

Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families

A Few Highlights: January—July 2009

Mothers' Union is a vibrant network of 3.6 million people across the world, each serving their local community to encourage a better quality of life for all and an end to poverty. Working at grassroots level through projects, trainings and advocacy, Mothers' Union seeks to empower, develop and uplift people and their communities.

We believe in the right to hope, dignity and freedom for all regardless of faith, race and nationality.

Most of our overseas work is supported by the Mothers' Union Overseas Development Fund. This fund provides financial assistance towards training events, community development projects and operational expenses ensuring work is both sustainable and progressive.

Through the Overseas Development Fund we also provide salary and travel grants to our community development workers throughout 30 different countries across the globe. This includes, amongst many others, hundreds of isolated South Pacific Islands, Guyana, Myanmar and 27 of Africa's 53 countries. Through this dedicated network, communities are encouraged and supported to **lead and direct their own development**. Local Mothers' Union groups provide the skills, knowledge, contacts and man-power to make things happen.

Facts:

So far in 2009 we have funded:

- 20 training events
- 4 projects
- 5 grants towards office equipment
- 4 vehicle grants
- 16 requests towards Emergency Relief
- And accepted 37 new workers

We are a group of people, working towards the same goal—

'To be a positive, life giving force' (Mothers' Union in Johannesburg)



Unlike many organisations, Mothers' Union really is lead at the grassroots level. All visions, ideas and implementation processes are devised and carried out by the very people they affect. This means the poorest and most marginalised people take back control over their own lives and development finding their own solutions and escape from the difficulties and challenges they face.

Another amazing fact about the Mothers' Union is that the vast majority of our income comes from individual donations and from Mothers' Union groups throughout the world. However, as the cost of living is increasing throughout the world and the daily challenges for many are only increasing, our need for financial support is greater than ever. To help, please see the end page of this document.

Trainings - Healing the Wounds of Conflict, Kenya



Kenya's national elections at the close of 2007 brought with them a wave of devastating tribal rivalry and post election violence. Various grants from the Mothers' Union Relief Fund were sent to Kenya to assist with emergency supplies for those caught up in the fighting. The picture to the left shows Mothers Union of Kitale distributing supplies in one of the many IDP (Internally Displaced Persons) camps.

More than one year on and communities are still very much divided. Unhappy and worried by the lack of progress being made by both the church

and the government, the Mothers' Union of Kenya wanted to do something about it.

"During the country's darkest hour, the church was silent and blind to the horrific acts that followed the general elections... The government seems to have turned a deaf ear and blind eye to the fate of the victims in the country even after the spates of deadly riots... it is time for us Kenyans, more especially the church to face the reality of the situation... the women pioneers of this ministry are ready to take the journey"

38 women were selected from those areas most affected by the violence to take part in a peace and reconciliation training programme. The first training was aimed at guiding these women through the healing process themselves before they could then go and facilitate the same in their communities. After the first workshop, Salome Leipa, our Provincial Worker for Kenya reported that *"As they first arrived, they were fearful and suspicious of others' from other tribes...it was difficult to share rooms at first. During the three days the atmosphere changed gradually...I went around and sat with them listening to their tearful sharing of their painful experiences. As they relived the moment I could feel the sense of bitterness and anger...Some of the participants are not settled and are still in camps. Towards the end we confessed our anger and sins and nailed them to a symbolic cross. One could see the relief on their faces."*

The objective of the training was to **"Equip Christians to be agents of reconciliation and healing so that God's intent for mankind- appreciation and harmonious living- may be practically demonstrated"**

The workshop was run by various trainers from Rwanda and Congo who had personal experience of ethnic clashes and bringing communities back together through reconciliation processes. The women participants were the guided through the processes of running successful workshops themselves. This included planning procedures, implementation and evaluation. The training also discussed how to be a supportive and sensitive facilitator when dealing with traumatic stories from participants and the need for debriefing for facilitators to enable them to handle others pain and trauma on top of their own.

These women have now gone back into their home communities and run their own reconciliation workshops. They have in turn, trained other women to lead further workshops so that the training is quickly multiplied and disseminated into as many communities as possible.

Below are some quotes from participants of the initial training and what it meant to them:

- **"I am proud to know that this training is the Mothers' Union initiative and that they are the organisers... Please, if possible, involve our husbands"**
- **"I will help others to be healed by facilitating the training... I feel renewed, transformed and my faith has increased."**
- **"The training should reach all ages from youth to old and every corner of our nation."**
- **"I have to go now and make use of what I have learnt and teach others."**
- **" I am proud because now I am free, relieved and happy. We left in one unity."**

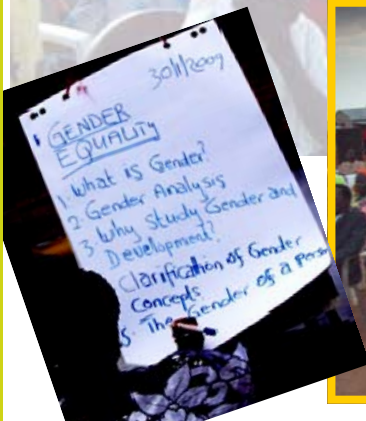
Trainings - Peace Building Conference— Rokon, Sudan

"The civil war in Sudan affected the lives of the people. Families, Clans and communities have been separated for more than 21 years. As the returnees come back, the war trauma is still in the minds of our community and their lives are marked by fear... there is a need to organise a reconciliation and healing conference aimed to bring peace, love and joy in the community,"
Mrs Linda Loyo, Mothers Union President, Rokon

At the end of 2008, the Mothers' Union of Rokon applied for a grant towards a peace building conference.

The conference was attended by almost 100 participants. The topics discussed included: Peace and Reconciliation, Confession and Forgiveness, Family Life, Gender Balance and HIV/AIDS & STD's. Difficult issues and questions were faced such as 'How can I forgive somebody who killed my husband?' and 'How do we wash our hands?'

Linda Loyo reported that during the conference, 'a lot of changes happened...reconciliation took place.' She says seven families and two clans were reconciled as a result of the conference and all participants 'felt spiritually strengthened and challenged.' Confessions came from people of all status, even community and church leaders who acknowledged their own mistakes. During the conference it was acknowledged that the women of the community faced the harshest treatment during the war but also that they play an essential role in the communities reunion. The church agreed to adopt a policy for women empowerment and pledged to allow women 'equal participation in decision making, policy, planning and administration.' Since the conference a change has been seen and women have now been allocated a role in the community development committees that were previously all held by men.



Equipment - Solar Powered Office Equipment, North karamoja, Uganda

The Overseas Development Fund often supports Mothers' Union workers with computer and office equipment but North Karamoja's request was slightly different as they wanted their office to be run by solar energy. "Karamoja is blessed with abundant sunshine so the solar system is an appropriate source of energy power." The computer has enabled worker Mariana Lomanat to gain access to the internet in order to expand her access to communication and research tools and also to make any administrative duties easier and more Professional.



Projects - Goat Project for Repatriated Women, Buye, Burundi

Burundi faced almost 10 years of civil war between 1993-2004. Since then the country has been relatively peaceful and this, coupled with the Tanzanians government policy introduced in 2008 to expel all Burundian refugees, people are slowly beginning to return home. However, returning home from refugee camps in neighbouring countries, they arrive back home with nothing. Back in Burundi they find their houses have been burnt and their livestock killed and so they now face a complete new start. The Mothers' Union saw the difficulties returning communities were facing with no source of income and limited access to food and so requested a grant towards a project that would hopefully make the process of repatriation a little easier on these families.

400 female goats and 10 Billy goats were distributed between 200 households of recently repatriated women. The goats will provide the women with food and a source of manure for their crops. Through breeding and selling the goats the women will also be able to generate an income. The diocese ran a training on how to care for the goats- looking into disease prevention and feeding. It was agreed that the first born from every goat would be passed on to another person in order for the project to be able to expand. A visit to monitor the progress of the project was carried out five months after the distribution of the goats.

Jeanne Mukamana, a mother of five said:

" may the Mothers' Union always help the vulnerable and poor people. Now I get a foundation of my development. I expect to be able to send my children to school. We had returned in the country without anything with us."



Projects - Mothers' Union Mobile Snackette, Guyana, West Indies

The Mothers' Union Snackette project was designed as an income generating project to enable Mothers' Union in Guyana to provide start-up funds for projects in depressed communities. These projects empower the women at the grassroots with skills so that they can better provide for their families and make a more meaningful contribution to society.

The diocese devised the idea of the Snackette which would be placed at strategic places in Georgetown, offering light meals at a low cost. Mary Sumner House received step by step photographs of the Snackette being built and painted so we gradually saw the project coming to life.

Project beneficiaries

- Will provide jobs to Mothers' Union members
- Communities will be able to purchase low cost meals and snacks
- Mothers' Union branches and post-parenting groups will benefit from profits made
- The entire community will subsequently benefit from these projects and programmes



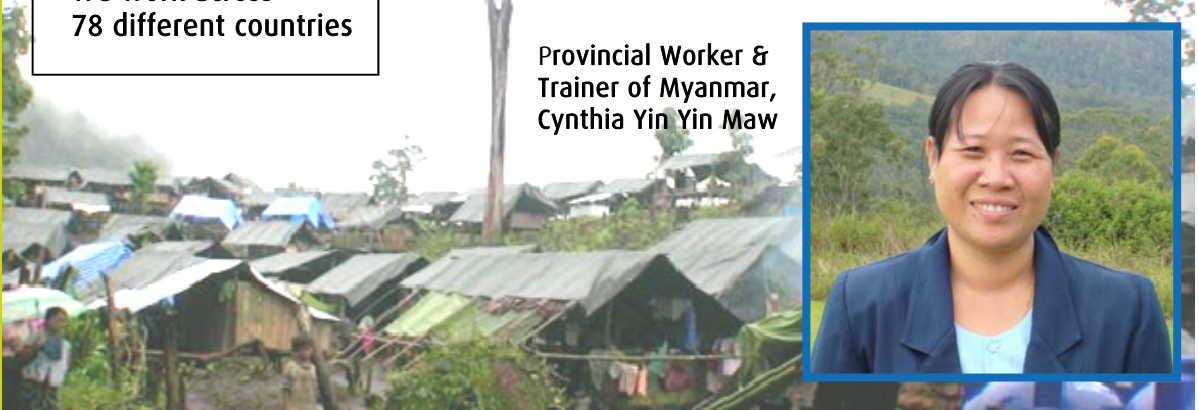
Mothers' Union Workers

2009 Facts:

- We have up to 300 workers & trainers across the globe
- We work across 78 different countries

There are almost 300 Mothers' Union Workers and Trainers working with grassroots communities throughout the world. All are local women who speak the local language and understand their peoples' needs, culture and customs. They work tirelessly to uplift and develop their communities making sure everyone is represented and those most vulnerable and marginalised are given equal opportunities to grow and prosper.

Provincial Worker & Trainer of Myanmar, Cynthia Yin Yin Maw



Cynthia has worked with Mothers' Union since 1999, she makes regular visits around the Province of Myanmar supporting her workers by facilitating trainings on topics such as leadership, family life and micro-finance. The Mothers' Union is highly regarded by the Church of Myanmar and have strong links with the governments Social Welfare departments. Cynthia plays a big part in the overseeing of a home for the elderly serving the entire community whether Muslim, Buddhist or Christian. Cynthia is also Vice President to the Myanmar Council of Churches, part of the Development Committee for the National YMCA and is also Secretary to the Cyclone Nargis Relief and Rehabilitation Committee.

" Mothers' Union members are always ready to take action whenever they know, see or hear about family problems and social issues that affect the community. We run projects related to the current situation and our communities' needs. Through the programmes, activities and projects, I have had many experiences to help develop my capability and capacity as Mothers' Union worker."



Josephine and Elfrida (from left to right) are from Lweru in Tanzania. Josephine is the Bishops' wife and the Diocesan President and Elfrida is the community development worker for the area. Together they work to 'encourage mothers to be socially and economically uplifted'. They have introduced saving schemes into communities, run HIV/AIDS prevention workshops and coordinate outreach work every Tuesday. They have also started dairy goat, poultry and cattle projects in villages to provide a much needed source of food and income.

Your continued support is absolutely vital to assist people like Cynthia, Josephine and Elfrida in their mission to improve peoples' lives and livelihoods. As the Mothers' Union continues to grow and expand to new countries, so too do requests for financial support. For this we need your help please.