



Education for Life beneficiaries in Kenya taking part in their Savings and Internal Lending Community (SILC) group as part of the project's economic empowerment initiatives

Welcome to the first Edmund Rice Development Newsletter of 2022.

2022 has been off to a busy start. A key focus of this year has been the ERD strategic planning process. Valuable feedback was gathered from our stakeholder consultation in March, and we look forward to developing our vision for the future in close collaboration with our partners in the ER network.

The Capacity Development project has found its footing in ERD. This year, an external evaluation of the first four years of the Capacity Development project was conducted by Out of the Box Kenya. Overall the evaluation was very positive, and we will build on the findings and recommendations as we plan into the future.

After two years of working remotely, it has been enjoyable to be able to gather in-person with the ERD team and Board again. The AGM in May was the first in-person Board gathering since the pandemic began, and it was a great opportunity for Board members to meet and reconnect. The 2021 Directors Report and Financial Statements were approved at that meeting, and are available on our website: www.edmundricedevelopment.org/governance.

While work travel has been paused for much of the last two years, we are now looking forward to visiting the projects this year. Currently, we have plans for visits to Zambia and Kenya to see the impactful work happening on the ground.

We will keep in touch throughout 2022. Sincere thanks for your ongoing support of Edmund Rice Mission.

Fiona Dowling
Chief Executive

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ERD Year in Review

Highlights and Achievements in 2021

The ERD 2021 Annual Report was approved in May 2022. Here are the highlights and achievements.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1:

Support partners to access resources to maximise impact of development projects



ER Development Projects in 10 countries accessed funding from ERD

€770,706
distributed to projects in 2021



Three **Distance Monitoring Visits** were undertaken by Misean Cara to ER development projects in Peru, the Philippines and Zambia



ANNUAL CALL FOR CONCEPT NOTES

Partners showed improved capacity to design and plan projects

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2:

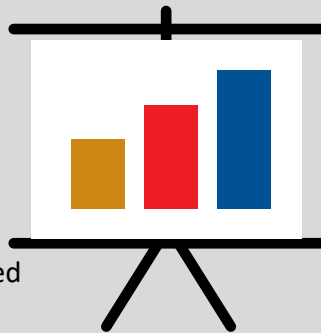
Build capacity to govern, plan and manage impactful projects



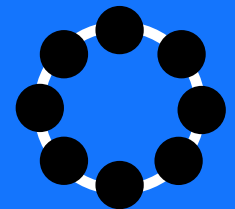
One **Governance Training Programme** developed for ER development mission

44

ER governors and project personnel received training in good governance



32 participants increased their capacity for Results Based Management through three online training courses and one in-country course



Facilitated two **ER Mission Office meetings** to collaborate and share learnings

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3:

Facilitate forum for collaboration around ER Development Projects



ERD was invited by the CLT to join a **working group** to explore pathways for collaboration across ER development mission.

Stakeholder Mapping

was carried out to prepare for the full Strategic Planning Renewal in 2022



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4:

Build sustainable organisation

ERD became a **member of Dóchas**, the Irish Association of international NGOs



450 supporters reached with two ERD newsletters in print and online



Developed **ERD's interim strategy** for 2021 – 2022



5

policies were reviewed and developed by the ERD Staff and Board

ERD team trained in Results-Based Management, Financial Audits, Governance and Charity Law

Project Spotlights



Mentorship meeting for Savings and Internal Lending Community (SILC) leaders on effective management of their various groups.

Checking in with Education for Life, Kenya

Education for Life is a project located in Eldoret, Kenya that empowers and provides opportunities for people living with HIV and AIDS from five informal settlements: Munyaka, Kamukunji, Huruma, Kipkaren, and Langas. This is done through education, psychosocial counselling, economic empowerment and advocacy to enable beneficiaries to make life-fulfilling choices towards realising their full potential in a society that is free of discrimination and marginalisation.

Recently, EFL conducted a one-day workshop on psychosocial counselling. The participants were 30 community members who recently tested positive for HIV. The workshop aimed to enhance their capacity to cope with issues including adherence to Anti-Retroviral medication, disclosure of HIV status, stigma and discrimination. It was noted during the session that the majority of the participants attributed failing to disclose their HIV status to a fear of stigma. The session helped to increase awareness to the participants on self-acceptance and informed decision making as a stepping-stone towards positively living with HIV/AIDS.

'I am very grateful for the training I received concerning psychosocial counselling. Before the training, I had not informed my kin about my HIV status, but since then I have been able to freely talk to my sister about it. I also have plans to inform my children about my status, of course with the help of my sister with whom I have become great friends. My husband died three years ago and currently I have been taking my HIV medication. I am very grateful to the EFL group.' – Rebecca, EFL beneficiary

An additional workshop was held that focused on healthy living. The session focused on hygiene, the value of a balanced diet in promoting good health, making right choices and promoting Kitchen gardening within the families. There was increased knowledge among participants on proper hygiene in handling food, awareness on less expensive or locally available food that they can incorporate in their daily diet and how to take initiative to grow their own food like vegetables in their backyard in the local community.



Br. John Paul Oluoch (pictured) recently took over as Project Director at Education for Life. He holds BA in Development Studies with 4 years of experience in community development, project engagement and administration in Christian Brothers Formation mission in Arusha, Tanzania. We are sincerely grateful to Misen Cara for the continued collaboration and support of the Education for Life project.



Beneficiaries with the local community representative with their food parcels in Blama

ER Mission responds to COVID in Sierra Leone

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted every aspect of life in West Africa. In Sierra Leone, which is ranked 181 out of 189 countries on the 2019 Human Development Index, the pandemic widened the level of vulnerability especially among poverty-stricken households. The country is a net importer of rice and other commodities, so the pandemic has created an exponential increase in the prices of basic food items. This added with disruptions caused by supply chain restrictions has caused untold suffering among many vulnerable households.

In response to the needs of the local communities, the West Africa Area Mission Office with a grant from ERD supported 98 households with basic food items across five communities in Sierra Leone. The food items were distributed to the households in November 2021 and included rice, vegetable oil, onions, tomato cartons and packets of spices. The Bo and Blama communities are vulnerable communities in the South-East of Sierra Leone. The Calaba Town and Hamilton communities are poverty-stricken coastal fishing communities with informal settlements. The Makeni community is a vulnerable community in the North of the country with a myriad of challenges including economic hardship. The allocation of households per community was done with consideration to the degree of need in each of the five targeted areas. Many of the households were made up of members that rely on manual labor and petty trading to survive; the pandemic restrictions severely affected their ability to earn a livelihood.

Upon receiving the distributed food items, the beneficiaries were elated and offered words of appreciation to what the food items meant to them. Miata from the Bo Community bemoaned, ***"You won't understand the reason behind my tears. My children and I have been living on cassava for the past one week. The last time we ate rice was on credit and I haven't paid for those cups of rice to this date. I can't believe my children and I will be eating rice, cooked with vegetable oil for the coming days. I will make sure I keep some for Christmas day. Thank you so much."***

Mary from the Hamilton Community shared ***"I am an orphan. I have no one to rely on except God and partially my aunt who sells vegetable crops to earn a living. My suitor impregnated me and abandoned me. I am struggling with the pregnancy as my suitor is nowhere to be found. I am more worried about the time I am going to deliver. Who will be there to help me and my kid? I really don't know how to bless you Godly people for this good work"***.

Mamie from Calaba Town remarked, ***"I have never in my life bought a full bag of rice on my own. Thank you Brothers for restoring dignity to my life"***. Weah, a blind beggar from the Blama Community said ***"Brothers, you have restored my hope, at least for the coming weeks, I don't have to beg in order to have food on my table."***

The intervention was impactful and it contributed to government and local communities' efforts in responding to the socio-economic chasm created by the pandemic. The Christian Brothers in the selected communities alongside the Local Chiefs and Youth Leaders implemented the grant, with the West Africa Mission Office providing oversight. We thank the ERD private donors for their generous support of this pandemic response initiative in Sierra Leone.

Edmund Rice Mission Capacity Development Project

External Evaluation

This external evaluation of the Capacity Development Project was conducted by Out of the Box Kenya in late 2021 through early 2022 to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project. Out of the Box used a consultative, collaborative and participative approach to carry out this evaluation collecting data through Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions with beneficiaries and stakeholders, and a desk review of ERD project documents, plans, reports and monitoring frameworks.

The evaluation report was very positive on the progress over the four years of the project. The evaluators found 'there is a strengthened capacity in Results Based Management (RBM), finance, safeguarding, development practice and increased collaboration and networking across Mission Development Offices (MDOs).' A series of recommendations have been developed which will inform our planning for the next project phase, which included placing an emphasis on governance capacity building which is by now already underway.

2022 Progress to Date

The capacity development project has been building on the success of the governance training programme and expanding to reach more areas in Edmund Rice Mission. In May, two new governance training programmes were delivered for the Edmund Rice Ministries Foundation Philippines, Inc (ERMFPI) and for projects in the Africa Province. The Board of ERMFPI who govern the Sama-Badjao project in Leyte and the CEBU project in Cebu City received training targeted for governors. The Africa Province invited their project and mission personnel to attend training on distinguishing the roles of governors from the roles of managers. The Irish Charity Regulators Six Principles of Good Governance was used as the framework for the training, and the session also included case studies to ensure theory was tied with practice. Both trainings were very well received from attendees.

The training has been of immense benefit distinguishing between the role of governance and management. The training was very well presented, and I now feel empowered in my role as part of management team.

- Africa Province Participant

We look forward to working with the governors of the Africa Province, India Province and Latin America Mission Area this year to further build their capacity in governance of development projects. While the congregation chapter and subsequent provincial chapters kept them busy for much of the first half of the year, the new leadership teams plan to participate in tailored training sessions this Autumn in topics such as Human Resource Management, Financial Oversight and Sustainability.



While the Mission Capacity Support Team no longer manages the Capacity Development project, the former members of the team, many of whom are mission office personnel, desired to continue to meet to share learnings, challenges and best practices from their respective areas. The capacity development project has continued to facilitate these ER Mission Office meetings over the last two years, which have been a great opportunity to hear from voices across Edmund Rice Mission in an informal setting. Pictured above is from the December Mission Office meeting where we shared reflections from the year and rang in the holiday season.

In addition to these meetings of the ER Mission Offices, the project has facilitated two learning sessions to date this year. One was a session on Safeguarding in Edmund Rice Development projects, which was informed by the findings from the ERD Safeguarding Assessment Tool. This session gave a high level view of common patterns and challenges in safeguarding practice. In addition, a refresher training in Results Based Management was included in the ERD Funding Policy and Reporting Roll-Out training in June. We look forward to offering more of these Learning Sessions in 2022.

News and Events from the Edmund Rice Network

Welcome to the New Congregation Leadership Team



Brothers Hugo Cáceres, John Casey (Deputy Congregation Leader), Peter Clinch (Congregation Leader), Senan D'Souza and David Ryan Silva

After nearly two years of delays, the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers Congregation Chapter finally reconvened in Dublin, Ireland from January 23 - February 5, 2022 to finish what was started in Lima, Peru in March 2020. Taking lots of COVID precautions, all delegates arrived safely and stayed healthy during the two weeks.

The Brothers elected a new congregation leadership team, led by Peter Clinch from Australia and including Senan D'Souza, David Silva, Hugo Cáceres and John Casey, who also serves as the ERD Board Chair. The Brothers thanked Br. Hugh O'Neill and his team for their years of service to the Congregation.

The transition process in Rome took place in mid-March. ERD was grateful to have Brothers Peter and Senan attend the ERD AGM alongside Br. John Casey in his role as Board Chair, and participate in the two-day ERD Strategic Planning meeting in person this past May. We look forward to working closely together over the next six years.

Congrats to Jessica Dewhurst!

We congratulate Jessica Dewhurst who was recently appointed by the Africa PLT as the Edmund Rice International (ERI) Africa Advocacy Coordinator. She will be coordinating and supporting all advocacy groups and organisations in the ERI and ER network within the African Continent, while continuing to run The Justice Desk as its CEO. The Justice Desk is a Human Rights non-profit organisation, inspired by the charisma of Blessed Edmund Rice, which works in South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The Justice Desk's mission is to empower ordinary people to understand and defend their Human Rights - so that they can transform society and create a more just and equal world.



Jessica pictured (centre) with beneficiaries of The Justice Desk

'I am incredibly passionate about ensuring that there are safe spaces for African advocacy groups across the continent to come together, share, mentor, learn from and support one another in this vitally important work. I look forward to being of service to the many organisations across the continent who are a part of this network!' -Jessica Dewhurst

ERD Update

ERD Strategic Planning Process

ERD is undertaking a Strategy Renewal process in 2022, setting the vision for the next 3-5 years. On May 5 and 6, the ERD Board, Members and staff met for a two-day strategic renewal workshop. It was great to have most attendees in person for the first time in over two years!

The workshop advanced the strategic planning process, and was also a great opportunity for people to get to know each other better, and for new Board Directors and Members to learn more about the organisation. With this in mind, the two days centred on building relationships and identifying collaborative ways forward. The objectives were:

- To enable people relatively new to ERD to gain relevant insights whilst providing a refresher to those who have been involved for longer.
- To engage participants in the strategy renewal process and in doing so make meaningful progress.
- To include learning opportunities and an opportunity to strengthen relationships.



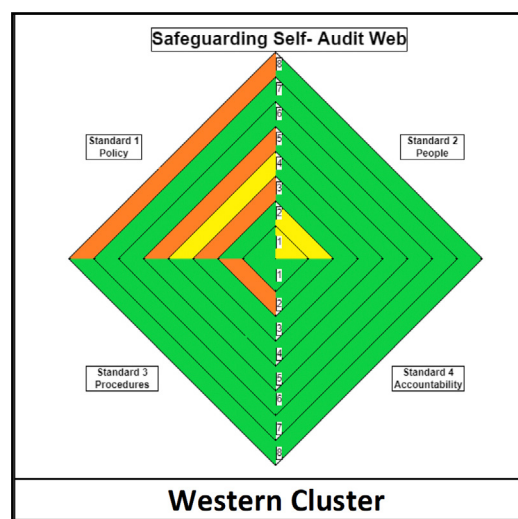
These two days built on the progress made at the ERD Stakeholder Consultation gathering, which took place on March 24. Priorities, structure and culture were all examined to see a possible way forward. We aim to finalise our strategic plan in the coming months, and will share it across the ER network.

Safeguarding in Edmund Rice Development Projects

At ERD we are committed working with our partners to ensure the protection of children and vulnerable adults from abuse, harm and exploitation. In 2021, we revised our Safeguarding Policy for partner projects. ERD Safeguarding Officer Naidi McDonnell used the opportunity to clarify compliance requirements while also aligning ERD's policy as much as possible with the policies of ERFA and Misesan Cara, two of our funding partners. In order to ensure projects have the highest possible safeguarding standards, in early 2022 ERD completed an assessment of the policies and practices of 12 partner projects.

Working with a consultant Rosemary Heenan, we developed a user-friendly safeguarding assessment framework. The framework consists of a self-audit tool, which assesses the safeguarding capacity of projects in the four internationally recognised safeguarding standards: Policy, People, Procedures and Accountability. The tool allows areas of strength and weakness to be identified and a visual summary of the results is produced (example below). The tool also contains a risk assessment to identify safeguarding risks present, and assess how the project's systems mitigate these risks.

Between February and April 2022, each of the projects were assessed using the framework. Following an initial review of the project safeguarding documentation, project teams were interviewed via Zoom, using the safeguarding assessment tool to guide the interview. All 12 projects achieved an acceptable standard of safeguarding and five projects achieved exemplary status. The highest scoring across all projects was for the Accountability Standard, while projects tended to score lower for written policies. However, in the majority of projects we found that actual practice was stronger than what was outlined in the policies. The Western Cluster project in Zambia in particular was commended for quality and innovative Safeguarding practice. We look forward to working with the projects in 2022 to assist them in addressing any gaps in policies and procedures to further strengthen safeguarding across Edmund Rice Mission.



Update from the ERD Board

Meet the new ERD Board Directors

Meet the three new Board Directors that ERD officially welcomed to the organisation at the AGM in May.

Elser Llanos



Elser holds a BA in Psychology, MA in Organisational Psychology and an MS in Development Practice from Trinity College Dublin. Elser is a former member of the Christian Brothers. During his time as a Brother, he worked all across the Latin America region with the most marginalised families and communities. Currently Elser works as the Vice President of Programs for A Chance In Life, a non-profit based in New York that serves at-risk children and youth. Elser oversees all programmatic activities and relations with 28 partner organisations in 10 countries, and leads A Chance In Life's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Team.

Elser is no stranger to ERD. He previously served as Mission Coordinator for the Latin America Mission Area, and as an integral member of the Mission Capacity Support Team. In both positions, he worked closely with the ERD team, and we are delighted to welcome him back as an ERD Director. 'I am committed, I am always open to learn, and I seek that my work contributes to make a difference in achieving human sustainable development of the poorest communities.'

Caroline McGrath

Caroline McGrath is a practising barrister, practising in general civil law with a particular interest in regulatory law, professional negligence, medical negligence and data protection. Prior to being called to the Bar, she practiced as a community pharmacist in a large pharmacy group where she held responsibility for clinical governance and regulatory affairs. Caroline has previously served as a Member of Council and Vice President of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland. She is looking forward to contributing to the organisation.

Dee McMahon



Dee is a Chartered Accountant with over 25 years' experience working in both the commercial and the not-for-profit sectors. Early in her finance career, she decided to do some voluntary work overseas with the aid agency GOAL and took a post as field Accountant in Darfur, Sudan. She worked with GOAL for over 8 years progressing to roving Financial Coordinator and Head of Logistics and Compliance. In 2011 Dee set up DMM Consulting and established a strong not-for-profit client base. Dee became Finance Director for Children's Medical Research Foundation in 2016 managing all aspects of the organisation's finances and governance. Dee is one of the founding members of Cycle

Against Suicide and was a Director of Fundraising Ireland until the merger with ICTR to create Charities Institute Ireland. In 2021 Dee was appointed Chief Financial Officer for The National Council for the Blind (NCBI). In this role, Dee manages all aspects of the finances, governance and risk in relation to the charity's income and expenditure and is responsible for all aspects of compliance with various regulatory authorities. Dee is delighted to be involved with ERD. She hopes to be able to use her experience and skills to add value to ERD in any way she can to further the mission overseas.

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