



Creating a Better Tomorrow



Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

(21 April 1926 – 8 September 2022)

We were deeply saddened by the passing of our beloved Patron, Her Majesty The Queen, in September. Her guidance and support of Mothers' Union over the decades enabled us to achieve so much, impacting communities and touching lives, and has inspired us for the future.

We give thanks to God for her role as our Patron, for blessing her with special gifts for a life humbly dedicated to public service, for her strong faith; for her commitment and devotion to family life; and for her great concern for communities and all people.



WHO WE ARE

Mothers' Union is a global Christian movement focused on ending poverty, violence and social injustice in communities across the UK and worldwide.

Active for nearly 150 years and with over 4 million members across 84 countries, we work with people of all faiths and none, transforming lives, strengthening families and advocating for change. Through kindness, faith and compassionate action we hope to create a better tomorrow, where everyone can thrive.



Burundi team

In 2022, we supported over **3.4 million** people worldwide.

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“At the 2022 Lambeth Conference, Bishop Anthony Poggo, the new Secretary General of the Anglican Communion described the work of the Mothers' Union in many provinces as ‘one of the hidden secrets’ of the Anglican Communion. For nearly 150 years, this wonderful charity has quietly and determinedly supported communities globally through faith and practical support and I thank them for their valuable work.”

The Most Reverend and Right Honourable Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby

HOW WE WORK

For nearly 150 years Mothers' Union has worked with communities in the UK and around the world. We believe that faith and compassion have the power to transform lives. We work under three core pillars to help communities transform:

Stopping Violence – through Peace & Safety

Stopping Injustice – through Gender Justice

Stopping Hunger and Increasing Self-Reliance

Our programme work and central support includes literacy and savings programmes, parenting and resilience training and crisis assistance, alongside the myriad of small acts undertaken by our loyal and committed members in their own communities every day. We are led by people's needs. We listen and respond practically and through faith to the requirements of individual communities, doing all we can to improve people's lives today to instigate lasting change for tomorrow. Additionally, and where appropriate, we partner with other organisations and governments to increase our impact.

In 2022, **750,670 lives**

were directly impacted globally whilst we also

supported over 2.7 million

indirectly through our grassroots initiatives such as working in prisons, building resilience against climate change, supporting families and educating about health.

2022 marked a new milestone for us with the launch of Transformation – now!

Adopted by all our members. Through this year and beyond, members of the Mothers' Union will:

- Transform ourselves, personally and spiritually, to live out our faith
- Transform the churches and communities we work with and of which we are a part to reflect Christ's kingdom
- Transform Mothers' Union to be relevant for 21st century life

WORLDWIDE PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

“The beauty of our members lies in their unwavering faith to always find a way where there seems to be no way.”



JOY OF VISITS AFTER COVID

In a time when we can once again travel, journeying to visit MU groups across the world has been uplifting and inspiring and a true learning experience.

Two island visits stand out for me during 2022. My visit to the Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean Sea and the Isle of Man in the Irish Sea – two beautiful islands where I felt the most amazing new energy and excitement of our members driven by their passion to make a difference and remain relevant in our changing world.

Claudia's story from Trinidad remains with me. She felt called to work specifically with boys within her local community and church who were victims of unstable homes. She set up a project called Boys to Men following the loss of her own husband and son. In partnership with a specialist NGO, the project provides trained male facilitators to work with boys, helping them emotionally, physically and spiritually to cope with past traumatic experiences and preparing them for the work environment and future family life.

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

Inspiring the movement and the power of little things

It is the faith and drive Claudia shows, replicated by our members worldwide, which humbles me and is the backbone of our movement. Our members' strong voices and passionate action at grassroots level transforms the lives of others. They are always willing to pitch in and pool their gifts to make extraordinary things happen. From rallying into action to support the arrival of refugees, from making a stand to raise awareness of our campaigns, contributing funds through amazing fundraising feats, we are a membership of drive and action. It is all these acts that, together, are the bedrock of our enviable worldwide movement.

Our Three Pillars

Our three pillars - stopping hunger and increasing self-reliance; stopping violence through peace and safety; and stopping injustice through gender justice – remain at our core in 2022 and are transforming lives across cultures and societies. We are making a difference as the stories in this annual report testify. We are particularly proud of our work in Burundi which has seen over 144,000 people become literate in twenty years, 89% of them women.

Injustice, and especially advocating for gender justice, has never been more important in today's world. In 2022, our members have continued to speak out - especially via our *no more 1 in 3* domestic violence campaign, we have built trust with women in our partner programmes and lobbied governments.

All acts of kindness go to support our world.

Day to day, it is fellowship that is seeded at diocesan level - reaching out to the lonely, helping those who suffer, being a listening ear, all following the ethos envisaged by Mary Sumner nearly 150 years ago.

In 2022, the global crises seem bigger than ever. Climate change, cost of living and conflict are increasingly affecting us all in one way or another. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary for us as members to continue to use our gifts in meaningful ways. Suffering is closer to home for many than we have ever imagined.

We need to transform, be open-minded as individuals, and as a worldwide charitable organisation adapt and flourish, particularly in times of difficulty and in difficult situations.

Everyone can make a difference through faith

Behind every member is God. A God who gives us hope and a drive to do our utmost to transform situations. Strengthened by our togetherness, we must seize every opportunity to use the blessings presented to us as part of our personal growth and for the future of our beloved Mothers' Union. This will not always be easy; it will take every ounce of our faith to push us forward to take risks and step out of our comfort zones. I was excited by our Reimagining Conference this year and look forward to the recommendations which come out of this.

The results of our endeavours will be for our children, for our grandchildren and for our great grandchildren above and beyond all we can ask or imagine – for with God nothing shall be impossible. Transformation is happening here and now.

Sheran Harper, Worldwide President

CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

For with God nothing shall be impossible (KJV Luke 1:37)



LIVING WITH HOPE FOR TOMORROW

As we all began to emerge, with gratitude, from the trauma and isolation of the pandemic, 2022 was an opportunity to build on the learning of the last two years, the new ways of communicating, as well as starting to rebuild the face-to-face activities and fellowship so important to MU members. It has been an opportunity to build on the resilience shown by so many, and to look with fresh eyes at how we shape our future, in a world where deep challenges, including conflict, climate change and economic crises remain.

Transformation – now!

2022 was also the start of a three-year cycle (“Triennium”) – and members chose Transformation – now! as the theme for the Triennium, to focus on how we all, in ways great and small, can look afresh at how we link with one another and support those in greatest need in our communities

Our Board welcomed three new members, including Pamela Abama, from the Solomon Islands, bringing an important voice from the Island States affected by climate change. The Worldwide Board includes representatives from 10 different nations around the world, ensuring that the voices

of the members, and those in need, can be heard, wherever they are.

Sustainable transformation of lives and livelihoods

In 2022, we commissioned an independent study of the impact of the work of our members in Burundi over the last 20 years, supported by the worldwide charity, and different partners over time. Over the years, volunteer facilitators were trained to support communities to become literate and numerate; to set up savings groups and to recognise the power they themselves had to improve their lives and the lives of those around them. 2.9%

of the adult population of Burundi has become literate through the ongoing work, 98% of participants reported improved relationships in the family and community, and 98% improved self-esteem. The status of women in the community improved greatly: “traditionally, women were considered of lower status than men...now, they are valued, honoured”.

As a central charity, we are both proud of, and humbled by, the impact of the work of local members, which the support of the wider charity has enabled.

We are also delighted that this validates the MU community-led approach to transformation – in this report, you will read about the effectiveness of the literacy programme in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Ethiopia. Alongside our ongoing savings group work, this shows how the MU participatory approach, as well as enabling women to provide for their families, consistently improves their self-esteem and their ability to take on leadership roles in society. It is also helping to shift traditional views of the role of men and women and reducing the level of gender-based violence.

The value of small things

Across the world, our members are committed to helping those in need around them in a myriad of different ways. I often hear “but I only...” – however the impact of those small acts can be profound. Whether it is supporting refugees with much needed items such as blankets or household objects; visiting prisoners; crafting blankets and fiddle pinnies for dementia sufferers; or marching to build awareness of gender-based violence. And in the UK and Ireland, members use a Bible-based approach, Metamorphosis, to really understand what the local needs are, and how MU, and the church community can address them.

Transforming ourselves and our ways of working

Mothers’ Union members around the globe are united in their deep faith, and will, to show faith through action to create an environment where every individual can thrive. We are delighted that, out of the pandemic, we have built new lines of communication online – with our daily Midday prayers joining together members from as far afield as Guyana, Papua New Guinea and Myanmar as well as the UK and Ireland; and monthly calls to share issues and pray together across continents. We are pleased that the Worldwide Board was able to meet for the first time for three years in person in November, and look forward to increasing face-to-face contact again from 2023.

Journeying together to create a better tomorrow

Our fight for gender justice continues, as we seek to build partnerships with others, so together we can make a bigger difference, sooner. We continue our call for “no more 1 in 3” women suffering from domestic abuse, and will increasingly extend our campaign beyond 16 days of activism to 365 days of activism a year, as well as working locally to provide practical support and act as agents of change. No girl should grow up to face abuse and violence, we aim to create a world where every individual can thrive.

BIG GIVE 2022

Thanks to support of our Christmas Big Give campaign which included match funding to double member donations, we raised over £106,000 for vital, life-changing projects in South Sudan where decades of civil unrest and violence have caused huge amounts of hurt and trauma for its people.

The funds will be used to expand our Literacy and Trauma Healing programme to 48 communities over the next two years. Each literacy circle contains up to 30 adult participants led by community volunteers trained by Mothers' Union.

Our programmes include interactive Bible studies and learning activities such as understanding the local alphabet. The facilitators use participatory tools to initiate discussion to help bring out knowledge and skills and challenge some of the cultural norms.

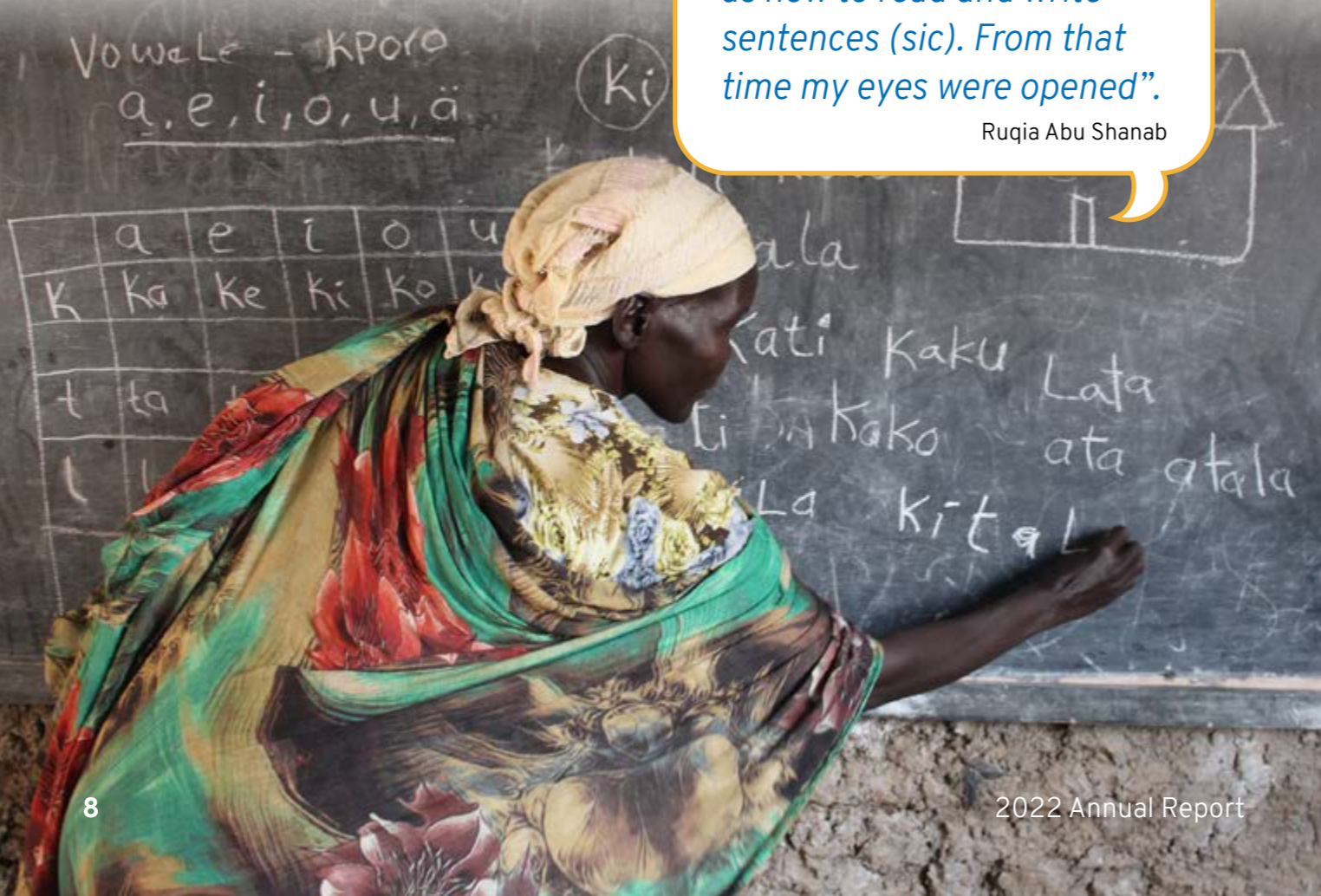
Already, the literacy circles run by the MU are seeing dividends in the country, enabling women to feel secure and able to discuss important issues affecting their lives such as health, gender-based violence, traditional practices and household responsibilities. Around 70% of attendees feel that they have

improved coping mechanisms and many are using their voice for the first time, taking a leading role in advocacy activities for peace in their communities.

Ruqia Abu Shanab wasn't allowed to attend school due to the social and cultural norms which discouraged women from getting an education. Since becoming literate, Ruqia has opened her own centre to train women from both Christian and Muslim faiths in entrepreneurial skills to help them set up businesses. She is now MU Diocesan President responsible for 33 churches in the Diocese of Khartoum in Sudan.

"Before the MU literacy circle I was blind, I didn't know how to read and write. Joining the literacy circle helped me more than I would ever expect as well as how to read and write sentences (sic). From that time my eyes were opened".

Ruqia Abu Shanab



OUR WORLDWIDE IMPACT IN 2022

MU made a difference to the lives of over

3.4 million

people worldwide.



MU indirectly supported over

2.7 million

people last year.



26,696

gifts of love



MU supported

750,670

through our face-to-face work and community projects.



11,796

offers of service

Over **2,238**

family members enjoyed an 'Away From It All' holiday supported by their MU branch.



5,412 acts of nurturing faith



19,834

craft items, made with kindness and compassion, were produced



1 in 3 women worldwide continue to be affected by domestic violence or abuse

Mothers' UNION
#NoMore1in3
End abuse and violence now

MAKING A WORLDWIDE IMPACT



Mothers' Union coordinates projects in a number of countries worldwide, with a focus on sub-Saharan Africa, working on projects to reduce hunger and poverty and increase self-reliance. Alongside this we do all we can to raise awareness of gender justice and encourage community cohesion to help reduce conflict.

"I got a loan of 20,000 Burundi Francs from the savings group and bought peas and beans for sale. Then I bought a pig that multiplied. I sold the piglets and bought a plot of land. The pig multiplied again. I sold the pig and the piglets and bought a cow. I sold the cow and bought a motorcycle that I use as a taxi business. From the profit, I bought another cow."

Female programme participant, Busoro community, Diocese of Buye, Burundi

In late September 2022 we published a review of our 20 year Literacy and Financial Education programme in Burundi. The goal of the project was to increase self-reliance and combat poverty through introduction of adult literacy circles with the added aims of promoting gender equality, women's empowerment and promoting social inclusion and peace-building.

In total, the programme has trained **1,291 facilitators** in **1,289 communities** across the country, of which 69% are women. It has directly impacted the lives of **165,416 participants** of which **77% were women**.

The programme encompassed four main strands beginning with functional literacy and numeracy education followed by the formation of savings and loans associations, financial literacy and business development and lastly, and most recently, parenting education.

Burundi is one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world where most of the population work in agriculture and many live in abject poverty due to the effects of a civil war (1993–2005) which devastated communities. There are deep-rooted inequalities between women and men both at home and in society and years of war have fostered a culture of normalisation of violence, with sexual and gender-based violence being particularly widespread.

There have been SIX key impacts of our programme:

- 1. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**
An improvement in women's self-esteem, confidence and aspirations through developing their skills, changing mindsets and enabling their voices to be heard – often via securing leadership positions.
- 2. Financial Empowerment**
Over the two decades, a rise in entrepreneurship, improved household income and financial stability leading to improved wellbeing and security. Our financial education has equipped women with knowledge and skills to manage their resources well, with 90% of female participants reported to have started a business. In tandem, women's status in households has been elevated, with a reduction in domestic violence due to less conflict in the home.
- 3. Transformation of Families**
Families and communities have benefitted from a new appreciation of benefits of education, better parenting skills improving family relationships and a rise in shared tasks and responsibilities between the genders. This has contributed to stronger marriages, nurturing of children and more stable family units.
- 4. Helping MU Deliver its Mandate Sustainably**
The programme has encouraged communities to become more resilient and supported 24,000 Mothers' Union members through training programmes and uniting them through prayer, worship and service. 40% of female participants indicated they had become MU members.
- 5. Contribution to Community Development and Nation Building**
Communities of hope have been built, with 98% of participants reporting improved relationships with friends, neighbours and the community, due to improved communication skills. Those who have been trained serve as role models and share ideas with other members of the community, transforming mindsets around gender equality, women's empowerment and family life. By being inclusive of ethnic, religious and other socio-economic groupings, the programme greatly contributed to peacebuilding. Furthermore, besides personal transformation, many course attendees became agents of change by taking up leadership positions.
"Traditionally, women were considered to be of a lower status than men... with the programme, they are valued, honoured. They have increased their status in society. They are teaching their children, both boys and girls, when they are still young, that both are of the same value."
Diocesan Secretary, Diocese of Rutana
- 6. Faith in Action**
Whilst not compelling people to convert to Christianity, the programme had a transformative impact on the participants' personal relationship with God and women's participation in the Church – showing faith in action. As people became literate, the first material they started reading was the Bible, which deepened their faith and transformed their lives.

In Burundi

144,103 people are now accredited with being literate, **89%** of them women.
99% of the programme participants improved their self-esteem.
96% now take part in family decision-making.
82% of married women reported improved use of reproductive health services.

75% of males reported that they no longer physically abuse their wives.
91% were able to buy goats or pigs.
96% can afford health insurance.
88% of female participants have increased personal income.
79% have better quality housing.



LITERACY CIRCLES ARE VEHICLES FOR CHANGE

MU Literacy projects work in many countries worldwide. In 2022, our Literacy Programme in the Diocese of Gambella in Ethiopia has enabled numerous MU members to become literate. Joyously, many then go on to train as Lay Readers so they can support their local churches in a leadership role.

Rebecca is one of the MU members who has benefitted from the programme. She recently said, "Before, it was just like a dream into my mind that I could read the Bible and hymn book. Now I can lead worship and the liturgy in church."

Tabitha, another beneficiary, said, "Our eyes have been opened. Before, when we were illiterate, people would say that the Nuer language was nothing - 'you should only learn English' - but when we can read our language we can become advisors to ourselves."

"I never expected to be able to read. I now want all my sisters to benefit from this."

Tabitha, Ethiopia.



MU Literacy projects have also run in the Democratic Republic of Congo and more are planned in new locations in 2023 including Papua New Guinea.

The Democratic Republic of Congo, the DRC, is one of the poorest countries in the world, coming 179th out of 189 countries in the Human Development Index, with 76% of its population estimated to be living below the poverty line on less than \$1.90 (about £1.40) a day. Repeated conflict and outbreaks of disease, plus economic and political uncertainty, coupled with illegal mineral extraction which displaces local people, contribute to poverty which is particularly concentrated in the North Western and Kasai regions.

MU DRC identified illiteracy as the main barrier facing communities moving out of poverty. Lack of basic literacy and numeracy skills prevents them

from running their own businesses and income generating activities. It also limits their knowledge and learning and undermines their confidence and ability to engage. They are also unable to make decisions at community and household level, exacerbating poverty and contributing towards gender abuse and violence. There is a general perception that women cannot run a good business or become successful.

In 2022, our two year 'Sustainable economic and social empowerment for disadvantaged women' project neared an end and has been proven to help change lives. Operating in four dioceses, 48 volunteer facilitators were trained by MU in improving agricultural techniques, nutrition and climate change awareness as well as other important issues such as gender justice and their skills in self-reliance and income generation.

In total, **1,409 learners** enrolled in the project groups (**1,217 women, 192 men**), and some of the reported outcomes includes:

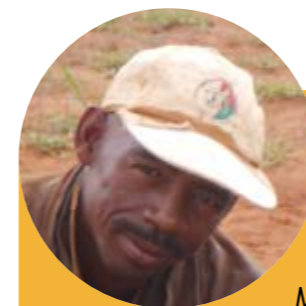
- Increased confidence: several participants reported that they have increasingly taken on leadership roles, for instance, leading Bible and choir groups.
- Increased community involvement: increased involvement with the local elections in the districts.
- Reports of reduced GBV – An increase of women as well as men are open to talking about it.
- Out of the 1,217 women in the literacy groups that reported having no say in household decisions, 70% of them are now involved in the decision-making.
- Increased agricultural knowledge to boost food production.

Marceline, KALIMA Archdeaconry, the Diocese of Kindu - a learner in TUPENDANE literacy circle

I stayed at home for many years and never got an education.

"I knew how to make clothes however, although I could sew I could not write the measurements for my client. When the project of literacy started in our area, I enrolled quickly. I am able to read all my messages on my telephone if my clients write to me. My income has increased and I have opened a workshop,

I changed my life very quickly by repairing my mum's house, my two little brothers are going to school, I am paying their school fees. I have a project of a farm where I will plant palm oil with my profits. I have also recovered my self-esteem.



"Before the literacy circle started in his area, women were not able to be involved in community decision-making and even attending meetings because they were not educated and therefore not respected for their input. Meetings were composed of only men, there was never any contribution of women during the big decisions made in the community.

"MU has brought this literacy circle and as a result, has increased many opportunities for this community. Women are becoming educated. They are now being called to be involved in meetings and other community events. They are able to read and write, they are speaking out about issues. Their crops are developing and they are making more money from the market. It is raising the profile of our community."

Henry, 54, a local community leader of Mbau township, member of their literacy circle steering committee.

OFFERING PEACE AND SAFETY IN OUR BUSY WORLD

‘I was a stranger and you welcomed me’ – Matthew 25:35

The heart of much of Mothers’ Union’s work in dioceses across Britain and Ireland is reaching out to individuals in need, whether that is prisoners, refugees, women fleeing domestic violence or rallying to respond to immediate need in their own or neighbouring communities. It is this warm welcome and wealth of acts of kindness that offer peace and safety to those who need it the most.

OUR PRISON WORK

“Simply knowing that they (prisoners) are being thought of, that they matter, makes all the difference.” Mothers’ Union member

Mothers’ Union Prison Work programme offers love, compassion and companionship to prisoners across the world.

We have found that 45% of people lose contact with their families when they go to prison, so prisoners can be deeply affected by isolation, loneliness and mental health issues.

We reassure individuals that they’re not alone and forgotten and our prison work is vital for ensuring prisoners keep in contact with their families – aiding the development of more than 200,000 UK children who have a parent in prison, promoting their mental health and helping ease the transition following a prisoner’s release into the community.

During 2022, dedicated Mothers’ Union members resumed their in-person volunteering at prison visitor centres and are the first point of contact for families who are visiting loved ones, welcoming visitors and helping put them at ease in a stressful environment. Members also send cards at Christmas and Easter, run craft sessions and provide gifts to prisoners to give to their children when they visit.

This year the prisons’ team set up a ‘Being Dad’ course where dads in prison have space to reflect on how to be a good father to their children. The course explores topics such as children’s feelings, listening and talking to children to help them grow in confidence and children’s rights and responsibilities. One dad told a representative he is now ‘developing to become the father my kids deserve.’

Mothers’ Union branches also supply bags and essential items for ex-offenders such as toiletries, underwear, phone and coffee vouchers when they are released. The bags were appreciated, often moving recipients to tears to learn that strangers care so much.

WELCOMING REFUGEES

Our charity has always extended a warm welcome to those fleeing war or unrest at home, offering compassion and kindness, especially to children to ease the transition to an unfamiliar country and show that they are safe and amongst friends.

During 2022, members in dioceses across Britain and Ireland welcomed refugees from Ukraine following the war with Russia which started in early 2022, from Sudan, Afghanistan, Syria and Yemen.

The Mothers’ Union Diocese of Derry & Raphoe in Ireland knitted teddies to gift refugee children on arrival to help with their resettlement.



They hand knitted 200 bears in the colours of the Ukraine flag which was placed in a gift bag with a Teddy Passport featuring a welcome and blessing in three languages. Other dioceses also contributed in similar ways, supplementing teddies with much-needed clothes and household items.

CRAFTING WITH LOVE

MU members have always been renowned for their crafting activities. This year was no exception with nearly 20,000 individual craft items lovingly created and given as gifts to those in need.

“Not only does this produce a range of items that are then donated, but it has big mental health benefits for those doing the crafting who have a sense of purpose in life and also an opportunity to meet with others and craft together. For some, being actively involved in a community that works towards helping others also offers a way to heal from grief; a member from Chelmsford shared that she found that knitting toys helped her after her husband committed suicide,”

says Alison Fernandes, Regional Development Manager for the MU in the UK.

In 2022, many MU branches have knitted fidget blankets – often with textured items securely attached – which are used in care homes and dementia units by individuals in the later stages of dementia to keep their hands busy and stave off feelings of anxiety or boredom.

AIFA HOLIDAYS



“Thank you so much for offering and allowing us this time. You will never know the difference this has made to us.” AIFA Beneficiary

Many MUs across Britain and Ireland offer respite holidays for families away from their daily stress and responsibility, especially prioritising those who have suffered domestic abuse, supporting them to heal and rebuild important family bonds through its ‘Away From It All’ holidays. Last year over 2,000 family members were able to enjoy a relaxing break courtesy of local branches.

In 2022, MU members worldwide helped others in a myriad of ways:

- Providing school shoes, blankets, clothes, toiletries, menstrual products and stationery.
- Running parenting classes, seminars and breakfast programmes.
- Organising holidays and outings for families in-need.
- Writing Christmas and Easter cards.
- Sourcing Christmas gifts.
- Through prayer.
- Livestock training.
- Organising food parcels.
- Leading talks on gender-based violence.
- Refurbishing homes.

MEMBERSHIP AT HOME AND ABROAD



With over 4 million members worldwide, gained over nearly 150 years, the Mothers' Union is a force for global change, with a particular focus on improving the life of families and supporting and equipping women to be leaders of tomorrow.

Our membership movement provides strong connections through fellowship and worship online and in person, around the corner and around the world. In 2022, our membership has been united via the following ways:



REIMAGINING CONFERENCE 2022

What was it all about and why did we need it?

The Reimagining Conference, sparked from the triennial theme of Transformation, was designed to kick-start a process of reimagining Mothers' Union.

One hundred members representing Britain and Ireland came together at Liverpool Hope University in July, for a weekend of discussion, ideas sharing and exploring solutions for growth and sustainability centred around what 'the MU needs to be' in the 21st century to reflect and support the communities we serve.

The fruitful discussions looked at rejuvenating membership, how to modernise and streamline how MU operates in its branches and dioceses so that volunteers can deliver projects and support in their local communities and how to maximise

use of resources. Members shared strategies and experiences about promoting MU including how to successfully fundraise for the charity, and successful ways to attract the new members MU needs so that it can evolve and continue its important work.

Sessions included harnessing the power of MU, working more effectively with clergy, other organisations, dioceses and partners and how to stay connected with God and the Christian ethos whilst being more inclusive and welcoming to everyone in communities in Britain and Ireland and important projects overseas.

Priorities emerged that will transform the way the charity works and provide the impetus to encourage and attract new members. A steering group consisting of members and staff were convened and each diocese has taken away three positive actions to progress and harness, enabling the MU to grow and thrive.

Supporting Spouses at The Lambeth Conference

In August, 30 Bishops from Peru, Argentina Uruguay, Chile, Egypt, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi and their spouses visited Ireland after the Lambeth Conference ended. They spent the week celebrating, interacting and engaging in different activities alongside members from Britain and Ireland, embracing the theme of 'Kingdom Voices'.

THE POWER OF FELLOWSHIP AND IMPACT OF MOTHERS' UNION

Reflections on our Annual Gathering 2022, Belfast

In September, 500 members from Britain and Ireland gathered in Belfast for the Mothers' Union's Annual Gathering. It was the first opportunity in a long while for members to meet in fellowship, and the programme was packed with inspirational updates and stories from across the movement that showcase the impact of the work we do.



The Right Reverend Andrew Forster, Bishop of Derry and Raphoe gave an inspirational sermon lauding Mothers' Union as "...the backbone, the heart and the stone in the shoe" of the Anglican Communion. The stone in the shoe reminding us that we need to challenge injustice where we see it and make sure that we work to positively transform our communities here and overseas.

Members left inspired with positive stories of meaningful and successful engagement that will encourage the new members we need to sustain Mothers' Union into the future and continue to be the largest volunteer-led movement in the Anglican Communion.

Frogmore House Event

At the end of August, Mothers' Union had the wonderful opportunity of hosting a day at Frogmore House and Gardens, Windsor Home Park for members and guests. The gardens are open for charity days on three days each year so it was a privilege to be picked as one of the hosting charities for 2022.

On a beautiful, sunny day, over 2,000 members enjoyed picnics and walks in the gardens and the chance to meet MU representatives and staff from Mary Sumner House. The event raised over £30,000 which will go towards supporting our charitable endeavours.



CAMPAIGNING FOR CHANGE

The Mothers' Union has a history of speaking out and campaigning on important issues affecting women worldwide such as gender violence and inequality and oppression. Combating domestic abuse through gender-justice is a major part of Mothers' Union's work and, all over the world, Mothers' Union groups are working together to address, and ultimately eradicate, the issue.



"In Ireland, we speak of 'No more 1 in 3', referring to the fact that 1 in 3 women worldwide will experience some form of gender-based violence in their lifetime. Yet, harrowingly, the ladies of Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan spoke of it being 2 in 3, often 3 in 3".

Jacqui Armstrong, the MU All-Ireland Coordinator for 16 Days of Activism



NO MORE 1 IN 3 AND THE 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM



As part of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, we ran our No More 1 in 3 campaign on Mothers' Union's Global Day of Action, Saturday 26th November, to raise awareness of the 1 in 3 women who will suffer from some form of abuse throughout their lives. At least 35 events and services were held across Britain and Ireland including prayer vigils, events, reflective walks, candlelight marches and services at Blackburn, Durham, Hereford, Lincoln, Sheffield, Truro and St. Columb's Cathedrals. Many members held a one minute's silence at 1.03pm to confront the issue of domestic abuse and raise awareness of its prevalence.

In Ireland a special service was broadcast on RTÉ with Sheran Harper giving the address; and in Carmarthen, Wales, members held a candlelight march through the town before a special service. Bev Jullien, CEO, did interviews for 18 local BBC radio stations along with an interview of a member who is a survivor of domestic abuse

The 16 Days of Activism campaign further united members from around the world with events taking place in over 14 countries from Uganda to the USA and Madagascar to Myanmar. It was a wonderful example of the true strength of the Mothers' Union to champion change.

PARTNERSHIP WITH WOMEN'S AID

On 11 October 2022, Mothers' Union joined forces with **Women's Aid** to support their Come Together to End Domestic Abuse campaign so that no girl is raised in a world of abuse.

Mothers' Union was the first national charity to partner with Women's Aid Federation of England in this new campaign, demonstrating how we can make a difference on this important issue if we all come together and dispel myths and create safe spaces. Together we are working towards a future where everyone can thrive, confronting injustice wherever we find it.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Held in March, the theme for 2022 was **#BreakTheBias** – a push towards a gender equal world that is free of bias, discrimination and stereotypes against women. These principles have consistently underpinned our work at Mothers' Union through the decades, so this year, we highlighted stories of empowered women who transformed their own lives and were committed to #BreakTheBias every day.

NATIONAL DOMESTIC ABUSE PLANNING GROUP

In 2022 we set up a national domestic abuse planning group made up of members who are interested in combatting abuse. This is a powerful group of a diverse range of women, some of who are survivors themselves.



THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (UNCSW) MARCH 2022

Twelve MU representatives from nine different countries attended the UNCSW conference in March, global intergovernmental body dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. This year's theme was **Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes.**

The MU delegation submitted a statement calling on member states, agencies and funders to ensure:

- Women participate fully alongside men in climate change/disaster risk reduction policy
- Planning and funding of all climate change initiatives are gender-sensitive and take into account the specific needs and priorities of women and girls
- Inequalities are addressed that put women at greater risk of the impacts of climate change
- Support is given to organisations embedded in local communities to identify and fund locally practical and sustainable solutions to the climate crisis
- An increase in climate financing and resource provision for climate change adaptation in marginalised communities most at risk of its impacts

We are actively working with our membership to elevate our voice and bring about change.

MOVING THE DIAL ON GENDER JUSTICE

“As caretakers of God’s wonderful planet, may we continue to be inspired by the inspiration and resilience of those who suffer. What we do today affects their tomorrow”.

Jacqui Armstrong, MU All-Ireland Coordinator

It is well-recognised that domestic violence escalated during the Covid-19 pandemic ‘the Shadow Pandemic’ – both in the Britain and Ireland and Worldwide but there are other cultural and economic factors which continue to lead to the oppression of women and which the MU is working hard to mitigate.

In many nations, men are dominant, both in family life and in local leadership positions. Women’s rights take a back seat, particularly as many do not receive an education, and, typically, their needs are not considered important with most of their efforts centred around raising children, feeding their families and tending crops going unnoticed.

Gender violence can result from financial struggles, political corruption, the stresses of conflict outside the home and, more recently, changing weather patterns resulting in women and girls travelling further for food, fuel and water placing them at greater risk of rape and violence.

Gender injustice is compounded as in many cultures, domestic violence is considered taboo and women often keep it to themselves for fear of reprisal. In

places like **Burundi**, if a woman leaves an abusive home, the husband will replace her with another woman and their children may suffer neglect.

All over the world Mothers’ Union groups address gender-based violence and its impact as a major part of our work. Many dioceses work together with other organisations and church parishes to recognise and acknowledge the existence of gender-based violence in their communities. They offer practical support to victims and survivors such as in the Britain and Ireland our ‘Away From It All’ breaks, report incidents of abuse and refer people to the appropriate services so that they can receive much-needed support and care.

Overseas, our work in 2022 has continued to stop injustice through gender justice. Our Literacy & Financial Education

Programmes which have operated in many countries including **South Sudan** help women gain financial autonomy and encourage them to join a savings group and set up their own small business or join together on community projects giving them tools to become self-reliant. Here also we run GBV workshops to give a safe space for women and girls to talk and share views. In **Burundi**, our programmes are encouraged through Bible study and prayer to realise their value and worth.

An MU parenting programme is continuing across **South America** which explores the themes of gender justice and Christian values. It introduces the concept of a violence meter which lays out a graded progression of violence, primarily sexual and physical, to help women understand how

“Because of famine, the men left the region to go to the capital of Madagascar in a massive rural exodus. Women could not go anywhere. They were a burden so they had to stay. As caregivers, they were not able to feed their families any longer. They were only eating cactus and boiled water. They were really starving.”

Jocelyne Razafiarivony is the MU provincial coordinator for Madagascar, speaking about the devastating impact of the world’s first climate induced famine. Most women were left to fend for themselves and their families in the wake of a massive rural exodus of men. MU helped in this situation by empowering communities to manage their own developments, carrying out risk assessments to mitigate hazards and introducing disaster risk reduction strategies.

they are being affected and to assess their threat level.

In Ankole in **Uganda**, MU members run a Revival radio programme which discusses challenging issues facing families, alongside training Parish Leaders and Clergy about Gender-Based Violence and running sessions for teenagers in schools to promote gender equality amongst the next generation.

At the root of all our projects worldwide, the power of Christ and the transformative power of prayer, helps us to create change, ultimately encouraging women into positions of leadership empowering them to play an equal part in society.



“A girl was viewed as a source of family income and so we were not allowed to go to school.”

52 year old Priscilla from South Sudan married when she was just 13 years old. The education of girls was not seen as important, so for many years Priscilla could not read or write until she attended the Mothers’ Union Literacy & Financial Education Programme. Now, along with literacy skills she was able to become part of the group’s savings and loans scheme and as a result, started a small business.



FUNDRAISING AND FINANCES

2022 was the latest in a succession of highly challenging financial and operational periods. The movement was buffeted by residual economic and behavioural impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, coupled with unusually high levels of inflation. The final outcome for the period was an overall deficit of £205k and an underlying operational surplus of £23k.

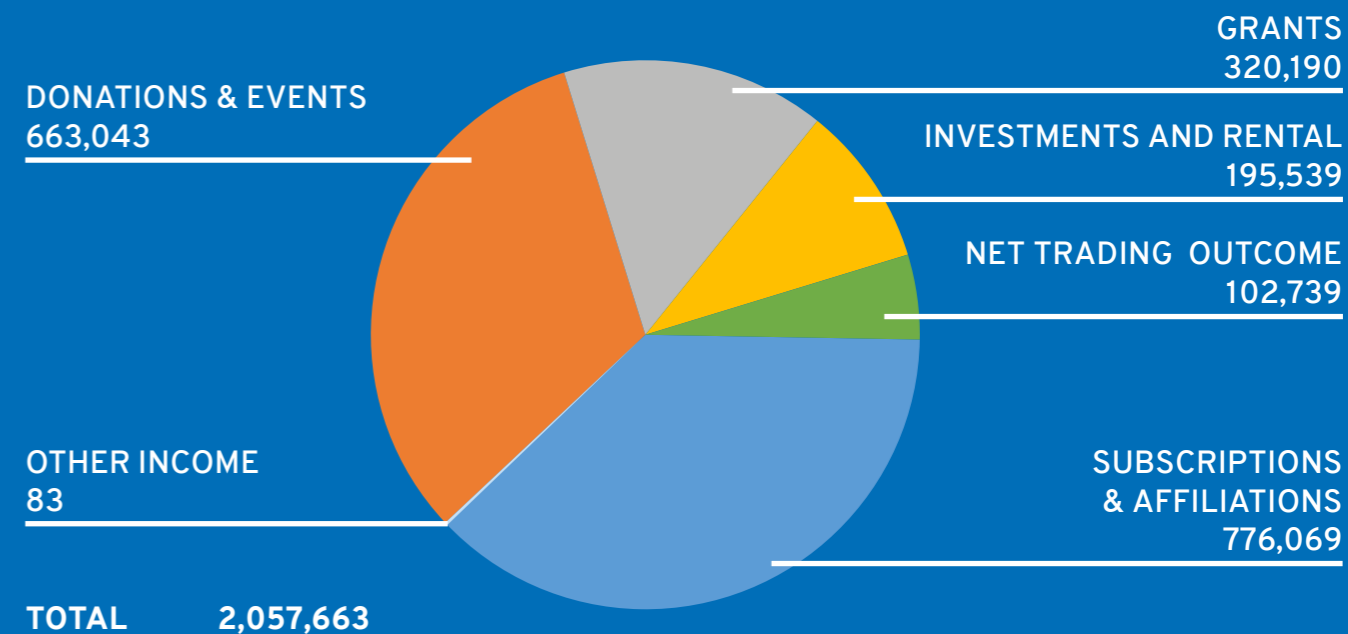
However, the underlying operational surplus reported was enhanced by a non-repeating exceptional item in the form of the reversal of a longstanding deficit arising from the group's old defined benefit pension scheme. Without this exceptional item the group would have reported an operational deficit of over £180k, driven by income shortfalls in conferencing activity and fundraising. Having identified this income trend early in the period, the Board of s took a strategic decision not to respond to these budget shortfalls with an additional round of cost cutting measures. Instead they took the view that budgeted investments in transformation initiatives, and maintaining the human and other resources necessary to deliver those transformations was ultimately more in long term interests of the movement than seeking to protect reserve levels, which were deemed sufficient to absorb any deficit likely to arise. Cost control measures were therefore limited to mitigating the worst of the impacts of cost inflation.

Combined with the decline in the value of our investment portfolios, that basic operational deficit would have meant an overall deficit of well over £400K, were it not for the exceptional item. The end deficit of £205k, resulting from stock market declines, therefore represented a welcome outcome in light of the challenges faced.

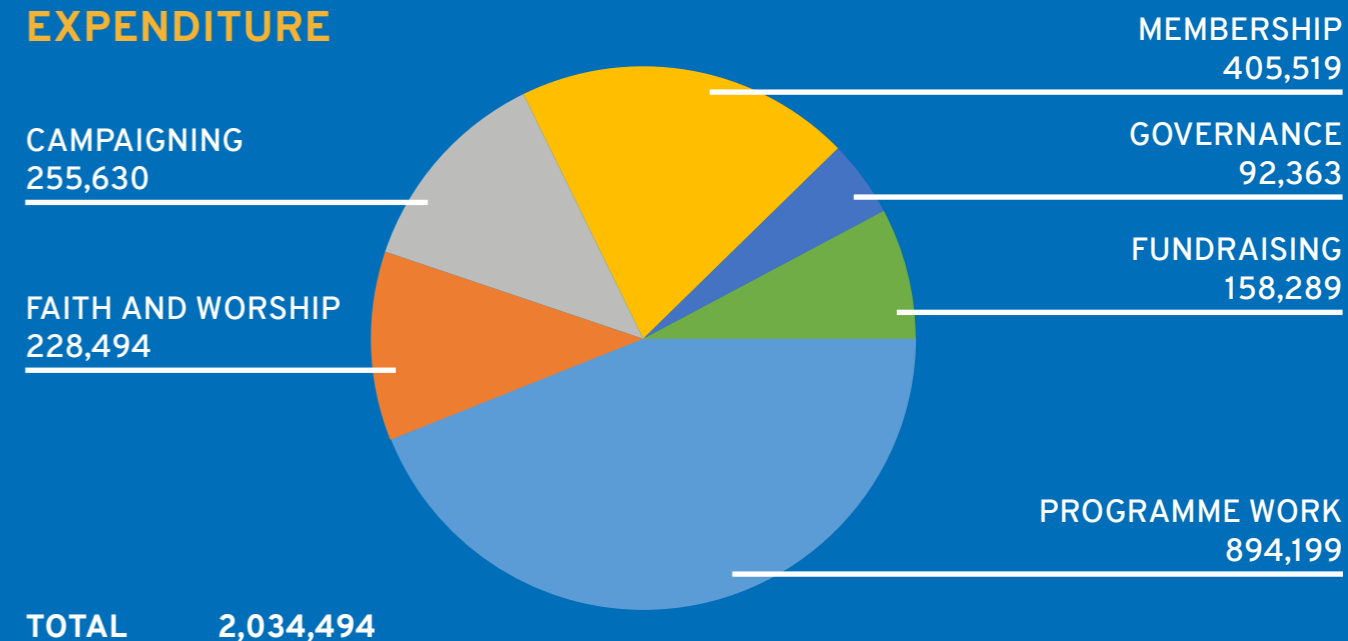
The reserves buffer the charity diligently built up in recent periods therefore did its job well in 2022 and is expected to be sufficient to ensure smooth operation in 2023 in the face of dramatic ongoing economic challenges, but recent performance has re-emphasised the importance of strengthening our existing income streams and developing new ones, to deliver genuine long-term run sustainability of operations. With this in mind, 2023 will therefore see the launch of a multiyear investment in our fundraising capacity. Something that will place added pressure on our reserves in the short term but is expected to pay for itself many times over in the long-run. The charity is also reassessing how best it can realise the value of its primary asset, Mary Sumner House, with the Board, supported by external expertise, seeking to discern the most appropriate course of action by the end of 2023. At this stage, options including outright sale or redevelopment remain under active consideration. We will keep you updated as matters progress.



INCOME



EXPENDITURE



Outcome from operations 23,169



Thank you to everyone who helped support the vital work of Mothers' Union during 2022.

But a very special thanks, as always, goes to our committed members and supporters. This has been an astonishing period to have lived and worked through and the fact the movement remains able to rise to the endless challenges confronting it is almost solely down to that commitment. Everything we are and everything we achieve stems directly from it. Our gratitude cannot be overstated.

Please get in touch and get involved

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Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families