

AWARENESS

www.survive-miva.org Getting others back on the road to self-help

Missionary Vehicle Association - UK Registered Charity No. 268745



FREE The twice-yearly magazine of SURVIVE-MIVA - **JANUARY - JUNE 2020 - ISSUE 67**

A WORLD IN A GRAIN OF SAND

Holy Family Parish Nundu, Archdiocese of Mwanza, Tanzania

"This parish is still young," says Parish Priest Fr Emmanuel Lyanga, "and only dates from 2016. As such, it needs constant involvement on my part and on that of our Catechists for it to grow. We need a means to reach out to parishioners in their homes, especially to the elderly and sick, and those with restricted mobility. Our great obstacle to growth has been transport," he continues, "as we are in an isolated area which is composed of mountains and valleys, and difficult, poorly prepared tracks."

It was because of this that Fr contacted SURVIVE-MIVA, and your donations consequently meant that a three thousand pound grant could be transferred to the Archdiocese, which in turn meant that funds were available to purchase the motorbike pictured. Such practical assistance has already borne fruit.

"My parishioners," Fr says, "are spread out over ninety-five different small Christian communities, and without any means of reaching them - public transport is rare and completely unreliable - then the Catechists and I all lost a lot of time and impetus. We felt we just could not serve them properly. All that has changed now and we can come and go safe in the knowledge we won't let the people down."

The small communities Fr Emmanuel ministers to have on average some forty members each, but are living proof of how the Church, especially in the 'Global South', or 'developing world', is growing steadily but surely - most noticeably in sub-Saharan Africa.

Nundu parish exemplifies how a 'whole' can be greater than the sum of its parts. There are tens of thousands of such micro-communities, scattered over the South, mostly disadvantaged economically and located off the beaten track, but vibrant in spirit and thirsty for pastoral guidance and support.

In Africa, the total Catholic population is now estimated at some 200 million - and constitutes the fastest growing in the world. Many observers are of the opinion that this is where the future of the Church lies (Pope Francis has visited Africa four times in six years and has so far appointed ten African Cardinals), but population growth in itself is not the only reason to think this.

As we at SURVIVE-MIVA have known for decades now, the Church has always had a presence where the state has failed to provide adequate services such as primary healthcare and education. We have done our best to work in partnership with some of the people in some of the places in which post-colonial governments rely on the Church to reach the vulnerable, for whom they are still unable to cater.

In supporting parishes like Nundu through your generosity, you have added your grain of sand to the growth of the Church in a highly targeted, no-nonsense way, leading Fr Emmanuel, who now has regular contact with all his parishioners, to write:

"May you remain blessed always!"



Read on to see how your support is providing practical, everyday mobility to our beneficiaries overseas, and how your contributions bring hope to so many...

Who's who at...

SURVIVE-MIVA

Steve Atherton

Trustee



Steve has joined our Trustees' Committee since our last edition, and writes: "I worked for over 30 years as a drama teacher in high schools in Wigan.

I am fascinated by how people learn, how we change our minds, how we make the transition from a childhood faith to an adult faith, from certainty to uncertainty, and from doubt to faith.

I've been J&P fieldworker for 15 years trying to remind people that the church has a provocative mission to the world and in the world: a duty of service which brings joy not gloom. I am convinced that the Church is a place where we engage with the world, rather than escape from it.

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SURVIVE-MIVA is a Catholic Lay Association and a Registered Charity (No.268745) founded in Liverpool in 1974. We exist to provide funding for essential transport for health outreach work in isolated rural areas, and for the Church's pastoral care in places of difficult access.

We have some 50 lay Speakers based across Britain who make appeals for funds in Catholic parishes via short lectern talks about those we do our best to help in a very practical way.

We are grateful to the Bishops of England, Wales, and Scotland for their support in our endeavours as the only UK-based charity to fund exclusively for transport.

For more information on our work and a booklet with details of all grants made in 2018, contact us at

5 Park Vale Road, Aintree, Liverpool, L9 2DG.

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Visit us at: www.survive-miva.org

ALWAYS AN APPEALING LOT

Welcome, readers, to the latest update from the SURVIVE-MIVA office, and from further afield too.

To begin this issue, I would ask you to cast your minds all the way back to 1974. It was the year of the three-day-week and power cuts, homework by candlelight (in my case), the disappearance of Lord 'Lucky' Lucan, and the first number one from a world-conquering 'popular beat combo' originating not from Liverpool this time, but from Sweden.

Let us not digress too far down memory lane, however. I mention all this to evoke times past simply because, more important even than the first appearance of barcodes (on chewing gum in the States), 1974 is a key year for SURVIVE-MIVA.

It was against this background, in December, that the original Constitution of the Association 'SURVIVE - International Mobile Medical Aid' was presented for approval to the Charity Commission, and thus what later became 'SURVIVE-MIVA' was officially founded. For those wishing to look further back at our early years, my colleague Theresa has written in more detail about this on our website.

This date is also something of a landmark in our unique lay apostolate because, of course, it means that as this issue of the magazine is compiled and goes to print in December 2019, we are in fact celebrating our 45th birthday, which should not go unmarked.

'We', of course, encompasses all sorts of individuals and groups, in all sorts of places. but fundamentally, 'we' constitute at least three different sets, all connected by a common thread.

Firstly, those faraway, whom we are unlikely ever to meet, who live and work in difficult circumstances, but who contact us hoping for our 'kick-start' type of help. Then, there are those amongst us who give of their time and talents to visit parishes in their area or not too far away, and speak briefly at Mass to raise funds from those present.

Most numerous of all, there are those such as yourselves, who in all likelihood heard about us at Mass, and have kept in touch since, donating what you can when you can, or remembering us in your prayers and providing your spiritual support and encouragement - and very often, plenty of words of appreciation when you write in to us, too.

In something of a contradiction of what I have just said above about beginnings and milestones, I must admit I have sometimes thought that in fact, there is no precise start or beginning to the 'us' that SURVIVE-MIVA consists of; no alpha and omega, and certainly no hierarchy, but rather a continuous cycle of associations and links.

No part or group is viable without either of the others, and for that reason I can say, rightly I hope, that this inter-connectedness means we are a 'living' entity - odd though it sounds. After 45 years of the life of the charity, and 22 years (gulp!) as its Director, I can think of no other way of expressing it.



All images in this edition provided by those you have made mobile.



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'We' are connected by our common humanity, and willingness to think of those beyond our borders - real people, real places, real progress, and the gratitude and prayers which come with them and close the circle - these are what make up our distinctive 'slot' among so many other worthy causes.

We all have our lives outside the charity of course, but it is when we get together that SURVIVE-MIVA both comes alive and comes up with the goods, as I hope you can see from these pages.

Since our founding, the vast majority of our income has come from parish appeals, and we are always eager to increase the number of volunteer Speakers we have. It may be that you have thought on the odd occasion that you would like to do something direct for us, by giving of your time, perhaps. In essence, all that is required is speak for 3 or 4 minutes at Mass, to get our message across, and we can help you to do that by providing all the material and support you might need. You do not have to be a seasoned raconteur - just the opposite, in fact - we like to think we are short and sweet, to the point, and about as practical as you can get!

Perhaps you have considered this in the past, but not taken it up, or you may have been wondering about volunteering your time somewhere but not found a suitable outlet. If so, we would encourage you to contact us, or re-contact us if you have never followed up on an initial interest.

So many of you think us worthy of your donations, may we also count on you for some of your time on a few weekends throughout the year? We like to keep things simple, so just drop us a line or give us a ring.

The world 45 years ago is unrecognisable today, but we remain constant, providing an essential tool for those with skills and experience who lack the means to reach out to their people, and we and they continue to be in need of your support now as much as we have been for nearly half a century.

Can you speak up for those whose voices are rarely, if ever, heard?

Please do consider it.

Many thanks and God bless,

Simon Patrick Foran, Director

NEWS FROM OVERSEAS

Each issue we do our best to keep you up-to-date with the progress being made by those you have supported. There are no easy or quick solutions to the problems our beneficiaries face each day, but we know that being mobile does enable them to tackle jobs they would otherwise have great difficulties doing. Here is an update on just some of the work being carried out:

MALAWI

St John's Parish, Mzimba, Diocese of Mzuzu

Located in the north of the country, Mzuzu is one of eight Dioceses in Malawi, and consists of just eighteen parishes in all. That said, St John's dates from 1940, and since the Missionaries of Africa founded it, has grown over the years to have eighty-eight substations, or Mass Centres. PP Fr Yotam Msumba tells us more: *"For administration purposes, the area has to be divided into manageable zones, and there are seven of these. Each one is managed by a trained Catechist who is in charge of pastoral coordination with the main Parish."*

One of the most rural parishes in the Diocese, Fr's parishioners are subsistence farmers in the main, who produce little more than enough for their own families, and very few are employed or in business, which means the parish income is small. Distances from the parish to the furthest families are very long, and so Fr Yotam and his curate have to work within their means. They recognise they cannot reach everyone with any regularity, but have developed a network of Catechists and other lay leaders who know the area like the back of their hand. *"They receive lessons and training which help them in their work, but the challenge posed by the distances involved still remains. Most of them walk to do their apostolate, which is unpaid, and in their circumstances, this represents a real commitment."*

In the face of this Fr Yotam requested a grant to provide each with a bicycle to ease their burden and increase the level of cohesion between them and the main base. Twenty-five bikes were purchased and distributed, but not without some forward

planning from Fr Yotam. *"We will allocate some funds from our budget to help us make sure the bicycles are always running, and will draw up a policy on the use and distribution of them which every user will understand before they enter into service."* In addition to leading prayer services, the Catechists' time is taken up mainly by preparing people, both young and old, to receive the Sacraments, and spreading the Word to those around them who are eager to learn more and participate more fully in the life of the parish at a very local level.

A grant of just £2,000 soon got things moving, and Fr Yotam wrote back to express everyone's gratitude: *"On behalf of St John's Parish, and indeed on my own behalf, I would like to thank SURVIVE-MIVA for the great support. Our pastoral workers will now carry out their duties effectively because of the means of transport that they have received through your able generosity. May the good Lord keep on blessing your noble work."*



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INDIA

St Joseph's Dispensary, Diocese of Rourkela, Odissa State

Run by the Sisters of St Joseph, this rural dispensary is situated on the top of a mountain in a forested area, where the local population, according to Sr Sushila Tete, lead a basic existence and lack most of the everyday comforts we would expect. *"They have nothing in their dwellings, which are like huts located deep in the jungle; they have no beds nor chairs and sleep on blankets, and there are no electric or sanitation facilities. According to the season, they collect fruit and flowers to sell on, which gives a precarious and very small income they have to earn from day to day. Most of them are illiterate and see no need for this to change; they often go hungry and are ill-clothed. Their malnutrition leads to their having little resistance to disease, and common complaints are TB, malaria - humanity's biggest single killer - anaemia, and typhoid. Many children suffer from night blindness as they have a severe vitamin A deficiency."*

It was to combat some of these problems that the Sisters set up their dispensary in 2005, at the invitation of the Bishop, and it is the only such facility in the area. *"People come from up to 40 kilometres [25 miles] away, sometimes carried on makeshift stretchers or bicycles, walking from morning to evening to get medicines, and lives have been lost on the way. We do our best, and two Sisters walk up to 20 kilometres to reach them and treat them when they can, because we are convinced the situation must change one day. If the children of these poor people are educated, the families will have a chance of a better future, so three Sisters work in the local village school."*

Once again, via your support, we were able to respond to their request to provide funding for a sturdy Indian-made seven-seater, and the difference it has made has been met with enthusiasm: *"We can now reach out to the people each week and bring changes in their life,"*

Sr Sushila says, *"we bring them their medicines and can look after the elderly. Now, we can arrange for mobile clinics for many more people than before and they don't need to come*

to us on foot. Not only this, but we can take complicated cases to the hospital 80 kilometres [50 miles] away down in the valley, and we are sure that some lives can be saved by this when just a few weeks ago they would have died.



As well as intervention, we can increase our prevention of diseases. We can conduct awareness classes on the dangers of stagnant water, for example, and take maternity care to pregnant women and girls. These are problems we are facing now with multiple approaches, and my Community and I wish to express our gratitude for your kind support. Indeed, the people around us have new hope for their future life. We assure you of our continued prayers".



Getting others back on the road to self-help



ZIMBABWE

St Barbara Clinic, Selous, Archdiocese of Harare

"St Barbara is located at Ndwizi Farm in Mashonaland West," the Most Reverend Robert Ndlovu, Archbishop of Harare told us, in a letter written earlier in the year, "and their request to you has my full approval" he added, stating: "I am happy to recommend this proposal for funding, as an ambulance is greatly needed to strengthen the system and thereby reduce maternal and infant mortality."

The clinic is run by the Little Children of Our Blessed Lady, an indigenous Congregation founded by Archbishop Aston Ignatius Chichester SJ, in 1932. Their Superior General, Sr Illumina Katsukuya contacted us with the initial request and gave more details:

"We cater to a population of some 6,000 in the immediate district, most of whom are employed as farm workers or in the mines. The most common diseases are malaria, and acute respiratory infections among the miners. The rate of sickness and unemployment is very high even against the national background of political and social instability we have endured for decades, and all health institutions have been affected by inadequate resources, both in terms of trained and experienced personnel as well as medicines."

Sister Illumina continues: *"The main goal of the clinic is to improve the quality of life and provide access to health services, particularly maternal-child health care and anti-retroviral therapy (ART) for those living with HIV/AIDS, as well as participating more actively in the immunisation programmes that are organised at national level."*

Without the off-roader pictured, which your generosity made possible, all these areas would have continued to be catered for sporadically, whereas now whole programmes can be refined, planned in advance, and carried out with many fewer uncertainties.

"The outcome of having an ambulance, which acts as a multi-purpose vehicle, has been noted across the range of activities we have already expanded" Sr Illumina informs us. "It is now possible to respond rapidly in cases of emergency, and we can link up with a centre further away which offers a higher level of care. There can be no doubt that mortality will be reduced. We can adopt a more integrated approach and offer our services to those with different needs. Immunisations to 900 children under five years are planned, and in the near future we can identify and train village health workers to cover this need and others at a very local level. They will assist us in the surveillance of communicable diseases to spot and deal with outbreaks earlier on. Their presence and service in the communities is one way

of making our programmes sustainable and will strengthen the sense of community ownership."



Looking further ahead, Sister has cast her nets even further afield: *"Our package of services will involve prevention via the spread of awareness on communicable diseases, and follow-up care in mother-to-child transmission of HIV, in addition to work to reduce the number of cases of TB. New cases will be detected, attended to and reduced, and the people will benefit. In terms of making new links and staff enhancing their skills, the availability of transport has facilitated our ability to network and attend meetings and training programmes. We have shared our specialist service knowledge and gained more information, because we can spend more time in the villages and among the patients."*

Sister also has some important words for you too: *"The vehicle has lifted a burden from our shoulders, and the community is so happy and appreciate all you have done for the grant received. May the Good Lord continue to bless you as you provide service to the people of God in poorer parts of the world."*





INDIA

Daughters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Andhra Pradesh

The more assiduous readers amongst you may remember a grant we reported back on in our previous edition, for the Bon Secours Sisters in Tamil Nadu, who requested a block grant for fifteen mopeds, in order to provide a simple form of transport for each of their small mission centres spread across their Province.

Since then, we have been able to meet a similar request from another women's Order in South India, this time based in Andhra Pradesh. Sr Pudhota, Provincial of the The Institute of the Bethlehemite Sisters (aka the DSHJ), contacted us and detailed their transport needs thus:

"We are involved in a range of projects such as village health clinics and awareness programmes, as well as initiatives to develop the situation of women, children, and Dalit labourers. Working in areas which are remote and have no established transport means we cannot reach the outmost corners on foot and cannot do justice without a proper conveyance."

Sr Pudhota gave some details of the varied nature of the work done at the Sisters' bases, and requested a block grant of £7,800 to purchase ten mopeds, one for each mission, including these:

Kothur — Nellore Diocese

There has been a community of nine Sisters based here since 1980. They take care of orphans and the children of leprosy patients, and want to expand their work to increase the number of village women's groups, where they conduct evening coaching classes in needlework as a form of self-help. They also wish to begin awareness and basic hygiene and sanitation projects.

Porur — Archdiocese of Madras (Chennai)/Mylapore

Here there are five Sisters who began their mission in 1993 with a small crèche. They visit the families to instruct them and have begun savings groups so the women have a small amount of capital to learn to administer and distribute among them according to pressing needs, and in some villages have encouraged some of the women to become self-employed. They need the regular contact a moped makes possible so as to maintain the success they have already had.



Reddiyar — Archdiocese of Pondicherry and Cuddalore

The mission at Reddiyar also dates from 1993, and currently has eight Sisters in residence. They assist the Parish Priest with the liturgy and in the administration of the Sacraments and take viaticum when necessary to the elderly and sick. They also prepare parishioners to make their First Holy Communion. Outside parish work, four of the Sisters who came after the first group have expanded into health programmes in thirteen villages which they can reach on foot. They now go two at a time to take their services to other places who have heard of what they do but were not within reach without a two-wheeler.

Muttukadu — Diocese of Chingleput

The Sisters were originally invited to work here by the Bishop in 2002, with a special ministry to look after the senior citizens, irrespective of caste, creed or language. There are 30 direct recipients of their care near to the mission, and the six Sisters share responsibility to run a small dispensary and provide medical cover to ten fishing hamlets in the area. Now mobile, they too can increase the number of villages where their help is needed but currently absent.



Getting others back on the road to self-help



Shakthi Nagar — Diocese of Bellary

A more recent mission the Sisters began in 2015. Currently two Sisters run the projects, but there is a possibility this may expand in the near future. They focus mainly on the local youth, especially girl children, whom they teach in a local school, but they also tour their area and provide community health education and have established several evening study centres.

Sr Pudhota has been in touch since the mopeds have been in service to say: *“They have really had an impact among the people, who now follow simple but vital measures to avoid easily preventable diseases, and they now come to us for treatment as soon as they have symptoms, which helps reduce infections. Proper care is now given to new and expectant mothers, counselling and catechism classes are now a regular feature in village life. Rubbish and pollution has been reduced, and many women in the target villages have a small but regular income and an independence they never had before. We are ever grateful to all the good hearts who extended their financial support to us, and vouch our special prayers to all of you.”*



A FEW FROM THE QUEUE

We receive on average more than 400 requests for some form of mobility every year. We do not have the funds to meet the needs of all those who match our basic criteria of urgency, impact and sustainability. This means there is always a queue of applicants hoping and praying we can increase our funds. Our aim is to provide suitable means for them to carry out their important work, and what follows is a ‘cross-section’ of different projects urgently in need of a vehicle.

Please note that all donations are paid into a central fund, to be distributed by the Allocations Committee, who between them have over fifty years of service on overseas mission. This means that we cannot say in advance where your particular donation will be distributed - but what we can say is that together we are much, much greater than the sum of our parts...

UGANDA

The Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod have contacted us to request a grant for a four-wheel-drive for their outreach work in the Diocese of Kasana Luweero. The Good Samaritan Health Centre they run caters to some 20,000 people, thirty percent of whom are under-fives. More than half the patients they deal with have to travel long distances to reach them, and arrive with easily preventable diseases which can prove deadly if untreated. The proposed vehicle would mean the Sisters could take vital primary healthcare out into the community and directly improve mortality rates.

ST MICHAEL'S PARISH, DIOCESE OF SOROTI

A rural parish with 48 outstations made up of pastoralists and ‘small scale’ farmers. We have been asked to provide a motorbike grant to enable the Parish Priest to reach the furthest small Catholic Community, 40 miles from the main base, as well as all the others in between. The bike, estimated to cost approximately three and a half thousand pounds, would make home visits to the sick a regular occurrence, as well as allowing funerals, baptisms, and regular Masses to take place across the catchment area, as well as meaning that borrowing a bicycle becomes a thing of the past.

INDIA

Another request for a motorbike has arrived, this time from Tamil Nadu. St Mary's Parish is to be found in the middle of a tea producing area, where the PP is himself from the Dalit community, and as such understands the level of injustice and the prejudices ‘low’ caste people face. It is a parish built on hilly ground, and travel by Shanks' pony as is the current situation, is not just difficult but dangerous, given that there are known to be panthers and tigers in the surrounding forest. Rather him than me...

We are pleased to report back to you that those featured in this section of issue 66 have now been funded. It may take time, but in common with our beneficiaries, and solely thanks to you, our supporters, we reach our goal in the end.



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END OF THE ROAD?

We hope you found this issue of 'Awareness' informative, and you have enjoyed reading about those your donations help. We also hope that we have managed to illustrate just how important mobility is for those who share their lives with the poor. We are the only UK based Catholic charity which funds exclusively for all different modes of transport. Making a donation will help ensure this is not the end of the road for the aspirations of so many people.

CAN YOU HELP?

If you would like further information/support for any of the suggestions given below, then tick the appropriate box & return to SURVIVE-MIVA together with your contact details.



- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make a one-off donation (and, if possible, 'Gift Aid' it) by:- <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using the form below;• Donating online from our website: www.survive-miva.org | <input type="checkbox"/> Organise a fundraising event in aid of SURVIVE-MIVA. |
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Pray for the work of the Association and our beneficiaries - *rest assured that they pray for you!*

READ OUR NEWS AND HELP US TO SPREAD THE WORD.



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SurviveMIVA

I wish to donate the sum of £ to SURVIVE-MIVA (Reg. Charity No. 268745).

By cheque ☐ postal order ☐ CAF voucher ☐ made payable to 'SURVIVE-MIVA' *(please tick appropriate box)*

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For new readers who wish to receive the 'Awareness' magazine (twice a year) please let us know by using the opt-in tick-box in the **CAN YOU HELP?** section above.

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This newsletter uses paper from managed, sustainable forests, where planting of new trees exceeds the trees harvested.