



Education for Life project participant Josephine feeding her chickens after attending the project's poultry training in Eldoret, Kenya

Welcome to the second newsletter of 2025.

It has been a year of opportunity for connecting with our partners across the world. As you'll read in this newsletter, in May our Programme Manager Naidi visited Kenya to monitor development projects in Nairobi and Eldoret. Abigail, our Communications and Capacity Development Manager, is coordinating our first Disability Inclusion project. We've received great feedback from participants so far.

We welcomed a new member to our team. Fionn Casey joined ERD in September and is providing part-time project and administration support. Fionn has hit the ground running and we'll share more updates in our next newsletter.

It's been a busy year for our Trustees too, who remain deeply committed to ensuring ERD can continue to support the work of our partners into the future. We look forward to sharing updates and news in 2026. We're pleased to introduce three of our newest Trustees and Committee members; welcome Angela, Christine and Rachel!

Of course our projects have experienced challenges this year; it continues to be a time of global uncertainty with a trend towards reduced commitment to overseas development assistance. We are more grateful than ever to our donors and supporters, our work would not be possible without you. We also acknowledge the ongoing support of Misean Cara and Irish Aid who continue to support our ER projects and other missionary organisations, at a time where their work is more vital than ever.

Thanks for your support this year, and we hope you have a happy Christmas!

Fiona Dowling
Chief Executive

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If you would like to support the work of Edmund Rice Development this Christmas, you can donate at: www.edmundricedevelopment.org/donate

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Artwork by Edmund Rice Mission in Peru

ERD Update



Lilian, a single mother to five children, was trained in business skills and joined one of EGL's SILC; she now runs her own stall which enables her to support her whole family.

ERD Programme Manager Naidi visits Kenya

ERD Programme Manager Naidi McDonnell travelled to Kenya in May to conduct monitoring visits of three ER Development Projects.

During my recent monitoring visit to Kenya, I had the privilege of spending time with three dedicated project teams. At Edmund Rice Centre Nairobi (ERCN), I met caregivers of children and young adults with disabilities. Through vocational and financial literacy training, parents who once felt defeated are now running small businesses and managing their finances confidently. One mother proudly talked about her laundry business, explaining how she's now able to budget, save and reinvest her earnings. The table banking groups have strengthened both livelihoods and community bonds. I also had the chance to join a meeting between ERCN and the Daughters of Charity to discuss how best to support young adults with disabilities who are 'ageing out' of current services. ERD and ERCN also explored a promising partnership with CBM Kenya to build a stronger network of disability support and advocacy.

In Eldoret, I visited the Edmund Rice Eldoret Empowerment Programme (EREEP), where the team's dual focus on school-based empowerment for girls and support for young mothers is changing lives. In the schools, open discussions around menstruation have replaced stigma with empathy.



Millicent was trained up as part of the ERCN EmpowerHer project to set up her own fruit and veg stall, which now helps her support her autistic son John.

I was lucky enough to arrive in time for World Menstruation Day, when the EREEP team was running a campaign and handing out reusable sanitary kits to schoolgirls. For many girls, this means no more missed school days, a simple change that can transform their education. The schools involved in the programme are creating safe spaces where boys now support girls, and teachers use a holistic supportive approach to education. EREEP's work with teen mothers is equally inspiring. Young women who once felt invisible are gaining confidence, learning childcare and life skills, and even sharing their stories publicly. One mum told me, 'People see me differently now, like I matter.'



Naidi joined the EREEP team on world menstruation day to hand out reusable sanitary kits to the female students at Wareng Secondary School, Eldoret.



EFL Monday SILC meetings where participants learn out how to save and take out loans to set up their businesses to become self-sufficient.



Naidi meeting with the ERCN team in Nairobi; (L-R); Rufina Ushago, Sammy Muga, Fidel Kioko, Br. John Paul Oluoch, Naidi McDonnell and Ann Nzioki.

At Education for Life (EFL), I met people living with HIV who are thriving through psychosocial care, vocational training and savings groups, which foster financial independence. Many participants have started small businesses in tailoring, catering and kitchen gardens, while others mentor new members. The Savings and Internal Lending Community (SILC) groups are flourishing, building both livelihoods and confidence. One participant summed it up powerfully: 'Education for Life is like a home. If it wasn't for this project I would be in a grave'.

Across all three projects, the results are clear: families are stronger, women are empowered and communities are more inclusive. The commitment of the Edmund Rice project teams and their governing bodies continues to show how, with the right support, people can transform their own futures and bring about long-term sustainable change within communities.

Capacity Development Project

Faith and Gender Conference

In September, three leaders from ER development projects attended the 2025 Pan-African Faith and Gender Justice Conference at St. Paul's University in Limuru, Kenya. Clalffin Achimba from Edmund Rice Eldoret Empowerment Programme, Julie Kibii from Edmund Rice Catholic Education Centre and Sammy Muga from Edmund Rice Centre Nairobi participated in the three-day gathering to explore how faith, theology and community leadership can become transformative tools for social reconciliation, gender justice, and violence prevention.

The conference was hosted by the Institute for Faith and Gender Empowerment, an organisation committed to transforming faith spaces into safe, inclusive environments where justice, equality and dignity for all are upheld. The conference convened a dynamic community of faith leaders, theologians, legal practitioners, gender advocates, civil society representatives, and young changemakers across Africa. The 200 faith-based attendees were called to challenge gendered violence, rethink scriptural interpretations that perpetuate oppression and advocate for equality grounded in faith values.

Clalffin, Julie and Sammy were able to understand the role of faith-based organisations in addressing Gender-based Violence (GBV) and promoting gender justice. They also had the opportunity to network with like-minded organisations to strengthen their advocacy initiatives. Participants explored how faith, when rooted in justice and compassion, can become a powerful ally in advancing gender equality. The sessions inspired collective accountability, urging faith leaders to move from silence to action and from preaching to practice. A key highlight was the call to observe Thursdays as a day of remembrance for women affected by GBV, promoting prayer, advocacy, and community engagement. Participants departed with renewed conviction to make faith a living testimony of justice, healing wounds, amplifying women's voices, and leading transformation across Africa.

'The experience was deeply enriching, broadening our understanding, strengthening our commitment to gender equality, and inspiring us to apply the lessons learned within our programmes and communities.'

- Clalffin Achimba



Clalffin Achimba, Julie Kibii and Sammy Muga at the Faith and Gender Conference

ERD's Capacity Development project supported the attendance of Clalffin, Julie and Sammy, and we look forward to working with them to share their learnings and further strengthen gender equality in Edmund Rice Mission.

Collaboration with ERFA in Dublin



L-R: Naidi McDonnell, Fiona Dowling, Alexis Pantazis and Abigail Carney

We were delighted to host ERFA's International Programmes Manager Alexis Pantazis at the ERD Offices in Dublin in June. While we have worked closely with Alexis over the years, this was the first time we had the opportunity to meet in person.

Alexis is based in Australia and provides support to development projects that ERFA supports in Africa and Oceania. Alexis participated in Edmund Rice International's in-person advocacy training in Geneva, Switzerland before heading to Ireland to meet our team. During her visit, we were able to discuss areas of collaboration, including funding, safeguarding and capacity building, and how we can better support development projects that receive funding from both ERD and ERFA.

Building Capacity in Disability Inclusion

As part of the capacity development project, ERD has been implementing a disability inclusion and mainstreaming project this year. While the development projects we support work with people living with disabilities, this capacity building initiative ensures project teams understand the principles of disability inclusion, intentionally target people living with disabilities and remove barriers that may impede full participation in project activities.

We have worked with a consultant who engaged with many ERD-funded development projects to assess the level of disability inclusion and mainstreaming in their organisations and to gauge priority training needs. A Guide to Disability Inclusion for ER development projects has been produced. In addition to that, we facilitated three online training modules on disability inclusion and mainstreaming in November for ER project personnel. It was an opportunity to learn more about disability, and to see how projects can implement best practices into their operations.

Language is important



Our Mailing List

As a supporter of Edmund Rice Development, we want to ensure that you are the first to hear our latest news, information about our partner projects and the impact of Edmund Rice Mission globally.

If you would like to update your mailing list preferences —be added to, or removed from our electronic or postal circulation—please contact Abigail Carney at office@edmundricedevelopment.org.

Contact Us

Address:

Edmund Rice Development
Edmund Rice House

North Richmond Street

Dublin, D01 NX89

Email: office@edmundricedevelopment.org

Web: www.edmundricedevelopment.org

Phone: +353 (0)86 818 6107

Project Spotlight

A Day in the Life of a Niña Trabajador at the Centro Hermano Manolo

My name is María. I am 15 years old, and I currently live with my mother and two stepsisters. My father disappeared before I was born, when he found out I would be a girl, so I have never known him. My mother has a new partner with whom she has two daughters, but the relationship is not what I expected. My mother is in a toxic relationship. Every time they fight, my stepfather disappears for months, and it hurts me a lot to see my mom suffer and struggle to work to feed my sisters.

I'll tell you about my daily routine:

From Monday to Friday, I get up at 6:00 a.m., then I get ready for school and usually have bread and tea for breakfast. I leave with my 9-year-old sister at 7:00 a.m., because my mom stays home to cook and get ready for work.

We arrive at school at around 7:30 a.m., although it is sometimes difficult to find transportation during rush hour. From 7:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., I am in class. I like going to school and making friends, and my favorite subjects are maths, social studies and Spanish. Thanks to the support of Centro Hermano Manolo, where my little sister and I go to do our homework, we get good grades in school.

After class, I go to the market to meet my mom, who sells fruit while carrying my 2-year-old sister. She brings us the food she prepared at home. At 2:30 p.m., I go to the Centro Hermano Manolo on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. On Mondays, I stay home to do household chores, such as laundry and house-keeping. On Tuesdays, I take baking classes at school.

When I leave Centro Hermano Manolo, some days I take my two sisters home so my mom doesn't have to walk with them, and other days we help my mother sell at the market. When I get home early, I make dinner for my little sisters and mom. After dinner, I help my sister with her homework or do my own. I also like to play soccer in the local field because I love sports.

On Saturdays and Sundays, I get up at 6:30 a.m. and go to work without breakfast; sometimes my boss invites me to have coffee with empanadas or bread. I work all day, from 8:20 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., selling baby clothes. Sometimes I get tired because I sit for so long, but I like it because I need the money for my personal expenses: food, transportation, and school supplies. I get paid 60 bolivianos / 6 euros per day.

I love to dance the traditional dances of my country. My goal for the future is to study culinary arts or become a teacher.

The Centro Hermano Manolo in Cochabamba, Bolivia supports 80 niños trabajadores (working children and teens) in La Cancha marketplace; these young people have to work from a young age to support themselves and their families. The project provides a safe environment and academic and personal development supports to help the young people complete their education, ensuring a better future for them and their families.



Top: María with other CeHM project participants

Centre: María presenting during CeHM activity

Bottom: María dancing at CeHM

ERD Board Update

Changes to the ERD Board

At the May AGM, we welcomed two new Board Members, and a member of the Finance and Audit Subcommittee.

Angela Nsereko



Angela Nsereko is a finance and governance professional with over 20 years of experience in audit, risk management and leadership. In her current role as Director, Finance at The ELMA Philanthropies Services (East Africa) Limited, Angela oversees financial strategy, compliance and reporting for philanthropic investments across East Africa. Angela has previously served on the Board of Habitat for Humanity Uganda, where she contributed to governance, resource mobilisation and program oversight.

Beyond her professional work, she actively mentors young women through the Girls4Girls Uganda Chapter, guiding them in leadership and career development. She is also a passionate Toastmaster, who has formerly served as Club President and now serves as an Area Director. Her professional affiliations include Fellow of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (FCCA), Member of the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Uganda (ICPAU), and Member of the Academy of Executive Coaching (AOEC). Angela is excited to join and hopes to contribute to the Edmund Rice Development Finance Audit and Risk Committee of the ERD Board.

Christine Sesay



Christine Sesay is the Chief Financial Officer and Vice President of Partnerships at Kepler. Based in Rwanda, she oversees finance and operations across all Kepler entities in the United States, Canada, Rwanda and Ethiopia. In her role, she has successfully led major initiatives, including establishing a new campus, spearheading fundraising efforts and developing a student loan system.

Before joining Kepler, she served as Acting Country Director and Deputy Country Director at the Clinton Health Access Initiative, a global health organisation dedicated to strengthening health systems and improving access to care for HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis in developing countries. Her primary responsibility was to ensure the effective execution of national programmes, driving results that met and often exceeded CHAI's ambitious targets. Earlier in her career, she was the Deputy Country Director for Operations at GOAL Sierra Leone, where she initially focused on capacity building, strategic planning, and systems integration across

head office and field operations. When the Ebola crisis struck in 2014, she played a pivotal role in scaling the organisation's response. She is a Fellow of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (FCCA) and holds a Bachelor's degree in Accounting and Finance as well as a Master's degree in Finance.

Rachel Wanyoike



Rachel Wanyoike is currently the Managing Director of Solidaridad East and Central Africa, where she leads efforts to advance sustainability and inclusion across agricultural, industrial and mining value chains in sub-Saharan Africa. With over 15 years of experience in sustainable development, Rachel is passionate about creating positive change and empowering farmers, workers and communities to build climate-resilient and dignified livelihoods. Her expertise spans policy planning, strategy development, risk and compliance management, fundraising and project leadership. She has played a key role in strengthening partnerships with governments, donors and the private sector to promote climate-smart agriculture, regenerative practices, and responsible supply chains that work for both people and the planet.

Rachel is delighted to join the ERD Board, where she looks forward to contributing her experience and insights in sustainability and inclusive development. Deeply committed to collaboration and social justice, she believes in the power of collective action to create opportunities, promote equity, and inspire a more sustainable and compassionate world.

ERD Board Update



Dee McMahon and Fiona Dowling pictured with the Irish Ambassador to the Holy See Frances Collins



Br. John Casey, Br. Amandi Mboya, Fiona Dowling and Dee McMahon at the Andrea Bocelli concert

Partnership and Planning for the Future in Rome

Chief Executive Fiona Dowling travelled to Rome in September for various ERD meetings.

Following Fiona's participation last year in the first inter-congregational workshop looking at "Building a Network for Mission Development and Sustainability", she has been invited to join the steering group to advance this important project. The steering group met quarterly throughout 2025, and September was the first in-person meeting. Participating in the steering group is a great opportunity for us to learn from other congregations and to network with mission offices around the world on the best way forward for long-term sustainability. Fiona will be back in Rome in early December as the steering group have organised a workshop to bring together missionary congregations from all over the world.

ERD Board Chair Dee McMahon joined Fiona in Rome for a meeting with the Congregation Leadership Team (CLT). Congregation Leader Br. John Casey and CLT member Br. Amandi Mboya met with Fiona and Dee to explore future plans for ERD. It was a positive meeting that built on the progress made at the May Dublin gathering. Fiona and Dee also managed to visit Frances Collins, the Irish Ambassador to the Holy See, and had a positive exchange at the Embassy.

The trip ended at St. Peter's Square, where Fiona, Dee, Br. John and Br. Amandi attended the Andrea Bocelli concert! We look forward to more fruitful gatherings with the CLT in 2026.

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Edmund Rice Development
Edmund Rice House
North Richmond Street
Dublin 1
Tel: +353 (0)1 819 6782
Email: office@edmundricedvelopment.org
Website: www.edmundricedvelopment.org

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