of the people it was set up to support. Some key achievements identified so far over this period are: over 160 young people have accessed tertiary education; 59 young people have completed their studies; 95% of parents have seen improvements in their children's confidence and social skills; 100% of graduates contribute to improving their families' financial situations. People now place more value on tertiary education, particularly for young women.



This year, the Amantani team have focused on working with their communities and partners to expand their reach. A new initiative this year is the 'Beca 18 Support Programme' which seeks to reduce the barriers preventing many young people from applying to the government's scholarships programme as well as helping final year students to apply for government scholarships. With Amantani support, 92 students from 51 Amazonian and Andean communities applied and took the government preselection exam. Of these, 22 passed and are moving on to educational institutions as part of the next stage in their journey.

Amantani also offer two further strands of support: 'Ethical Trade' and 'Meet My World'. The 'Ethical Trade' strand aims to support women in the fight towards equality against a background of illiteracy, domestic violence and limited earning potential. The Ethical Trade Project supports Quechua-speaking women from rural communities. It empowers them to strengthen their skills and build a more secure future, through the production and sale of artisanal products and personal development workshops. 'Meet My World' draws on the deep-seated cultural traditions of the indigenous communities that Amantani work with. It encourages young people to connect with and celebrate their cultural identity, sharing personal experiences through film and photography. During 2024, they

compiled photos and text that will be used to showcase their work in 2025, through exhibitions and a book.

As we can see the aims and work of Amantani stretch deep into the needs of the rural communities in Peru and it is a pleasure to hear of the impacts we help make possible. In a recent report from Amantani and from personal emails from Jenny, our contact, the Amantani team express warm and heartfelt thanks for our support in helping them achieve their mission.

Nicolette Michels

Peru

Apostolic Vicariate of Iquitos

BOAT has been supporting the work of Fr Miguel Fuertes of the Apostolic Vicariate of Iquitos since 2021. That was the year when, thanks to your Lenten generosity, BOAT was able to send £7,500 to Fr Miguel to help him in his mission to ensure young people in his “parish” were provided with solar-powered radios so they could continue with their education during the Covid crisis. Fr Miguel’s “parish” is in Amazonian Northern Peru and covers an area approximately the size of Scotland, with parts only accessible by river.

The following year, in 2022, the committee decided to support Fr Miguel’s long-standing fight to ensure that women and girls in the vicariate are safe, honoured, and able to lead full and dignified lives. BOAT’s commitment was renewed for a further three years in 2024: testimony to the committee’s understanding of the continuing and extreme challenges faced by women and girls in Peru (especially if they are of indigenous origin).

According to INEI (Peru’s ONS), in 2022, 55.7% of women aged 15 to 49 had experienced Intimate Partner Violence in their lifetime; this went up to 59.5% among women of indigenous origin. Another disturbing statistic: the number of femicides in Peru nearly doubled from 84 in 2015 to 146 in 2023. Of course, these numbers are far worse in reality: women and girls who join the ranks of the *desaparecidas* are not included in the femicide statistics; moreover, there is a commonly held view that violence against women is acceptable and normal, certainly not something to be reported to the authorities. Thus, according to an INEI survey in 2019, 33.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that an unfaithful wife/partner should be punished by her husband/partner, and 26% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that a wife/partner should never refuse sex to her husband/partner.

Human trafficking is another huge problem in Peru, with women and girls primarily targeted for sexual exploitation. According to a 2024 US Department of State Report on human trafficking in Peru, traffickers lure Peruvian, Venezuelan, and Bolivian women and girls to remote communities near mining and logging operations by promising lucrative employment opportunities; victims then find it impossible to escape and make their way home (and some, especially when their past lives are, if possible, more miserable, have no desire to return home). Indigenous women and girls, living in isolated parts of the country, are especially vulnerable to being trafficked due to marked economic and educational disadvantages as well as language and employment barriers.

Fr Miguel and his team have been tackling these problems for many years. *Proyecto Mujeres Loretan* runs workshops and discussion groups where women and girls are taught about self-esteem, Human Rights (women’s, children’s, and indigenous people’s), women as leaders, and women in business. Engagement with the wider community is also an important part of the project: raising awareness of the problems of violence against women and intrafamilial violence, and making such

violence unacceptable at a societal level. In 2024, 989 people participated in the various workshops and groups.

In addition, three lawyers are employed in the vicarial Office for Justice and Peace to give free legal advice on child maintenance payments, division of assets, protection orders, rape, assault, domestic violence, and other matters.

Dra Rita Ruck, a highly-respected lawyer who has been part of the team for over twenty years, writes that 2024 marked “32 years of service to the community of Loreto [Peru’s largest department]”. She reports that, as part of *Proyecto Mujeres Loretanas*, legal advice was given in 1,600 cases (of which



876 were new cases and 724 continuing cases). Of particular note are the 369 successful applications for child maintenance undertaken by the team. (*The Women’s Day float in the photo shows women who have fought for their rights with the Vicarial Office’s help.*) Fr Miguel writes that the legal office’s work “is given very positive recognition by the local population, manifested in particular by the 2024 case of the Leader of the Council of Maynas (Iquitos) who suffered domestic violence at the hands of her husband and who, instead of engaging a private lawyer (whom she would have easily been able to afford), came to our office to be defended by us – which we did with absolute dedication. Why did she come to us? Because of the lack of credibility of the state’s judicial system and the complete confidence which people have in our office and the service we offer.”

It is a tremendous privilege to be involved in Fr Miguel’s mission – albeit from afar. His energy and dedication are evident in all he says and does; BOAT could not ask for a more efficient and responsive project leader or a more inspiring example of Christian service to others.

Fr Miguel sends his greetings to our community: “Once again, thank you! – and we will work towards ensuring that the joy of the Resurrection reaches more people [...] we will continue to fight for the right to a life of dignity for all God’s children.”

Anna Lucas

Peru

Lima (San Benito) and Ayacucho

Despite his retirement last year, Columban Father Ed O’Connell continues to keep us in close touch with the great work done by the Warmi Huasi project, which works in the San Benito area of northern



Lima, and in the mountainous region of Ayacucho. BOAT has supported Warmi Huasi for many years, under Fr Ed’s leadership, and continues to do so now that he has handed over to the very experienced local team and returned to Ireland. The project is focussed on children and young people, providing safe and supportive spaces for reading clubs and libraries, homework and other after-school activities, in areas where the streets are not safe and there is a high incidence of domestic violence.

The project also enables and encourages the children and young people to take an

active role in local democracy to ensure the provision of the services they and their families need, using information collected from the children themselves in a survey called “My Voice Matters”. Fr Ed reports that in 2024, Warmi Huasi directly reached 1,540 boys and 1,960 girls, but that doesn’t take into account the wider communities who will benefit from the policy changes and safeguarding measures made by their district and provincial councils as a result of children’s activism. Giving these children and young people an early experience of how to bring about change is a sign of a healthy future for the community and the idea is being imitated at national and well as regional level.

Fr Ed has reported in past years on the devastating effect that the COVID outbreak had in Peru. He says that these last few years has seen the Warmi Huasi team, and indeed the children and young people themselves, tackle the after-effects of the two-year period of social isolation, which left a considerable number of frustrated children with behavioural difficulties and others lacking confidence and behind with their studies.

Warmi Huasi’s programmes to grow social skills have since helped the children enormously, as has the “Life Project” which challenged and encouraged teenagers to get on with the next phase of their lives, helping get them ready for higher education and/or work options. The project enabled the young people to return to structured educational services through something called the Alternative Basic Education Center (CEBA). This has given them the chance to improve their own quality of life and future prospects as well as that of their families.

Other highlights of Warmi Huasi’s work this year include information and awareness-raising activities aimed at teenage girls on sexual and reproductive health, with special emphasis on menstrual health care. These sessions not only contributed to improving their knowledge on the subject, but also encouraged self-care and well-being practices. And project workers have given local schools specialist advice on the inclusion and participation of neurodivergent children.

The range and impact of the work carried out by this project is so impressive. Fr Ed will be back in Peru for a visit this summer and has promised to come and see us at Blackfriars in the Autumn. We look forward to hearing more about the wonderful work of Warmi Huasi then.

Helen Ghosh

Philippines

Midsalip, Missionary Sisters of St Columban

For many years, BOAT has supported the Subanen Mission in Midsalip, Philippines, currently led by Sister Winnie Apao of the Sisters of St Columban. The Mission plays a vital role in empowering the indigenous Subanen people, providing access to education while also protecting their ancestral lands from the threats of mining, natural disasters, and unsustainable agricultural practices.

BOAT's funding directly supports the Mission's seven pre-schools, all now officially recognized by the Department of Education. Located in remote barrios, these schools offer culture-based learning in the local language to 194 students, ensuring the preservation of Subanen traditions while equipping young learners with essential skills. The picture shows a pre-school feeding programme.

BOAT's contributions also aid the Mission's Youth Programmes, which provide leadership and literacy classes for selected high school and college students, as well as youth camps for approximately 400 elementary and high school students. The Mission also runs seminars focused on empowering women to recognize their value, dignity and rights, while offering a safe environment where women can share stories and build friendships. At the forefront of the Mission's education outreach are their biodiversity and farming programmes, that teach sustainable agricultural practices such as composting, natural fertilization, and tree planting – efforts that help prevent landslides and preserve the environment.

The Mission is also deeply committed to defending the Subanen people's rights, standing in solidarity against destructive mining operations. It further fosters cultural pride and unity through celebrations on Indigenous People's Sunday and the Subanen Day Festival, where individuals of all faiths come together to honour and strengthen Subanen traditions, language and heritage. The Mission recently opened a new space called the School of the Living Tradition (SLT) where children come together to learn the traditional Subanen language, music, and dance. The SLT is committed to fostering unity within communities, whilst ensuring the Subanen culture continues to thrive.

A new member of the Mission's staff described the Mission's work.

'I've had the opportunity to witness first hand the Mission's efforts to promote culture and uplift those in need, especially the Subanen people. One of the most impactful experiences has been how the Mission supports the preservation and development of Subanen culture. I've also observed the Mission's holistic approach in helping the Subanen community, going beyond material assistance. The Mission offers knowledge on sustainable livelihoods, such as organic farming, which empowers the Subanen to become more self-



sufficient. Moreover, I've seen how the Mission organizes seminars, meetings, and educational programmes that focus on educating the Subanen about their cultural rights, laws, and heritage, giving them the tools to protect and advocate for their community. These experiences have shown me the vital role the Mission plays in both cultural preservation and community empowerment, and I'm proud to be a part of this meaningful work.' The Mission have sent too many vivid photographs of all aspects of their work for us to show more than a few of them in this account. The two photos above show interpretive Subanen dance, the upper one at the summer youth camp, the lower one with a message about preserving biodiversity.

In her Christmas message, Sister Winnie shared a powerful reflection on faith, perseverance and gratitude: '*A Song of Gladness* is not only a reflection of the season, but also a tribute to the hope, peace, and love that we are able to share through your generosity. We are filled with gratitude and joy as we look back on the year, and we eagerly anticipate all the good we will continue to do together in the coming year. I want to express my deepest thanks to each of you for your continued belief in our mission. Your support makes everything possible, and we are excited about the future we are building together. In the coming year, we aim to expand our educational programmes, reach more communities, and further preserve the Subanen culture. Care for the earth and hearing the cry of the poor is always our mission to carry on forward. With your continued support, we hope to make an even greater difference. May this Christmas bring you and your loved ones the same joy and peace that you so generously share with us and others. May the New Year be filled with abundant blessings, and may we continue to work together to make the world a brighter place. Rest assured of our constant prayers and thoughts. Once again, *Gembegal Palad-palad*, thank you very much. More power and may God bless you all."

Julie Lynch Bridson

Rwanda

Network For Africa

Network for Africa helps the survivors of the Rwandan genocide through a programme of economic empowerment and mental health support, in collaboration with Survivors Fund Rwanda (SURF) in both aspects of the programme. SURF's counselling team run peer-counselling sessions that have a significant impact. Each two-hour session allows individuals to share their experiences in a confidential and supportive environment. The counselling promotes resilience, self-esteem, and a focus on positive life aspects. Testimonials, such as this one from KM, illustrate the programme's efficacy. KM, who lost her family during the genocide, expressed how participating in group counselling, along with securing a microloan for her business, had helped her focus on healing self-care and gave her a new determination to succeed.

In 2022, it became clear that addressing the economic challenges faced by participants was crucial for sustainable recovery. With BOAT's support, SURF launched an entrepreneurship training programme, integrating it into the existing peer-counselling framework. This programme not only provides essential business skills but also enables small businesses to access loans that enable them to get started.

Participants receive comprehensive training, covering essential topics such as business planning, market analysis, and customer care. As of 2024, 713 graduates from the peer-counselling programme have completed the entrepreneurship training. No less than 229 of them submitted business proposals to microfinance institutions. The loan initiative has facilitated access to funds for 99 participants so far, enabling them to launch various businesses, including restaurants, coffee shops, and service-based enterprises.

Entrepreneurship serves as a pathway to economic self-sufficiency for survivors, fostering a sense of dignity and community.

The participants are not only able to generate income but they also contribute to local economies, creating jobs for themselves and others. The collaborative nature of many business initiatives helps rebuild social networks that are vital for psychological healing.



The results of the combined counselling and entrepreneurship programmes have been remarkable. A survey conducted by Network for Africa indicated that participants experienced a dramatic decrease in feelings of despair – dropping from 82% to just 8% after completing the counselling course. At the same time, the percentage of individuals struggling with traumatic flashbacks diminished from 72% to 8%.

Dominik Eynaud OP

Sierra Leone

Koindu

2023/24 was the sixth year in which BOAT has supported this orphanage in the north-eastern Kailahun district of Sierra Leone. Founded and run by Mary Sesay, the orphanage takes in local children, many of whose parents had died from AIDS and were denied support from family or other sectors of the community because of the stigma attached to their parents' illness. The orphanage now also takes many children who have been abandoned for other reasons, and are subject to abuse or neglect in their domestic settings. Many have multiple needs, including impaired vision and hearing problems. Due to the orphanage's reputation, the number of children placed there continues to grow.

Sierra Leone is a desperately poor country, its poverty exacerbated by the international financial crises which have also affected the UK. Abandoned or orphaned children are among the most vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone. The orphanage struggles on a daily basis to provide the basics for the children



who live there. Our money makes a real and fundamental difference to the lives of these children. Readers may recall that previous BOAT donations helped to build a well, build and furnish a dining room,

fence off the orphanage compound; to provide food, cutlery, and medical supplies; to pay for medical bills, uniforms, textbooks, pens, exercise books, extra lessons for those taking public exams, monitors' allowances, transport costs, Christmas entertainment and daily breakfasts.

Our donation to Smile With Us last year was £4,000. Over that year, the orphanage continued its mission despite a number of challenges. At present, the orphanage's school (open also to non-resident children) has ten teachers, only four of whom are fully qualified; but none is paid a salary by the government. The volunteer teachers receive some donations by way of incentive, given by some parents via Parent-Teacher Association meetings. Our money supported one of the teachers with college fees for a year. Others are waiting for the same opportunity, and BOAT's donation was used to pay for the volunteer teachers.

Nevertheless, the school continues to improve on its remarkable results. In 2023/24 the school sent 19 pupils to sit the National Primary School Examination (NPSE) and all of them made it through. (In the previous two years, 13 and 16 candidates respectively achieved this standard; in 2022/23, Smile With Us was rated among the best-performing schools in the district.)

The school's success means more children attend, so that it was overcrowded and lacking in classroom accommodation. This year's BOAT sponsorship was used to construct a new classroom. There are 85 vulnerable children in the school, in dire need of footwear, uniforms and books. Our gift was spent in providing uniforms and shoes. The Headteacher has also requested a laptop and printer to prepare the children's report cards at the beginning of the academic year.

BOAT's sponsorship has enabled the creation of the school garden. Its harvest fed the children during their long break. Afterwards, as it was not possible to provide the children with home-grown breakfasts, BOAT's money was spent on food and condiments, as well as continuing to tend to the school garden.

BOAT communicates with the orphanage via a WhatsApp group and we receive information particularly from Tamba and Timothy, the social workers involved. They say they continue to be proud of the school and orphanage, and that there are always positive stories in the life of the children. They told us of the children's happiness when they shared with them the news of BOAT's continued support, and all involved at Smile With Us send their best wishes to us and all our families. They write: *They're sending their love and appreciation to the Boat family in the UK. ... Thank you and we love you all.*

Our UK link to the Smile With Us Orphanage is Penny Boreham, a producer, presenter and writer, who works for the BBC World Service. Penny has longstanding links in Sierra Leone and knows the orphanage well.

Jenifer Dye

Uganda

Cancer Trust

Uganda Cancer Trust (UCT) is a UK based charity, supporting cancer treatment, education and care in Uganda. Our donation makes possible the critical role of the palliative care nurse Liz Nabirye. As clinical lead of the palliative care team she has a vital role to play in supporting patients, carers and the team. In addition, Liz provides important mentorship to the work of volunteers, who have grown in number and significance over time, and are now increasingly involved with children and their needs.

Under the mentorship of Liz, five volunteers now form part of the UCT's multidisciplinary team and actively offer support to patients that is practical, psychosocial and spiritual. Each volunteer comes twice a week for 4-5 hours, depending on the needs of patients. To give a sense of the scale of support they provide we are able to share that every month the team provides each of the following services some 20 times: Psychosocial Assessment; Counselling and Emotional Support; Communication and Facilitation; Collaboration with Healthcare Teams; Education and Advocacy; Spiritual Care and Support. In addition, they conduct some 140 follow-up calls to patients and their families. The volunteers also bring joy through activities such as organizing Christmas hampers for patients and their care-givers and celebrating events such as World Hospice and Palliative Care Day with children on the paediatric oncology ward as shown in one of our photographs.

Liz reports movingly on her pride in the team at MMPCU which, although small, is becoming increasingly skilled. A rewarding aspect of being involved with the team over the years has been seeing them grow in confidence and capability, and hearing feedback from the institutions they work with showing the high regard for the work they do. Some of the volunteers have gone on to train specifically in social work, while those with clinical backgrounds are taking Masters degrees or being involved in research programmes relating to palliative care. Funds to continue with such studies, of course, remain a challenge for these individuals.

Illustrating the increasing focus on the care for children with cancer, Liz explains that the volunteers in particular expressed desire to be able to do more to support children having long periods of treatment in hospital. Little things could improve their quality of life such as occasional treats, or extra meals, airtime to connect to family or friends, or art materials or stories to amuse them. The team have agreed a fund specifically for children, to be spent at their discretion. They also highlighted that children can be desperate about missing long periods from school, so UCT's latest appeal is to raise funds for educational support to provide access to online classes or educational games and possibly even dedicated teaching if appropriate. We will keep close communication via Liz and Michael to see how this progresses.

In addition to clinical lead of the palliative care team and mentor for volunteers, Liz Nabirye also acts as information officer. She writes in a recent update about the importance of providing access to appropriate information to alleviate the devastating sense of uncertainty, fear and loss that a diagnosis can have on the physical and emotional wellbeing of patients', and hence their treatment and outcome. Access to information enables patients and families to make difficult decisions regarding the treatment options and potential side effects, and improves the quality of life, not just of patients, but of families too. Communicating with the patients about their lives and wishes during hospitalization and afterwards is one way of empowering the patient and enabling them to feel autonomous and respected. As Information Officer, Liz bridges the information gap for patients, as well as working alongside the social work volunteers to offer mentorship and clinical modelling in aspects of communication especially with children and bereavement support. Liz also advocates for patient's wishes with the primary teams.

It is always a privilege to act as BOAT link person with UCT and with trustees Michael and Liz Minton, and always humbling when without fail every time we communicate there is heartfelt gratitude expressed for our donation that enables the work of nurse Liz Nabirye and her wider team.

Nicolette Michels

Uganda

Church of St John the Baptist, Bulindi

Father Sebastian writes with news of his parish and with further details of the mosquito net project. He reports that this second phase of the project has been successfully completed. The price of good durable mosquito nets has risen since the previous year because of the high demand. This year's grant provided 617 mosquito nets. Malaria is still rampant in the area and remains a deadly threat. Particularly susceptible are new-born babies, expectant mothers, especially in the early stages of pregnancy, and mothers in labour, so the majority of nets are allocated to women. A slight decrease in malaria cases has been noted this year among the parishioners, despite its continued prevalence in the area, and this is thanks to the provision of mosquito nets. Malaria lessened in June, July and August. It has intensified since September and this increase will continue until December, due to the heavy rains they are experiencing. Because of the floods there is a lot of stagnant water, an ideal breeding ground for mosquitoes.

Within the parish of Bulindi there are 17 chapels or out-stations, and every chapel is administered by a Catechist. The Catechist can contact or be contacted by people living in each out-station who need a mosquito net, who are poor and vulnerable, or are pregnant, about to give birth or have young babies. They can then go with the Catechist to Father Sebastian's office on Tuesdays. 250 mosquito nets were given to expectant mothers, and 300 nets to breast-feeding mothers and those in the first months of pregnancy. Mosquito nets have also been provided for single mothers caring for families and for 30 elderly women and 37 children. Some people in great need who have not yet received a net are hoping to be given one next year.

The mortality rate in the parish due to malaria decreased slightly this year. Between June and October 31 parishioners died from malaria, of whom 18 were babies, nine were expectant mothers, and four were elderly. In addition, 146 parishioners were admitted to various local hospitals. Without the mosquito nets, the death toll and the rate of illness would have been much higher. The treatment of malaria in the health units continues, but is prohibitively expensive for many, as a dose of quinine and Panadol costs UGX140,000, the equivalent of £30 sterling. Catechists do a great job following up all those who are beneficiaries of the BOAT mosquito nets and ensuring that the nets are washed frequently with Omo detergent and mended if damaged. The parishioners are very grateful to BOAT for this project and there are still many who hope to benefit from mosquito nets next year.



Karungu Convent, Kigumba

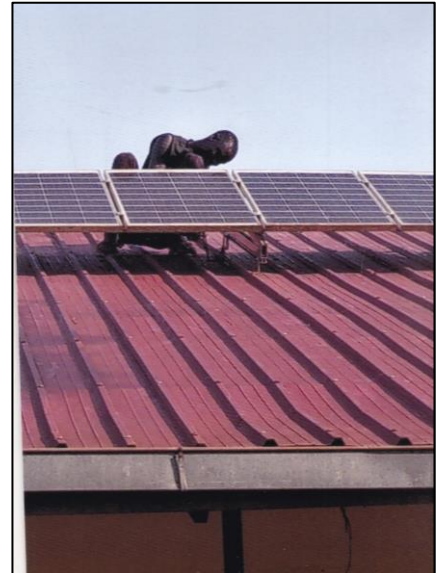
Sister Clemensia writes from Karungu Convent to report on the completion of the second year of the project to instal solar panels to provide lighting for the three buildings of the Karungu Community. The first year provided solar lighting for the Infant Jesus Nursery and Primary School. This year it was the turn of the Health Unit, a vital part of the community. All those living in and around Karungu are treated here when they are ill, including the sisters in the convent and the children in the school, as well as the displaced people from northern Uganda.

In March 2024 the technician visited the Health Unit and listed all his requirements for the work and gave an estimate for the costs. In April all the items which needed to be bought in Kampala were confirmed and ordered. Three new original 75W panels were ordered, as these are more durable than second-hand ones, and six heavyweight batteries and all the accessories. In May the components were delivered according to plan. In June the work started and continued until the solar system was installed and then the technician spent four weeks monitoring and testing the efficiency of the system. By August solar energy was already being used in the Health Unit.

The provision of reliable energy has transformed care for the patients. Now there is power at night providing light and making dangerous hurricane lamps unnecessary. The patients now have adequate light if they are admitted overnight, and doctors and nurses have electric power to continue their work. Patients can be monitored effectively by nurses and treated by doctors. Electric power is constant and dependable, so the refrigerators work reliably. Vaccination is available, because vaccines can now safely be kept refrigerated. In addition, there are now security lights operating at night and this deters thieves.

The whole village of Karungu and our convent plus the schools around are very grateful to BOAT because the Health Unit cares for everyone and everyone benefits from the new source of light and power. The third and final year of BOAT's grant for this project will come in 2025, when our Convent will have solar panels fitted and will benefit from solar electricity.

Rosaleen Ockenden



Zimbabwe and Uganda

African Mission

African Mission is a well-established small charity, which has been running now for just over 20 years. They had a challenging year in 2023, losing a major donor and around one third of their income, but things improved in 2024.

There are two aspects to their work: medical training in Uganda and supporting schools in a Franciscan mission at Fatima in Zimbabwe. Over the years most of our money has gone to Zimbabwe, but a few years ago we gave them a one-off grant towards a portable anaesthesia kit, which is now in use in Uganda. In Zimbabwe, the main expenditure is to cover the living costs of 23 young people with special needs, whose disabilities ranged from Downs Syndrome to deaf-mutism. Disabilities make lives difficult everywhere but particularly so in rural Zimbabwe, where in the past these children have lived very impoverished lives.

African Mission's aim is to both educate and maintain their children whilst they are with them, and to prepare them for life post school. Though for some of them it is always going to be difficult to get jobs, a number have gone on to work as builders and helped at the Mission.

In a country where power cuts are now regular, they have put a lot of emphasis on increasing self-sufficiency. Our money has helped support a vegetable garden and a new chicken coop. They are also trying to establish a piggery and now have 90% of the money to make that happen. They have also invested in solar panels for their water pump, which has proved to be a wise investment.

We have been supporting them for many years, and in that time they have made great progress, though the need remains high.

Mick Conefrey

2024 Lenten Appeal Project

Computer Lab for Sugandh



Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of the Blackfriars community, the Lenten Appeal of 2024 raised £9,508.10 in support of the Sugandh charities vital work with marginalised girls and children in the most deprived regions in New Delhi. These funds have established a dedicated computer lab, providing crucial digital literacy training to teenage girls and children. In a world where computer skills are essential for education and employment, this initiative will and already has opened doors to academic advancement and future career opportunities. Beyond the lab, Sugandh's integrated approach ensures broader impact to directly address educational inequality, and the educational **project has** equipped women with literacy and rights awareness to create sustainable change through education.

The Lenten Appeal's success reflects the 9.30 community's deep commitment to global justice and empowerment. By investing in these young women, we are not just funding computers – we are nurturing confidence, breaking cycles of poverty, and empowering future leaders. The ripple effects will be profound: educated girls and children become role models, skilled women uplift families, and entire communities grow stronger.



Autumn Rowan Hull

BOAT Greetings Cards

This year, these raised £466, about half the sum raised last year, and rather less than in previous years. The reason, we believe, is the exorbitant price of stamps, which now cost more than the cards themselves. But the card factory is a social occasion, and the team take comfort from the understated

but effective publicity BOAT gains from our efforts. We would welcome more hands to stick the boxes, once the mounts have been printed and the cards trimmed to fit. Many thanks to those who created, packaged and sold the cards, as well as to Joshua Dubin and Jenifer Dye who generously funded the costs.

Ag MacKeith

BOAT and Blackfriars MCR

Members of Blackfriars Hall's graduate student community (MCR or Middle Common Room) started supporting BOAT's activities in October 2024. Some of our students took part in a mammoth baking session, organised by Theology student Anna-Wera Wilms, for the BOAT Advent Café, during which we made dozens of German Christmas cookies, as can be seen in the photo. Our students have also attended BOAT's monthly meetings to maintain a close link between the organizations. We look forward to continuing our support for this excellent charity as part of the Blackfriars family.

Maura McKeon, DPhil candidate and Blackfriars MCR Link to BOAT



Reserves policy and risk management

The Trustees' policy is to maintain reserves of approximately £24,000. This sum is sufficient to meet emergencies by covering the outlay for the entirety of two projects. It provides a buffer so that even severe changes in our financial conditions can be cushioned for the projects that we support.

Risk Management

In the light of the Trustees' desire to deliver funds to good causes as expeditiously as possible, any surplus cash is held on a bank deposit until needed. The Trustees monitor the level of cash held and would review this policy if the levels of cash held were to increase significantly.

Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements

Law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs and the charity's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed subject to any departures disclosed or explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare financial statements on the going-concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue its operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 1993. The Trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity, and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

By order of the Trustees

Signed: **Geraldine Johnson,**

BOAT Chair, for and on behalf of the Committee of BOAT

9th May 2025

Treasurer's Report on the Statement of Financial Activities for the Year ended 31 December 2024

I am delighted to report that BOAT has again finished 2024 in good health and is getting the money generously donated out of the door and to the poor who need it as fast as possible. In 2024 we received £85,591 and we were able to send all of this out, plus a little more so that our reserves are at the level we target. Thus £92,610 went out. This is only possible because of the generosity of our donors and so on behalf of the many people we help in education, health and wellbeing in the developing world – thank you.

The incoming resources are predominantly received through monthly direct debit donations (£55,738). The next largest contribution is from gift aid: £16,378. Filomena Nave organises our gift aid and it is clearly very valuable. Next some donations are received reserved for particular projects. In 2024 most of this (£9,508) was for our Lenten Appeal which was for the Sugandh Foundation. We also received donations reserved for Operatori de Pace in India.

Our costs continue to be as low as it is possible to get. All of us are volunteers and so there are no salaries. We have to pay the bank charges to send money overseas (£290) and we pay to print the annual report (£312). Everything else is given to the causes we support.

We continue to have a rich interaction with the 9.30 congregation at Blackfriars, many of whom support BOAT. This is evident in all of the events that we run: Harvest Auction, Christmas café, Mothering Sunday café, and the summer café. There are a team of volunteers, with Ag MacKeith and Josh and Jenifer Dubin prominent among them, who sell cards in aid of BOAT and so allow even more people to hear of us.

Finally, I am honoured to be able to play my part in getting the sums we raise to the projects we support. This year there were 19 projects, all of which received at least £4,000. In some cases, they received even more for specific capital projects (e.g. a medical assistance truck for ARCH Cameroon). My colleagues work hard to follow the story of that money and how it is converted into good works. Stories you can read in this report.

Thank you for your generosity and with prayers of kindness,

Signed: John Thanassoulis

BOAT Treasurer

Further Reference and Administrative Information

BOAT address: Blackfriars Priory, 64 St, Giles, Oxford. OX1 3LY

Bankers: Lloyds Bank, Carfax, Oxford. OX1 4AA.

Charity Number:288585

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the Blackfriars Overseas Aid Trust ("the Charity")

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year to 31 December 2024 which are set out on the following pages 27 to 32.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under Section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act") and that an Independent Examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- ◆ Examine the accounts (under Section 145 of the 2011 Act);
- ◆ Follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act;
- ◆ State whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes considerations of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

I am therefore happy to declare that in the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 44(1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations;
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulationshave not been met, or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: **Stefan Enchelmaier**

23rd March 2025

BLACKFRIARS OVERSEAS AID TRUST

Balance Sheets as at 31 December 2024

	2024	2023
	£	£
Current Assets		
Cash at Lloyds Bank	26,047	33,066
Net Current Assets	<hr/> 26,047	<hr/> 33,066
Total Assets	<hr/> £26,047	<hr/> £33,066
 The Funds of the charity:		
Restricted Income Funds	-	
Unrestricted Income Funds	26,047	33,065
	<hr/> £26,047	<hr/> £33,065

BLACKFRIARS OVERSEAS AID TRUST

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2024

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
INCOMING RESOURCES				
Donations	72,116	11,008	83,124	79,856
Events and Sales	2,467	-	2,467	3,750
Bank Interest	-	-	-	-
Total Incoming Resources	74,583	11,008	85,591	83,605
RESOURCES EXPENDED				
Costs of Generating Funds				
Fundraising	312	-	312	358
Charitable Activities	81,000	11,008	92,008	95,971
Governance Costs	290	-	295	255
Total Expenditure	81,602	11,008	92,610	96,554
Net Incoming/(Outgoing) Resources	(7,019)		(7,019)	(12,949)
Total Funds Brought Forward	33,065		33,066	46,015
Total Funds Carried Forward	£26,046	£0	£26,047	£33,066

The notes on pages 29 to 32 form part of these accounts.

Notes forming part of the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

General

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2005) issued in 2005.

Income

- (1) Donations and grants are included in the accounts when they are received.
- (2) Interest income is included in the accounts when it is received.
- (3) Tax recoverable in respect of Gift Aid donations is included in the accounts when it is received.

Expenditure

All grants to partner organisations and other expenditure are included in the accounts in the year they are paid.

Unrestricted Funds

Unrestricted funds are donations and other incoming resources received for the objects of the charity without a specified purpose and are available as general funds. From time to time the Trustees may establish Designated Funds out of the Unrestricted Funds to meet contingencies.

Restricted Funds

Restricted funds are to be used for specific purposes as laid down by the donor. Expenditure which meets these criteria is charged to the fund, together with a fair allocation of management and support costs.

2 DONATIONS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Donations received under Banker's Order (unrestricted)	55,738	55,934
Donations received under Banker's Order (restricted)	-	
Other Donations (unrestricted)	2,467	3,750
Other Donations (restricted)	11,008	8,576
Tax Recovered under Gift Aid	16,378	15,346
	£85,591	£83,605

3 EVENTS AND SALES

	2024	2023
	£	£
Harvest Auction	589	517
Christmas café	582	410
Card Sales	466	895
Mothers' Day Café	388	495
Summer café	242	367
Donations from the 9.30 coffee team	200	
Donations in memory of Anna Baidoun	-	
Bread Sales	-	366
	£2,467	£3,750

4 CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

Grants (Unrestricted) to Overseas Projects

	2024	2023
	£	£
Nicaragua, Leon	4,000	4,000
Jamaica, Christ the King School	4,000	10,000
Uganda Cancer UK	4,000	4,000
Uganda Fr Sebastian	4,000	4,000
Cameroon Arch	9,000	4,075
Ethiopia Jean Grove Trust	4,000	4,000
Uganda, Sr Clemensia	4,000	4,000
Philippines, Columban Sisters	4,000	4,000
Zimbabwe, African Mission, Dungu	4,000	4,000
Peru, San Benito, Br Ed O'Connell	4,000	4,000
India Sugandh	4,000	4,000
India, Operatori di Pace	4,000	4,000
Rwanda, Network for Africa	4,000	4,000
Myanmar Living Water	4,000	4,000
Brazil, St. Paolo	4,000	4,000
Ethiopia, Mission of Hope	4,000	4,000
South Sudan, Anaesthesiology	-	2,820
Sierra Leone	4,000	6,050

Peru , Amantani	4,000	4,000
Peru, Iquitos Fr Miguel	4,000	4,000
SUB-TOTAL	£81,000	£86,945

Grants from Restricted Funds

	2024	2023
Lenten Appeal	9,508	8,576
Operatori di Pace		-
Sierra Leone	-	450
TOTAL	£92,008	£95,971

5 COSTS OF GENERATING FUNDS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Costs of Printing the Annual Report	312	358
	£312	£358

6 GOVERNANCE

	2024	2023
	£	£
Bank Charges	290	225
	£290	£225

7 TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES

No remuneration was paid or was payable for the year directly or indirectly out of the funds of the charity to any member of the committee or to any person known to be connected with any of them.

8 RESTRICTED FUNDS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Balance at January 1	0	450
Incoming Resources	11,008	8,576
Expenditure	(11,008)	(9,026)
Balance at December 31	£0	£0

9 GENERAL FUNDS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Balance at January 1	33,066	45,564
Incoming Resources	74,583	75,029
Expenditure	(81,602)	(87,528)
Balance at 31 December	26,047	£33,066
Represented by:		
Current Assets	26,047	£33,066

A Standing Order for regular donations, which can be cancelled at any time, greatly helps BOAT. We need more people to give regularly so we can predict over a year how much money we can send to our projects overseas.

BLACKFRIARS OVERSEAS AID TRUST (BOAT)

HOW TO SET UP A STANDING ORDER

- With most banks and building societies, you can set up a Standing Order online or by phone.
- Alternatively, you can go into your bank to complete a Standing Order form. You'll need the BOAT account number and sort code (as well as some personal identification).

Beneficiary Name: **Blackfriars Overseas Aid Trust**

Beneficiary Account Number: **00087533**

Beneficiary Sort Code: **30-96-35**

Beneficiary's Bank: **Lloyds Bank plc, 1 High Street, Oxford OX1 4AA.**

GIFT AID DECLARATION (FOR REGULAR OR ONE-OFF DONATIONS)

Boost your donation to BOAT by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate, at no extra cost to you.

giftaid it

Just tick this box ☐ Yes! I would like to Gift Aid this donation and any other donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to BOAT.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS

Title: First name(s): Surname:

Home Address:

..... Postcode:

Signature **Date**

Please notify BOAT if you:

- wish to cancel this declaration
- change your name or home address
- no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Please return to: The Gift Aid Treasurer, Blackfriars Overseas Aid Trust (BOAT), c/o Porter's Lodge, Blackfriars, St. Giles, Oxford, OX1 3LY. Alternatively, you can email it to: boatblackfriars@gmail.com

IF YOU ARE HAPPY TO FOR US TO CONTACT YOU ABOUT BOAT'S ACTIVITIES, PLEASE TICK THIS BOX ☐ Please see the BOAT website at tinyurl.com/BOATOxford for an explanation of why and how we use your data, and your rights in respect of that data.

Blackfriars Overseas Aid Trust

Registered Charity No. 288585

c/o Blackfriars Priory

64 St Giles

Oxford OX1 3LY

tinyurl.com/BOATOxford