



St Brigid's One World Group

www.stbrigids3wg.com

Charity Commission for NI Registration Number NIC102818

Annual Report 2023-24

Our Group

St Brigid's Third World Group was established in 1989-1990 in St Brigid's Parish Belfast. It was accepted as a charity for tax purposes by the Inland Revenue on the basis of its Constitution which provides that its object is to advance any legally charitable purpose and in particular the relief of poverty in the Third World. The Group is registered with the Charity Commission for NI. Its financial year runs from April to March each year.

In December 2022, the Group, recognising that the term Third World had become increasingly outdated, passed a resolution changing its name to **St Brigid's One World Group** and amending its purpose to the relief of poverty in developing countries.

In 2023-24 the Trustees of the Group were

Rosalie Flanagan – Chair
Michael McGrath – Secretary
Kevin Flanagan – Treasurer
Hugh Doherty – Assistant Treasurer.

This Report

This report covers the financial year April 2023 to March 2024. It has been considered and approved by the trustees. During this year the trustees have had regard to the Commission's public benefit requirement statutory guidance.

The Financial Statements and Report of our Independent Examiner are attached to this report. In the financial year ending 31 March 2024 the Group raised **£313,052** and made grants of **£335,990** to beneficiaries.

Our purpose

As a registered charity, we are obliged to be able to demonstrate that we have complied with the purpose set out in our constitution which is “*the relief of poverty in developing countries*” and that our funding is providing the following public benefits

- *to prevent starvation and malnutrition and to assist in the physical development of children and their concentration and learning (feeding programmes)*
- *to alleviate and prevent suffering and disease and provide dignity for the dying (health and hospice care)*
- *to help people grow food and to prevent disease (wells and sanitation)*
- *to enable people to gain employment or make a living and support their families (education, books, equipment and training)*
- *to prevent homelessness and provide shelter and security (housing).*

Our donors

During 2023-24, our funding has come from

(i) voluntary donations from parishioners of St Brigid's Parish Belfast and other supporters through

- Standing Orders
- Annual Collection
- Special Collection for the Syrian earthquake
- Other donations
- Quizzes
- Lent Bread and Soup lunch and Advent activities
- Gift Aid refunds from HMRC;

(ii) specific donations for ophthalmic equipment and training in Rwanda;

(iii) grants from the Summerhill Foundation for specific projects; and

(iv) a large legacy from the will of a benefactor.

Former beneficiaries

This year, 2 of our former long term beneficiaries had to retire home to Ireland because of ill health. Fr Raymond MacQuarrie returned after 34 years in South Africa and Fr Neil Magill after many years working in the Far East, most recently in Burma/Myanmar.

Fr Andrew Lappia who was very active in the Diocese of Bo in Sierra Leone died suddenly in November 2023. May he rest in peace.

Sister Elsa Joseph who was to move from Swaziland to Western Cape, South Africa last year has also had to retire back to her home in India due to ill health.

Sister Mary Anthony also had to return home from Sierra Leone to India.

Our beneficiaries this year

Attached to this report is a summary of the work done by our 17 regular beneficiaries and the one-off projects which we also supported.

This year we completed the special collection for the victims of the earthquake in Syria.

We have received reports from each of our beneficiaries over the last year telling us how they have used the funding provided by St Brigid's One World Group to provide the public benefits listed above. Often our beneficiaries are working in areas where the internet availability is sporadic. They all work in difficult situations and often in dangerous conditions.

But the main thing that stands out from all the reports is the love and care shown to some of the most deprived and disadvantaged people in the world and that donations made through St Brigid's One World Group have helped to relieve poverty through feeding programmes, education and training, health and hospice care, provision of clean water and sanitation and housing and shelter.

Finally it is important to note that all of the donations raised go directly to the beneficiaries we support. None of the money is used for administrative expenses. Any expenses such as postage and printing costs and bank charges are met by members of our parish group.

We are grateful for the continued support provided for our projects and special appeals through your generous donations and your prayers.

**Rosalie Flanagan
Chair, St Brigid's One World Group
May 2024**

Summary of St Brigid's One World Group Beneficiaries in 2023-24

Current regular beneficiaries

1. Sister Mary McAteer is a Missionary Sister of the Assumption who works in the Western Cape in South Africa as the Congregational Leader of that Order. She uses our funding to help run a special needs school, the Enkuthazweni Centre, for children and young adults with disabilities.

The additional £7,000 one-off funding provided from the *legacy* this year enabled the Sisters to give

- £2000 to the Assumption Nutrition Centre in Makhanda. This helped to provide food for the poorest children in the township. More than a hundred children get breakfast there every morning, and lunch after school;
- £2000 to Enkuthazweni Centre to provide food for the children and young people with disability as well as stipends for the staff who care for them;
- £1500 to Chinsapo, Malawi for a lunch scheme at the school so all the children now get a meal every day;
- £1500 to provide food and shelter for very needy, hungry and desperate people and assistance for refugee families in Johannesburg.

2. The Cluny Sisters run a feeding programme for destitute people in Freetown, Sierra Leone. **Sister Elizabeth Asare Buobi** has replaced former beneficiary Sister Mary Anthony. On average the programme feeds 44 destitute people. Many more ask for help but the cost of food has doubled. The Sisters also provide assistance to some very poor young people to enable them with their education.

Their share of the *legacy* money has been used to fence in a property outside Freetown which the Sisters plan to use as a care home for the growing numbers of aged and sick destitute people but which was at risk from land grabbers. **Sister Angela Bangura** reports that this has made them feel safer and more secure and given them peace of mind.

3. Sister Florence Njoku is a member of the Medical Missionaries of Mary working in Fuka, Nigeria. Our funding supports the work of their health clinic providing preventative/vaccination and healthcare programmes, the provision of boreholes for clean water, couples workshops to improve attitudes to and reduce violence against women and income generating activities for women.

With the *legacy* money, this year Sr Florence was able to improve sanitation in one primary school by the provision 2 toilets, a hand-washing station and clean water as well as a deworming programme in schools, helping 3 women to set up income generating activities and assistance with school fees for 10 children from very poor families.

4. Sister Margaret Nafaku is a member of the Medical Missionaries of Mary working in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil. She has replaced former beneficiary Sister Jacinta Ugonma. Funding from St Brigid's One World Group including the *legacy* money supported a programme to support over 150 women in their efforts to live an integrated life that facilitates self-empowerment through participating in activities that enable them to build their self-esteem and so foster their socio-economic development. It also provided nutritional support and medical care to over 40 families.

5. Father Ignatius Malwa is a member of the Society of African Missions working in Zambia. This year the Group again provided funding for teachers' salaries to enable the SMA Education Centre in Ndola to continue to operate. The school caters for over 300 children aged 5 to 13 with a pupil teacher ration of 1:40. These are orphans whose parents have died of HIV/AIDS and are totally dependent on the SMA Fathers for primary education. The Government provides only minimal funding for this school.

With his share of the *legacy* money, Fr Ignatius was able to build a new ablution block at the school providing hygienic and safe toilet facilities for the staff and pupils.

6. Rev Jim Campbell is a Presbyterian Minister who formerly worked in Malawi and established a shallow well building programme to provide clean water for communities thus improving both health and ability to

grow food. Following his retirement, the Group continues to provide funding for the programme. The project is currently overseen by Alan Laverock.

Alan has earmarked the *legacy* money to kick start a chicken farming business from which the profits will be partially invested for future income generating work and partially support feeding programmes for children in schools.

7. Sister Patricia Speight is a member of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters for Africa. She runs the Love and Hope Centre in Nakuru, Kenya. The Centre uses our funding to provide food, shelter and healthcare to poor and vulnerable people suffering from HIV/Aids, cancer and other illnesses, education support to orphaned children and assistance to help people begin to support themselves.

Sister Patricia used the *legacy* money to support 25 cancer patients, who would otherwise have died without treatment, and their caregivers with medical costs and other support

8. Sister Mary O'Malley is a member of the Medical Missionaries of Mary working in Nairobi, Kenya. Funding from the Group supports her work on the prevention of human trafficking in its many forms and on helping the recovery of victims of trafficking through therapy and education/training for the future.

She used the *legacy* money this year to student education and to support income generating activities for 12 people, including assisting them to join a small saving scheme to help when some crisis happened.

9. Sister Celestina Nnadi and 10. Sister Charity Gathungu are nurses/midwives with the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary working in the Blessed Mother Teresa Friendship Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Our funding, including the *legacy* money this year, is used for a food supplement programme for those suffering from HIV/Aids and Leprosy, the elderly poor and the destitute and to train people in new skills so that they can go on to support themselves.

11. Sister Ruth Chetambe is a nurse/midwife with the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary working at the Holy Rosary Health Centre in Ngonyek, Kenya where funding from St Brigid's One World Group helps provide food, proper housing, education and accessibility to health care services and contribute to the alleviation of poverty in Ngonyek village.

The *legacy* money was used for

- the prevention of starvation and malnutrition and assisting in the physical development of children and their concentration and learning;
- subsidizing treatment for poor patients especially children and old people so as to alleviate and prevent suffering and disease and provide dignity for the dying; and
- supporting young people from poor families in their education.

12. Stephen and Melita Gordon are doctors working in Malawi. Our funding including the *legacy* was used for education and vocational training, food and fertiliser aid for families affected by famine, nursing support for the Respiratory High Dependency Unit in the QEC Hospital and for prevention of child pneumonia and other conditions.

13. Sister Geraldine Henry is a Daughter of Charity based in Dublin and supporting the work of their Sisters in a number of African countries. The Group provided funding for food and a small income for poor families in Kenya. Funding was also provided by the Summerhill Foundation for scholarships for 2 young women in Kenya to undertake nursing studies.

The *legacy* money was used for Upendo Street Children Programme in Kitale, Kenya. The children are rescued from the streets and given accommodation including laundry and hygiene facilities, nutrition, education, medical care and counselling; a rehabilitation programme is also run.

14. Father Diarmuid Sheehan is a member of the Missionaries of Africa also known as the White Fathers who previously lived in Tamale, Ghana but is home at present. The Group continues to provide funding through the White Fathers to those who are still carrying out the work supporting people in that community

with schooling and medical costs.

The *legacy* money was used to provide microcredit (which is repaid with 10% interest) to 10 women to carry out petty trading and make an income to feed their families; to assist some young people with education; to pay the National Health Insurance for 40 people through the St Vincent de Paul; and to assist 9 farmers with seeds and fertiliser to grow maize of which 14 bags are donated back to the St Vincent de Paul for distribution to the poor and needy.

15. The One World Group provides funding through **Fr Fouad** for the Jesuit Refugee Service in Syria to help those affected by the war there. This money including the *legacy* donation is used in the Alberto Hurtado centre run by the Jesuits in Damascus to provide psychosocial support and a hot meal for children and a space where young people can receive spiritual, educational and personal development support against the background of a society ravaged by war and despair.

16. Father Johnbull Brashay (who has taken over the work of Fr Andrew Lappia who died in November 2023) works in the Diocese of Bo, Sierra Leone, West Africa. The funds, including the *legacy* money, from St Brigid's One World Group provide food and other essentials for the extremely impoverished, to assist young people with education and training and to provide medical care.

17. The **Columban Fathers** based in Burma received funding this year from St Brigid's One World Group to provide food for people living in poverty.

One-off grants

(i) **Sr Sabrina Hynniewta** is a member of the Congregation of Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians Assistance working in Lesotho. Through the Summerhill Foundation we were able to provide a grant to assist in the school for the education of children with multiple disabilities and for training their parents and teachers and raising awareness in the community.

(ii) We provided a grant to a charity in Malawi, Empowerment Counselling Relief and Development (ECRAD) run by **Malison Nda**. ECRAD supports 420 orphaned children whose parents have died of HIV/AIDS and malaria. Its aim is to become self funding and sustainable through a chicken farming business.

(iii) **Fr Robbin Kamemba** is an SMA priest in Kenya. We provided a grant to construct toilets at a school in order to provide hygienic conditions and prevent diseases and absences from school.

(iv) **Dr Michael Mikail**, an ophthalmic consultant who trained in Belfast, is now working in the Kabgayi Hospital in Rwanda. He is the only retinal consultant for a population of 11m people. Dr Olivia Earley, a member of our Group, spent a month there recently training 2 young doctors in cataract surgery techniques. Through an appeal to her colleagues in the Belfast Trust and donations from some of her patients, together with a share of the *legacy* money, we were able to send money to Dr Michael towards the establishment of a dedicated training unit in the Kabgayi Eye Unit.

(v) Following the earthquake in Syria last year, the Group facilitated a special collection in the Parish which spanned the 2 financial years 2022-23 and 2023-34. All the money raised went via Fr Fouad to the **Jesuit Mission in Aleppo** who are providing humanitarian aid to those affected by the earthquake.