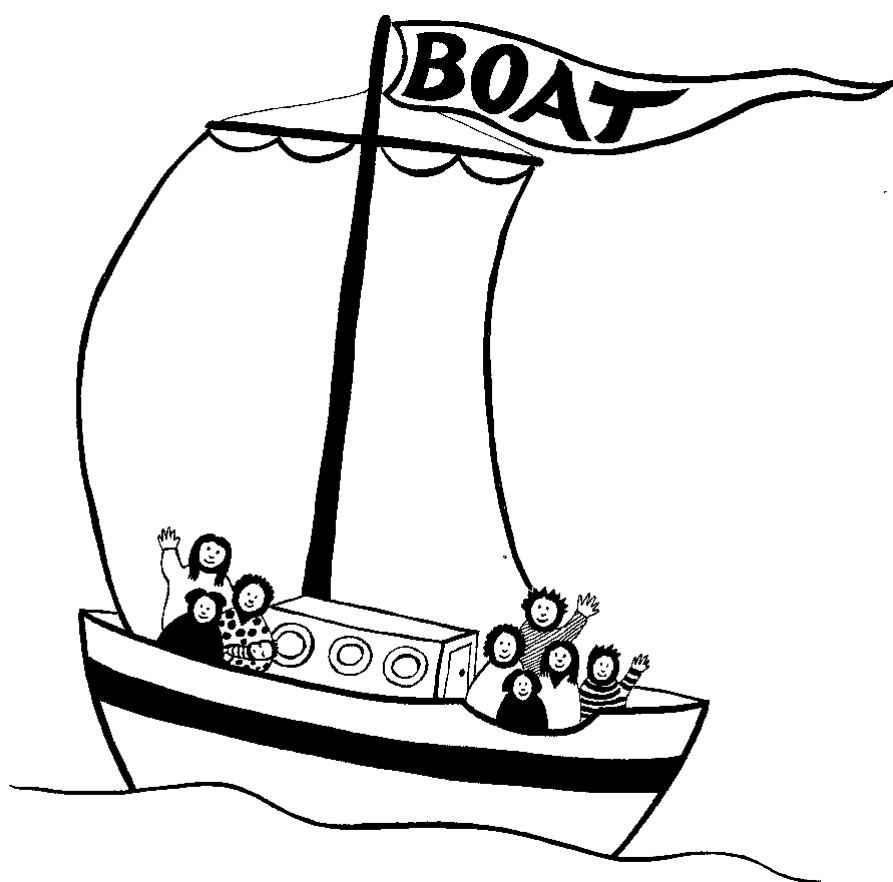


# BLACKFRIARS OVERSEAS AID TRUST

Founded 1984 by Members of 9.30 Family Mass Congregation



ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS 2025

Registered Charity 288585

# BOAT COMMITTEE

## January to December 2025

### Trustees (voting)

Geraldine Johnson	Chair of BOAT
Elizabeth Oberle-Robertson	Secretary
John Thanassoulis	Treasurer
Filomena Nave	Assistant Treasurer, <i>Brazil</i>
René Bañares-Alcántara	<i>Ethiopia (Zizencho and Arekit)</i>
Mick Conefrey	<i>Zimbabwe and Uganda</i>
Jenifer Dye	<i>Ethiopia (Mission of Hope) and Sierra Leone</i>
Helen Ghosh	[trustee to June, but continued to liaise with projects] <i>Peru (Lima and Ayacucho)</i>
Ag MacKeith	Annual Report, <i>Nicaragua</i>
Rosaleen Ockenden	<i>Uganda (Bulindi and Kigumba parishes)</i>
Julie Lynch Bridson	[trustee from June] <i>Myanmar, Philippines</i>

### Committee Members (non-voting)

Anna Lucas	<i>Peru (Iquitos)</i>
Julie Lynch Bridson	[member to June] <i>Myanmar, Philippines</i>
Rinaldo Caprotti	<i>Cameroon and India (Allapalli)</i>
Nicolette Michels	<i>Peru (Amantani), Uganda (Cancer Trust)</i>
Dominik Eynaud OP	[member to September] <i>Jamaica and Rwanda</i>
Autumn Rowan Hull	<i>India (Sugandh)</i>
Kath Roberts	[member from June]
Alin Octavian Maria Ardei OP	[member from October] <i>Jamaica and Rwanda</i>

*Italics indicate the projects for which members are responsible.*

**Everyone in the 9.30 congregation has a part to play in keeping BOAT's projects afloat. We are very grateful for the generous responses to our appeals for help and for our community's initiative, skill and hard work in raising funds in so many creative ways.**

**Registered Charity No. 288585**

## CHAIR'S REPORT 2025

Dear Friends of BOAT,

Imagine being unable to safely light your home at night, rendering you incapable of undertaking even routine tasks after sunset, and with an ongoing fear of thieves arriving under cover of darkness.

That was the situation in Karungu Convent in Kigumba, Uganda, until support from BOAT allowed the dynamic Sister Clemensia to complete a three-year project in 2025 to install solar panels throughout her convent, including in the Nursery, Primary School, and Health Unit, as well as being able to power nighttime lighting to deter thieves. Installing solar panels has also improved the health of patients, who can now be better cared for overnight by the sisters in the Health Unit, and the health of the sisters themselves, who no longer have to inhale the toxic fumes generated by paraffin lamps. 'Living in darkness has been eradicated completely around our campus here at Karungu,' writes Sister Clemensia, all thanks to the 'special concern and support [of] BOAT members.'

Sister Clemensia's solar panels are just one example of the many infrastructure projects supported by your generous donations to BOAT in 2025, projects that have transformed the lives of thousands of children, women, and men. And, of course, installing solar panels has the benefit of providing clean, renewable energy in countries often plagued by the noxious effects of pollution.

Two other BOAT projects completed solar panel installations in 2025: ARCH (the Associated Rehabilitation Centre for the Handicapped) in Cameroon and African Mission in Zimbabwe. In the case of ARCH, reliable solar-generated energy has banished the power outages that dangerously impacted the care of ARCH's vulnerable disabled patients for days or even weeks on end. At African Mission, installing solar panels was part of a broader drive to build infrastructure to allow the Franciscan school to become more self-sufficient in a region plagued by unreliable power.

African Mission also used BOAT funding over the past year to dig a borehole, build a piggery now housing 33 pigs, and provide new tables and chairs for the school's dining room. Investing in infrastructure related to food production and consumption was a theme in other BOAT projects in 2025 as well. For instance, the Allipalli Orphanage in the Andhra Pradesh region of India, one of the country's poorest areas, used BOAT funds to clean and upgrade its cafeteria building. For the first time in its 36-year history, the orphans and other underprivileged children who rely on Allipalli to provide them with hot meals are now able to eat at a table with chairs, rather than being forced to sit on the ground, and at long last have access to proper cleaning facilities for their dishes.

Perhaps the most significant example of food-related infrastructure improvements in 2025 was the Mziwothando Soup Kitchen, which serves poor children in the Qandu-Qandu settlement in Cape Town, South Africa. BOAT's 2025 Lenten Appeal raised an astonishing £13,264 thanks to your donations. Some of these funds were used to purchase key items of kitchen equipment, including a chest freezer, a refrigerator, pressure cookers, and equipment to connect the Soup Kitchen to a nearby solar energy panel. The result is that Mziwothando Soup Kitchen was able to provide 15,000 meals to children over the course of 2025, with 20,000 meals the target set for next year.

None of these long-term investments in infrastructure would be possible – indeed, even imaginable – without the ongoing generosity of our supporters...that is, you! I would like to extend my most sincere thanks to each and every one of you, whether your donations come in the form of monthly contributions (hopefully using the gift aid scheme!) or through your contributions to fund-raising events such as cafés and auctions, or buying BOAT's recycled cards, all discussed in greater detail towards the end of the present report.

I would also like to thank my fellow trustees and members of the BOAT Committee for their support over the past year, with particular thanks to John Thanassoulis and Liz Oberle-Robertson, BOAT's Treasurer and Secretary, respectively, and Filomena Nave who turbo-charges your donations through

her forensic work on gift aid claims. Ag MacKeith, who produces the Annual Report, should also be singled out for praise, as well as Br Dominik, Br Alin, and all members of the Dominican community who welcome BOAT so warmly to Blackfriars.

But this year in particular, I would like to extend our collective thanks to Helen Ghosh, former Chair of BOAT, longtime trustee and Committee member, and willing ironer of table clothes for our cafés, who stepped down as a trustee at the 2025 AGM. Her energy, wisdom, and dedication to BOAT and the projects she has overseen for many years in Peru are enormously appreciated and will be greatly missed. Thank you, Helen, and many thanks to everyone who supported BOAT over the past year!

### **BOAT's Public Benefit**

All charities, including smaller ones like BOAT, are required to report on the 'public benefit' they bring through their activities and to describe how they have achieved their objectives.

### **Our Purpose**

Under our constitution as a registered charity, which we updated at the 2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM), the purposes of BOAT are to 'provide support for the charitable activities of Christian parishes, organisations or societies, situated or working outside Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, in (i) the relief of poverty, and (ii) the advancement of education.' Everyone attending Mass at Blackfriars or giving to BOAT on a regular basis is regarded as a member of the Trust. The formal Trustees consist of up to ten people, elected each year at our AGM, with additional members of the Trust, together with the Trustees, comprising BOAT's Committee. A representative from the Dominican community – in October 2025, Br Alin Ardei took over this role from Br Dominik Eynaud – also sits on the Committee, as a link to the Priory which is home to BOAT.

### **The Benefit We Bring**

We have paid due regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance. Under our Principles for Giving, updated at our AGM in 2007, we have a very clear set of criteria for the projects we support and for assessing the public benefit that support will bring. On the key principle that we want our funding really to 'make a difference,' we aim to support relatively small-scale or grass-roots projects with regular grants normally of £4,000. Some funding will be one-off, particularly in the case of our annual Lenten Appeal. But in most cases, projects will be funded for three years and then considered for renewal on a rolling basis.

We always look for projects with some link to the 9.30am Mass congregation or to the Dominican Order. Although most projects we support have Catholic leadership or a strong Catholic connection, this is not a requirement, and we do not fund any form of proselytizing. We ensure that there is regular personal contact with our projects, partly so that we can identify priorities and needs quickly, but also so we can better help the Congregation and other supporters understand the challenges faced by the charities we support. We aim to help communities find long-term solutions to their needs, rather than short-term fixes, even if, from time to time, we do give money to help with emergency situations. As you read through this report, you will see that our projects fall broadly into three areas:

**Health:** especially primary health care and preventive medicine;

**Welfare:** especially for children, people with disabilities, refugees, and victims of war, poverty and violence or exploitation of any kind;

**Education:** particularly practical skills, women's education, and the provision of basic educational needs for children.

Thank you again for your support of BOAT in 2025.

**Geraldine A. Johnson**, *Chair of BOAT*

1 May 2026

## Brazil

### São Paulo da Cruz, Calvário Church

BOAT has supported the Centre for Children and Adolescents (CCA) São Paulo da Cruz, in the Parish of Calvário, city of São Paulo, Brazil, since 2005. It continues to be a worthwhile project, as 103 children, from low-income families, including 21 with special needs, are kept off the streets outside school hours. CCA operates two half-day shifts, as schooling in Brazil is only half a day, either morning or afternoon.

CCA provides counselling as well as social and educational activities that complement state school education. Most importantly, at CCA the children receive two meals each day. There are regular talks and workshops for the families who are encouraged to participate in the development of their children. For children with special needs, regular contact with the families



ensures

that medical treatment is carefully followed both at home and at CCA.

We receive regular reports and photographs describing the children's activities. Here is an extract from a recent email from CCA's manager Mrs. Ida Oliveira. 'BOAT's donation has been essential to make our work possible and to ensure that the children and families receive support. In 2025 it contributed to the realization of social/educational workshops, buying toys for collective activities and paying for educational trips. In addition, it was used directly to pay for transport for the most vulnerable children, ensuring access and improving attendance.'



*Filomena Nave*

## Cameroon

### ARCH, Dibanda

The Associated Rehabilitation Centre for the Handicapped (ARCH), Diocese of Buea, was founded in 1986 and provides professional rehabilitation services to people living with disabilities, with the aim of enabling them to reintegrate into society. Some patients are born with disabilities or suffer birth trauma, while others develop disabilities or abnormalities because of malnutrition, disease, or accidents.

Over the years, the centre has grown significantly and now treats around 2,500 patients annually, coming from the local community and hospitals across the Southwest Region of Cameroon. Children account for nearly 50% of all cases treated.



ARCH's activities include consultation and treatment for persons with special physical needs, counselling for families and individuals living with disabilities, prevention of physical deficiencies and abnormalities, and follow-up care for patients who have undergone rehabilitation. In addition, the centre promotes and advocates for the rights of persons with disabilities through local and national awareness campaigns.

BOAT has supported ARCH over the years by providing funds to improve hospital facilities like increasing food production used by carers and patients, and rebuilding the centre's incinerator. The new incinerator is a modern furnace designed for the safe disposal of hazardous materials and general hospital waste.

In 2024, our support enabled the purchase of a second-hand four-wheel-drive (4WD) vehicle, allowing ARCH to reach remote communities and provide treatment to people with disabilities who would otherwise have little or no access to rehabilitation services. The objective of this initiative was to treat an additional 1,000 cases per year and in 2025 this was met and exceeded.



More recently, BOAT in 2025 provided financial support for the installation of a solar energy system at ARCH. The solar installation has been completed successfully and is now fully operational. Prior to this intervention, ARCH experienced frequent power outages, sometimes for days or weeks, that disrupted services and increased operational costs. The solar system has enhanced service delivery, improved staff efficiency, and ensured continuity of care for the children and adults with disabilities who depend on ARCH's services.

Moreover, the intervention has greatly improved daily operations by providing a reliable and sustainable source of electricity. Additionally, consistent power supply has also enhanced security for both patients and staff through improved lighting and uninterrupted operations, thereby creating a safer environment for persons with disabilities under our care.



Beyond its immediate benefits, this project contributes to environmental sustainability and aligns with ARCH's commitment to responsible and eco-friendly practices. 2026 will mark an important milestone for ARCH. On April

24th they will celebrate their 40th anniversary, and 2026 is also the year that marks 30 years of support from BOAT.

*Rinaldo Caprotti*

## Ethiopia

### Zizencho

This year's BOAT annual contribution has been used to support the Lord Jesus Catholic school in the small rural village of Zizencho in the Guraghe region, Ethiopia. The Zizencho school maintains an annual enrolment of around 650 students.

The school offers education from kindergarten to elementary school and serves children coming from the village and surrounding areas, many of whom walk long distances to reach the school every day. Classes run from 8:15 am to 1:00 pm and, despite the challenges they face, students attend with great eagerness and determination.

About 90% of the Zizencho school students come from low-income families and many arrive to school without having eaten a proper breakfast. To support their well-being, especially in the kindergarten section, the school provides a midday meal programme.

Educational opportunities are very limited in the Guraghe region (in Ethiopia, two thirds of all children cannot attend school), but many of the children who attended the Zizencho school are studying at higher levels, and some have started good quality jobs.

The school depends heavily on external funding and small community contributions to meet operational costs (teachers' salaries, food for students, learning materials, maintenance). BOAT's contribution covers around 23% of the school annual expenses.

Two classrooms were built this year for the kindergarten section, and the building of a mini media hall for extra curriculum activities has been started for the elementary school. There are many challenges in a poor and war-torn country such as Ethiopia, however one of the immediate major challenges facing the school is the annual increase in teachers' salaries, and keeping up with rising salary expectations is becoming increasingly difficult.



As in previous years, and in the name of the Bethany Sisters who run the school, Sister Prashantha sends a message of gratitude: "... because of your assistance we are able to support our teachers, improve our learning environment, and give our students hope for a better future."

*René Bañares-Alcántara*

## Ethiopia

### Mission of Hope, Gode, Somali Region

Sr Mary Joachim and a group of volunteers provide housing, basic healthcare and education to destitute women living near a military base in south-east Ethiopia. These women were mainly former prostitutes recruited to serve the base, and many were infected with HIV-AIDS. Some had young children – who were also infected. Due to very limited social and medical care in this part of Ethiopia, these women and their children had no-one to care for them. This work of caring has been taken up by the Mission of Hope.

The armed conflicts in Tigray and Somalia have exacerbated the poverty of the region, but the country has also been affected by war in the Middle East. Rising prices and rising poverty over the last year have not only made life desperate for the people of Ethiopia, but they have made the work of the Mission more challenging.

This year BOAT gave £4,000 to the Mission. Thanks to the generosity of BOAT and other donors, Sr Joachim and her volunteers can continue to provide support to the local people. The Mission's work includes:

- Pastoral, practical, and healthcare provision for approximately 30 women.
- Education of 35 pupils, aged 3-13.
- Provision of a floating water pump to provide water for those supported by the Mission and its volunteers.
- Medical and personal care and basic convalescence for ill adults in the local community, who otherwise would be left to fend for themselves on the streets.
- A training programme in weaving for the women of the Mission, to provide them with a way of earning money without resorting to prostitution.

The mission is also building a small chapel dedicated to St Charles de Foucauld.

In Sr Joachim's most recent newsletter, 'Fragments from the Frontier', she describes some of the ways in which the Mission has been able to provide care in the fundamentals of life. Here are some examples:



Sr Joachim visited the home of a young mother, Ferdowsa (*see photo*), who had come twice to ask for food. Her home was basically a covered bundle of sticks, with the wind constantly blowing her family's clothes into the desert. She survived on what food her neighbouring villagers could gather for her; the day that Sr Joachim visited, she had only a few potatoes. Now she and her children attend the Mission daily.

Sr Joachim often takes people in her community to hospital. While there, a stranger approached her, saying that he and his family were hungry. She found that he and his wife had brought their 28-year-old

daughter (herself a mother of 6 children) for treatment for a breast ailment. They had come a long way and had run out of money, spending it on food and medicine. The young woman, Faraah, had been left with a large wound and was in a very bad way. Sr Joachim eventually found a surgeon to treat her, and he performed a mastectomy but without the necessary skin graft. Sr Joachim then contacted Dr Kjell at the Nordic Medical Centre, Addis Abbaba, who agreed to treat her. The Mission helped Faarah and her family to obtain travel documents, and saw them off from Gode airport.

The Mission helped a young man to obtain an operation from an orthopaedic surgeon to treat his leg. It had been broken six months earlier, which had left him in pain and unable to walk. They also secured a biopsy, which ruled out cancer.

It is worth noting that the Mission's administration costs in the UK amount to less than 0.3% of its current annual income (the annual subscription for the website/domain name registration); and Sr Joachim's costs in Ethiopia in 2024-25 were the equivalent of £66, representing less than 0.2% of total expenditure, and were incurred in visa fees, driving licence, and similar.

BOAT's UK link to the Mission is Miles Maxwell, Chair of the charity's Board of Trustees in the UK.

*Jenifer Dye*

## India

### Allipalli, Andhra Pradesh

Allipalli Mary Matha Orphanage is a Catholic childcare institution located in Allipalli, Chinthalapudi Mandal, in the West Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh, India – one of the country's poorest regions. Established in 1989 with just 15 children, the orphanage has grown significantly and now provides care and support to approximately 500 children.

The institution is dedicated to serving orphans, as well as destitute and abandoned children, by offering free shelter, clothing, food, and education. Through this comprehensive support, it aims to give every child the opportunity for a brighter and more secure future.

Beyond childcare, the orphanage also plays an important role in supporting surrounding rural communities. Its outreach activities include health awareness programmes, free medical consultations, food distribution, and women's empowerment initiatives.

Recent development projects supported by BOAT have had a meaningful impact on the quality of life at the orphanage. In 2023, the construction of an additional well significantly improved access to water, especially during the dry season. In 2024, with support from BOAT, the kitchen facilities were refurbished and modernised. Previously, food preparation conditions were inadequate; now, the orphanage benefits from a purpose-built kitchen equipped with modern catering equipment such as stock pots, hot cabinets, and a large vessel for hot water and steam.



In 2025, a major improvement project at the orphanage focused on upgrading and cleaning the cafeteria building. This included installing proper washing facilities, enabling the children to clean their own dishes at the end of their meal. Previously, meals were eaten while sitting on the ground,

but with our support, tables and chairs will be installed by the end of May 2026 once the carpentry, painting, and plumbing work is completed. Then, the children will be able to dine sitting at a table for the first time in the orphanage's 36-year history.

*Rinaldo Caprotti*

## India

### Sugandh, New Delhi

Sugandh is a charity working in some of the poorest slum communities of New Delhi, in the Madanpur Khadar and Holambi Kalan neighbourhoods. The charity seeks to transform the lives of marginalised women, men and children through holistic community development, empowering individuals to advocate for themselves and their families. This year, 168 students were supported across Sugandh's educational programmes, with 71 new admissions and active outreach to 253 children. The Children Development Centre provides tuition to young children entering formal education for the first time, as well as to older children who have fallen behind, offering homework support, exam preparation and a free daily meal.



BOAT's funding in the last few years has directly enabled the establishment of dedicated Computer Training Centres at both Holambi and Madanpur Khadar, providing laptops and structured digital literacy classes to young people and women, equipping them with skills in basic computer operations, internet use and online services that open doors to employment and independence. Over 1,630 women are members of Sugandh's Self-Help Groups, which provide collective savings, micro-financing and vocational training in tailoring and embroidery.

Sugandh also delivered 525 health sessions and facilitated 97 hospital referrals this year. A free medical camp served 129

patients who would otherwise have had no access to

professional care, offering ENT, dental, gynaecological and ophthalmological services: sixteen individuals were diagnosed with cataracts requiring surgery, and several women were identified with early gynaecological concerns and referred for follow-up. BOAT's ongoing support has been essential in enabling Sugandh to sustain and grow this life-changing work.



*Autumn Rowan Hull*

## Jamaica

### Christ the King Basic School, Kingston

Christ the King Basic School is a cornerstone of the August Town community in Kingston, Jamaica, currently providing early childhood education and support to approximately forty children between the ages of three and six. The school operates within a vibrant area that, despite its potential, is

characterized by significant socio-economic challenges and a lack of readily available resources. In this underserved environment, the school remains steadfast in its commitment to fostering hope and providing a high-quality educational foundation for its students.

A fundamental component of the school's daily operations is its nutrition programme. Recognizing that many students arrive without having eaten breakfast, a factor that severely hinders their concentration and ability to learn, the school provides warm, balanced meals. This initiative is vital for student health and serves to



alleviate the financial strain on families struggling with food insecurity. Furthermore, through the ongoing support of BOAT, the school has successfully maintained some of the lowest tuition fees in the region. This financial accessibility ensures that early education remains an attainable right for all local families, regardless of their income.

The school's physical environment has seen transformative changes in recent years. In 2023, significant facility upgrades were completed, including the installation of a durable new roof and the professional resurfacing of the playground with asphalt. Funded by BOAT's Lenten appeal, these improvements created a safe, long-lasting space for physical activity, which has since allowed the school to host successful community events like Sports Days.

The school is currently entering a new phase of expansion following a request from Jamaica's Early Childhood Commission to begin accepting two-year-old students. To meet this need, the administration is converting an existing resource room into a specialized nursery department titled the "Brain Builders Centre". This project is designed to offer a safe, friendly, and aesthetically pleasing environment that encourages early learning and provides parents with a secure space for their youngest children. To complete the transition to a certified nursery department and maintain the safety of the campus, several critical works have been identified: restoring the roof and the ceiling, controlling pests and wildlife, and making the perimeter and playground safe.

The continued partnership with BOAT is essential to making these repairs possible, ensuring that Christ the King Basic School remains a safe, affordable, and transformative environment for the children of August Town.

*Alin Octavian Ardei OP*

## **Myanmar**

### **Living Water Myanmar**

*“Water is life. Giving water is giving life.”*

Since 2017, BOAT has been proud to support the transformative work of Living Water Myanmar (LWM) – a grassroots initiative founded in 2011 by Rosemary Breen. LWM funds, builds, and installs

water tanks across the Dry Zone of Central Myanmar, giving communities a dependable source of clean, safe water.

Under the guidance of local coordinator Soya Toe, LWM works closely with local communities to



identify villages facing the most urgent water shortages. With the help of committed volunteers, tanks are constructed on the grounds of schools and health clinics. These tanks – owned and maintained by the community – collect monsoon rainwater or, in some cases, store water drawn from boreholes.

The impact reaches far beyond access to clean water. Freed from the daily burden of walking long distances along dusty tracks to fetch water, villagers now have more time for education, livelihoods, and community development. In several villages, the presence of reliable water

has even made it possible to establish local schools, enabling more children to attend classes close to home.

To date, LWM has built over 522 tanks. BOAT's 2025 donation funded the construction of four new 5000-gallon tanks in or near Kyaukpadaung.

- Tanks number 516 and 518 for the school in Salindaung village.
- Tank number 517 for the community use in Salindaung village.



- Tank number 519 for the community use in Taungzin Aleywar village

Rosemary shares her deep gratitude with BOAT supporters: 'Living Water Myanmar continues apace, and, to my great joy, we have finally reached the 500 mark, which I dreamed of all those years ago. However, there are still villages without clean water so I'm 'keeping on keeping on' as long as I can and the work continues. How I'd love for you and your magnificent Oxford group to visit Myanmar and see for yourselves what has been accomplished through your help. I never forget the support BOAT has given over the years. Please pass on my gratitude and good wishes.'

*Julie Lynch Bridson*

## Nicaragua

### Guadalupe, Leon

In 2025, the Nutrition Project supported by BOAT was an essential component of the School Reinforcement Project running from February 2025 in Guadalupe, Leon. This ensured daily access to a balanced diet for the 30 children in the school, while also contributing to their overall well-being,

supporting their health, energy levels, and readiness for learning. Likewise, it directly aided their academic performance, with evident improvements in concentration, participation, classroom attendance, and developing skills in Mathematics, Literacy, and study habits. The active participation of families in food preparation strengthened the family–project relationship, generating learning that extended into the home environment.

For the last few years the teachers' salaries at the school have been covered by the Hamburg-Leon twin towns group, whilst administrative overheads have been paid by NECAT (Nicaragua Education Culture and Arts Trust). However, as will be explained in greater detail in next year's annual report, the high costs of registering as an NGO in Nicaragua have led Hamburg to withdraw the funding for their share of the teachers' salaries. As a result, it was decided to shut down the pre-school on 1st May, 2026, although a teacher-training programme in Montessori pedagogy will continue until the end of the year. In the light of these changes, BOAT will be reviewing its support of this project in 2026.

*Ag MacKeith*

## **Peru**

### **Amantani**

Amantani's Transitions Project aims to promote the holistic development of young people from rural, Andean communities so they can access tertiary education and prepare for the future. Over the years, the programme has made a significant impact on the lives of many young people, and their rural Quechua families. These communities have rich cultural and ancestral traditions, but they find it hard to access educational and economic opportunities.

The project covers two main districts: Ccorca and Huanquite. Ccorca is a rural district, made up of a small town of the same name and the 12 communities that surround it. Although only 20km from the city of Cusco, until 2024 Ccorca was connected by a dirt road, so the journey took at least 1 hour. When the road was tarmacked the journey time was halved. The population of the whole district was around 3,700 people in 2024. Huanquite is a much larger district, with a central town and 22 communities. It covers almost double the area of Ccorca, and has nearly 7,000 residents. The main town is 52km from the city of Cusco, but the road conditions mean it takes over 1.5 hours to get there. Both districts are characterised by social and economic inequality. According to the last 2017 National Census, 97% of houses in Ccorca and Huanquite were made of adobe (mudbricks), only 30% had access to running water, and 20% didn't have electricity. Additionally, 98% of people didn't have a computer or laptop at home.

The main aim of the Transitions Project is to help indigenous young people from rural communities to prepare for life after school and access tertiary education and fair employment. The founding vision of the project is that access to quality education and better job prospects reduce poverty and help improve standards of living. The project comprises four main programmes that give practical support to young people aged 16 to 25.

- 1) The Pathways Programme supports 15–18-year-olds in the last two years of secondary school to prepare for the next stage, including the challenges of studying away from home. Activities include vocational orientation, comprehensive sex education, personal development, cultural identity and environmental awareness workshops, psycho-social support, and parental involvement.
- 2) Beca 18 Programme helps young people (17–19 years) apply for government scholarships, take the entrance exams and apply for tertiary education courses. Activities include registration in the

government system, academic reinforcement sessions, logistics to attend the selection exam, vocational orientation, and support to apply to educational institutions and adapt to life in the city.

3) The Scholarships Programme ensures students (18–25 years) from rural communities access and complete tertiary education courses. Activities include financial scholarships, academic and psycho-social support, personal development workshops and social activities at the youth hub, parent council and workshops.



4) The Employability Programme provides tools to help project participants prepare for entry to the job market. Activities include careers guidance, workshops on CV writing and interview/job search skills, support to find work experience and jobs, and relationship-building with local employers.

An evaluation of the impact was carried out last year which showed that this project has been able to create

much positive change in the past eight years, not just to individuals but also families and communities.

- 163 young people have had access to tertiary education
- 60 so far have received their professional qualifications
- 92% of project graduates are employed
- 95% of parents report improved confidence, social skills and adaptability in their children
- 100% have achieved financial independence and contribute to their families financially
- 96% of families report stronger relationships and better communication
- 98% of parents and 95% of students feel the project has increased community appreciation of tertiary education

Amantani continues in its mission to transform the educational and social panorama in rural communities of Peru. The Transitions Project has had a profound impact in multiple dimensions: education; employment; personal development; finance; family and community. It offers effective pathways for families to break the poverty cycle and has promoted a cultural change in community perception of the importance of continuing education. The project's commitment to inclusion, equity, and collaboration is building a future where young people from Quechua-speaking Andean communities have the opportunity to achieve their full potential. The benefits are seen not only in their families, but also in the development of the communities.

The Amantani team recognise that the sustainability and expansion of the project depend on their ability to adapt to the local dynamics, strengthen communication and visibility, and diversify its contribution. The holistic approach balances the need for short-term results with the creation of a long-term legacy that not only empowers project participants, but also their families and the young people who follow in their footsteps. The stories of personal and collective transformation that emerge from the project are testament to its success. They are also a call to continue adapting what it does.

The Amantani 'mission' is firmly aligned with our BOAT principles. Amantani doesn't just offer scholarships. It cultivates hope, promotes social justice, and builds bridges to a more equitable and sustainable future.

*Nicolette Michels*

# Peru

## Apostolic Vicariate of Iquitos

BOAT has been supporting the work of Fr Miguel Fuertes of the Apostolic Vicariate of Iquitos since 2021. It was in that fraught, fragmented time that, thanks to a member of the 9.30 Family Mass Congregation, we learned of the efforts of this dedicated Augustinian priest to serve and protect the people of the Apostolic Vicariate of Iquitos during the Covid pandemic – a challenge even at the best of times, since this ecclesiastical territory covers nearly 39,000 square miles of Amazonian jungle and rainforest, with many parts only accessible by boat or plane (including the city of Iquitos itself).

For the past four years, BOAT's donations have been assigned to the project *Mujeres Loretanos* – administered by the Subcomisión de Justicia y Paz - Derechos Humanos del Vicariato Apostólico de Iquitos (“SCJPDHVAI”), one of the social ministry initiatives of the vicariate – which aims to improve the lives of women and girls in the territory. As Fr Miguel explains in his ‘Reflection on 2025’, women and girls in Peru continue to face sex-based violence, discrimination, and hardship – which makes the work of his team absolutely indispensable:

‘Since the time when Adam, in the terrestrial paradise, blamed Eve for his decision to accept the apple she offered him (Genesis 3:12), women have been considered, all down the centuries, as “guilty”, “inferior” to and “with fewer rights” than men. Thousands of years have passed and, sadly, we have not made much progress in this or in many other matters. It is for this and various other reasons that the service provided by the [SCJPDHVAI] continues to be vital ...’

‘It is true that there has been some improvement where gender disparities are concerned, but there still exist significant inequalities in women’s financial situation, in their exposure to domestic violence, and in their lesser work opportunities: the rate of unemployment among women is 7.2% higher than amongst men, and more than 50% of women have suffered domestic abuse at some point in their lives. There is even data demonstrating that women are more likely than men to suffer from chronic illness. Consequently, it is essential that we continue to work to identify problems early, to offer help in a timely manner, and to provide ongoing support to all those who suffer from one or more of the scourges described.’

‘Our mission has remained focussed: improving women’s self-esteem as well as promoting and defending their human rights...’

‘The work of the [SCJPDHVAI] has not been limited to the city of Iquitos, but has also benefitted the outskirts of the city as well as the various riparian communities (some a day away by boat).’

*Proyecto Mujeres Loretanos* runs workshops and discussion groups where women and girls are given the opportunity to learn about their rights, their opportunities, and how to ensure their physical and mental well-being. These are convened by experienced professionals such as Elva Reátegui Souza, a local psychologist who specializes in mother-child relationships, and seek to give women and girls the skills, confidence, and support they themselves need, whilst also equipping them to share their knowledge with others in their community. One workshop which merits particular mention was run on 19th and 20th September 2025 and was specifically tailored to teenage girls and the violence and challenges they face. Seventeen teenage girls from the city of Nauta attended the workshop which formed part of a programme of continuing support to enable them ‘to confront any form of violence which might arise in their day-to-day lives’. The workshop also encouraged the girls to support one another and it is hoped that from this core group the message will spread so that other teenage girls in Nauta benefit.

*Proyecto Mujeres Loretanos* also provides a free legal advice service, headed for the past 22 years by the highly-respected local lawyer, Dr Rita Ruck. Dr Ruck reports that, in 2025, legal advice was

given in 1,139 cases, of which 449 were new cases and 690 ongoing cases. Support extends to accompanying the female clients to hearings and meetings, as well as to police interviews.

Individual and familial problems are exacerbated by wider, societal and environmental, injustices.



Clearly, women's daily lives are made harder by, for example, a lack of access to clean water (due to industrial and other pollution). Women – particularly indigenous women – are being given the help and legal knowledge they need in order to become community leaders in the battle to ensure that they and their families have a safe natural environment in which to exist

Fr Miguel is particularly proud of the vicariate's promotion of the First Amazonian Summit About Water, held over three days in October 2025, and which was attended by 400 people

from 10 countries and 14 areas of Peru. The motto of the summit was 'We are Water, We are Life, We are Hope'. As Fr Miguel writes: 'The right to water is an inalienable right for every human being, and our commitment as a Church to this right is beyond cavil'.

With so much going on, it is hugely impressive that Fr Miguel is, without fail, a prompt and informative correspondent. Moreover, he has devoted his life to the people of Iquitos in a loving and unshowy manner, facing sorrowful situations with Christian determination and courage.

Fr Miguel writes that at the centre of the work of *Proyecto Mujeres Loretanos* is a 'concern that all have dignity in life, the same life which God gifted us when He became one of us in Christ Jesus.'

Borrowing Fr Miguel's own words to us, we say to Fr Miguel and his team and flock: 'Thank you for making us feel part of the Universal Church.'

*Anna Lucas*

## Peru

### Lima (San Benito) and Ayacucho

BOAT has supported the Warmi Huasi project in San Benito, Lima, and in the mountainous region of Ayacucho for many years. Fr Ed O'Connell, the Columban Father who led the project until his retirement in 2024, came to visit the 9.30 congregation at Blackfriars in October 2025 and gave a wonderful talk about the work of the project.

The project is focussed on children and young people, providing safe and supportive spaces for reading clubs and libraries, homework and other after-school activities, in areas where the streets are not safe and there is a high incidence of domestic violence. The project also enables and encourages the children and young people to take an active role in local democracy to ensure the provision of the services they and their families need, using information collected from the children themselves in a survey called 'My Voice Matters'.

Fr Ed sent us this 'Christmas Letter' about what has been going on in 2025:

‘Dear Helen and all at BOAT, As you know I went to Lima for parts of May and June to celebrate my 80th birthday. Whilst there I visited the three parishes where I had worked, celebrating Mass in many of the communities, and visited Manuel Duato Special Needs School, where I chaired the Board of Governors for 20 years.’

‘On several occasions I visited the Warmi Huasi project in San Benito, where there are a variety of activities with children and adolescents. Reading clubs for primary school children, civil society formation and plan of life for secondary school students. The children’s and adolescents’ organizations have increased to seven, each with their own activities: cultivating vegetable plots; developing their local parks; raising awareness of the need to protect the environment; and educational and cultural activities.’

‘I also went up into the Andes mountains to the Province of Paucar del Sara Sara in Ayacucho, where Warmi Huasi accompanies 11 primary schools with their reading clubs, including reaching out to small village schools, with books in Spanish and Quechua. The students, after each



book, are encouraged to write a short summary and also write a short story. Reading comprehension has improved no end.’

‘In three secondary schools the Warmi Huasi team have developed a plan of life for 4th year students, while a joint initiative with the local municipality has led to the opening of a small academy to prepare 60 students for public exams and to help them draw up their CVs. I am hoping that some who go on to further studies will return to their Andean home towns and villages to serve their own.’

‘I am planning, in the second half of 2026, a visit to Melbourne to see John Hegerty, an Australian Columban. We worked together in Peru for over 30 years. My plan is to call in on Peru as well, as the Manuel Duato Special Needs School will be celebrating 50 years! Take care, Ed.’

*Helen Ghosh*

## **Philippines**

### **Midsalip, Missionary Sisters of St Columban**

For numerous years, BOAT has supported the Subaanen Mission in Midsalip, Philippines, now led by Sr. Winnie Apao of the Sisters of St Columban. The Mission provides ongoing essential support to the indigenous local Subaanen people, facilitating access to education and healthcare, as well as safeguarding the ancestral lands of the Subaanen against mining operations, natural disasters, and harmful agricultural practices. BOAT’s funding specifically helps to operate seven pre-schools run by the Mission, all of which are recognized by the Department of Education. These schools serve 185 students in six remote barrios, providing culture-based education in the local language. BOAT also funds the Mission’s Youth Programmes, which offer leadership and literacy classes for 26 high school and college students, as well as youth camps for a broader group of children. The Mission continues

to run Biodiversity and Farming Programmes to educate local people about sustainable farming practices, including promoting the use of natural fertilizers, composting and tree planting to avoid landslides. In the last year alone, 200 trees have been planted. In addition to standing in solidarity with the local community to actively protest against mining companies (who filed six new applications last year, which were successfully blocked), the Mission also organizes interfaith celebrations for Indigenous People’s Day, where people of all faiths come together to promote and strengthen Subaanan culture and practices.



In her Christmas letter, Sister Winnie describes the Mission as ‘A Living Hope’.

‘Beyond material support, the centre has become a place of spiritual renewal. People discovered that hope is not just a word – it is a living force that sustains and uplifts. Your generosity has been more than assistance; it has been a testimony of compassion. You have stood with us, ensuring that our mission

could carry on, and in doing so, you have become partners in the story of resilience and renewal. Your support has helped us defend our land, preserve our future, and transform lives. Even amid challenges, communities are strengthened, and hope shines brightly. As we look ahead, we humbly ask you to continue walking with us – through your prayers, encouragement, and support – so that the seeds of hope planted this year may grow stronger in the years to come. On behalf of the Mission staff, teachers, students, parents, and the Subanen people, I extend my deepest appreciation for your help and support in making our activities and programmes successful. May God bless you all. May your hearts be filled with the joy and peace of Christ, and may God continue to bless you and your loved ones abundantly in the coming year, bringing fulfilment and blessings. With blessings, best wishes, prayers, and heartfelt gratitude, Sister Winnie Apao.’



*Julie Lynch Bridson*

## Rwanda

### Network For Africa

The partnership between Network for Africa and Survivors Fund Rwanda (SURF) takes a holistic approach to recovery for young survivors of the 1994 genocide. Recognizing that economic instability is a primary driver of emotional distress, the programme for 2025 has fully integrated entrepreneurship training into its proven peer-counselling framework.

The programme operates on the principle that psychological healing and financial independence must grow together. Counselling sessions foster the self-esteem and emotional stability necessary for participants to engage in the rigors of business planning. In 2025, a major shift occurred: instead of selecting only a few individuals, entrepreneurship training is now provided to every member of the counselling groups. This change has strengthened the social support networks among participants, as they now collaborate on business ideas and market analysis.

The cumulative results of this integrated approach are substantial. In the three years the project had been going: 989 participants have successfully graduated from the dual pathway of counselling and business training; 317 business proposals have been developed, demonstrating the practical application of the skills learned; 190 loans have been approved, allowing survivors to open a variety of enterprises, including tailoring shops, restaurants, and crop trading businesses. So far, 77 participants have fully repaid their loans, which keeps the revolving loan fund sustainable.



The £4,000 grant provided by the Blackfriars Overseas Aid Trust is fundamental to these operations, covering nearly all the £4,235 cost required to train 240 participants every year. Without this specific funding, the entrepreneurship component would be severely compromised, leaving survivors with psychological support but without the practical tools to escape poverty. Individual success stories, such as KC, who transformed a £250 loan into a thriving tailoring business, or MC, who now supports her children through crop trading, underscore the transformative power of this mission. By fostering dignity through work, the programme helps survivors move from a state of despair to one of active contribution to their local economy.

*Alin Octavian Ardei OP*

## **Sierra Leone**

### **Smile With Us Orphanage, Koindu**

2025/26 is the eighth year in which BOAT has supported this orphanage in the north-eastern Kailahun district of Sierra Leone. Founded and run by Mary Sesay, the orphanage takes in local children, many of whose parents died from AIDS and were denied support from family or other sectors of the community because of the stigma attached to their parents' illness. The orphanage now also takes children who have been abandoned for other reasons, or are subject to abuse or neglect in their domestic settings. Many have multiple needs, including impaired vision and hearing problems. Yet the Orphanage builds an academic reputation in its district year on year, and the school at the Orphanage continues to grow.

Sierra Leone is a desperately poor country, its poverty exacerbated by various international financial crises. Abandoned or orphaned children are among the most vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone. The Orphanage struggles on a daily basis to provide the basics for the children who live there.

Our money makes a fundamental difference to the lives of these children. Readers may recall that previous BOAT donations helped to build a well, build and furnish a dining room, fence off the Orphanage compound; to provide food, cutlery, and medical supplies; to pay for medical bills, uniforms, textbooks, pens, exercise books, extra lessons for those taking public exams, Monitors' allowances, teacher training, volunteer teachers, construction of a new classroom, transport costs, Christmas entertainment, daily breakfasts and cultivation of the school food garden.

Our donation to Smile With Us last year was £4,000. During 2025, the Orphanage continued its mission in various ways:

- They held another successful Inter-House Sport meeting, bringing a sense of cohesion to the Orphanage and wider community and a sense of achievement to the pupils. It is also a fun



day for the students and their guests. (See photo.)

- The most significant expenditure (aside from the Sports Day) was on breakfasts for 312 children over the year.

- BOAT's gift was also spent in providing basic clothing for 124 children: uniforms and particularly shoes.

- There has also been some renovation

work on one of the school's building and hall.

- Repair and construction of furniture has also required considerable expenditure.

BOAT communicates with the Orphanage via a WhatsApp group and we receive information particularly from Tamba and Timothy, the social workers involved with the Orphanage. They say they continue to be proud of the School and Orphanage, and that there are always positive stories in the life of the children. All involved at Smile With Us send their best wishes to us and all our families.

Our UK link to the Smile With Us Orphanage is Penny Boreham, a producer, presenter and writer, who works for the BBC World Service. Penny has long-standing links in Sierra Leone and knows the Orphanage well.

*Jenifer Dye*

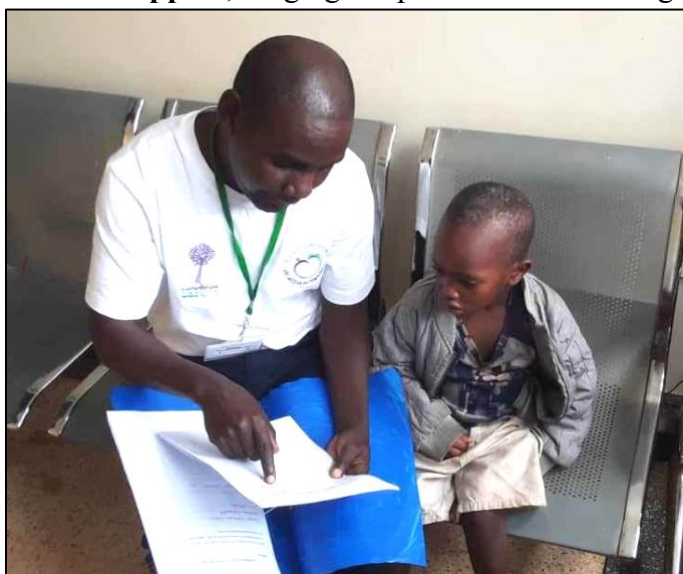
## Uganda

### Cancer Trust

Our BOAT donation pays for the salary of Liz Nabirye, lead nurse and Information Needs Officer of the Palliative Care Unit in UCT. Liz's role has developed and expanded over the time we have supported UCT, to encompass the establishment, development, growth and leadership of a team of volunteers. Our report this year focuses on the work of this team given how vital their contribution is and the impact they have.

UCT now has six volunteers who are described by UCT as ‘The Heartbeat of Our Mission: the soul of our work, pouring their hearts into providing compassionate, personalized care’. Each week, they dedicate 8–10 hours to offer a holistic blend of practical, emotional, spiritual, and social support to adults and children. Their tireless efforts touch countless lives.

The volunteers provide **emotional and psychosocial support**, forging deep connections through companionship and counselling. Over the last year they conducted over 150 counselling sessions, offering comfort and empathetic listening to patients and their loved ones during difficult times. Additionally, 12 support group sessions created safe havens for families and caregivers to share experiences and coping strategies. Twenty bereavement support sessions provided compassionate guidance through grief, while 30 play therapy sessions brought joy and emotional relief to paediatric patients through creative activities. Over 40 mindfulness sessions taught patients and families relaxation techniques, fostering peace and well-being.



The volunteer team work tirelessly to ease the burdens of daily care with **practical care and symptom management**. Volunteers trained 80 caregivers in proper medication dosing and adherence, ensuring effective pain and symptom management. They assisted 120 patients with practical tasks such as feeding, picking up medicine, and transport to medical investigations. Additionally, 60 patients received were helped with transfers and movement.

With deep respect for diverse beliefs, the UCT volunteers provide **spiritual guidance** to 100 patients and families, offering comfort and hope through a compassionate presence. These moments of spiritual care have been a profound source of strength for those navigating life-limiting illnesses.

Key Achievements funded by donations over the last year have included:

- Provision of tailored palliative care to 200 patients and their families across Mulago and Kiruddu National Referral Hospitals.

- Through education sessions, 80 family caregivers gained vital knowledge about palliative care options, empowering them to support their loved ones.

- A refresher training of volunteers, expanding their capacity to serve more patients in the future. One of the volunteers, Vicky Jemimah, has started her Bachelor's degree in social work and social administration at Victoria University, Kampala, empowering her with skills and confidence to better support patients and families with palliative care needs. Fortunately, she is attending evening classes and continues to volunteer at the unit as before.



Liz tells us that our donations empower her and her team to **provide knowledge with compassion**, supporting patients, families, and healthcare professionals. Through one-on-one sessions, they listen with empathy and offer tailored guidance, ensuring families feel seen and supported. Whether by phone, WhatsApp, or in person, they respond with care and urgency, ensuring no one feels alone on their journey. Our support enables them to **build bridges through collaborating** with oncology paediatric care teams and other primary care providers, creating a seamless network of compassionate care. By advocating for better access to information, they are building a world where no one faces life-limiting illnesses in isolation, ensuring every patient and family receives the support they deserve. While happy to have touched many lives, Liz says she and her team are driven to do more. They are committed to creating culturally sensitive, accessible resources for diverse communities and embedding information services into clinical care for seamless support. Our donations **transform challenges into opportunities**, fuelling UCT's efforts to make a lasting difference.

It is touching to hear how personally committed the team are to their roles. Liz tells how they share moments of grace sitting with patients and families through laughter, tears, and quiet understanding. Despite the emotional weight of their work, they find profound purpose in bringing comfort. 'Holding a patient's hand as they share their story feels like a sacred moment. Your support makes these moments possible.' Caring for children with cancer is a journey of heartbreak and hope. The volunteers form deep bonds, cherishing moments like a child's giggle during play therapy. 'These children teach me to live fully in each moment,' one volunteer reflected. While the pain of witnessing suffering can be heavy, volunteers find strength in knowing their presence makes a difference. They also support weary families, offering comfort and hope in trying times. The volunteers carry forward transformative lessons: the power of compassion, resilience in adversity, the value of living in the moment, and the importance of self-care. These lessons, born from love and loss, inspire volunteers to share their stories and invite others to join this meaningful work.

Our donations are the foundation of UCT's work, funding heartfelt resources, volunteer training, and personalized support that bring light to those in need. with donations towards salaries where appropriate and cost of living expenses for the volunteers. On a practical note, UCT have been able to purchase smart looking T-shirts to identify the team members and also a tablet to use on the paediatric ward. These gifts are transforming lives by facilitating learning and play for children and strengthening the volunteer team's presence on the wards. The uniforms symbolize unity and purpose, amplifying the visibility of the UCT mission, while the iPad brings joy and education to young patients.

Liz is keen to say: 'With your continued generosity, we can expand our reach with inclusive resources and integrate information support into clinical care, bringing comfort and hope to more families. We are deeply grateful for your generous contribution. Your kindness and commitment inspire us daily.'

*Nicolette Michels*

## **Uganda**

### **Church of St John the Baptist, Bulindi**

Father Sebastian Benyumiza writes with news of his parish and of the progress being made in combatting the spread of malaria. This is the third year that mosquito nets have been distributed in this large parish, thanks to BOAT's donation. Father Sebastian's parish has 17 chapels or out-stations each with a catechist or catechists in charge. He travels to them regularly to say Mass. He uses his catechists to find those most in need of the mosquito nets, especially the very poor, and those most vulnerable, such as the elderly and the expectant mothers, particularly the young girls who drop out

of school because of pregnancy and who are not married and have no income at all. Between April and June 400 mosquito nets were bought in Kampala and 189 in the city of Hoima.

He reports that malaria is still rampant throughout Uganda, including in their area. In 2025 there was a high rainfall in spring and early summer (April, May, June) and then again in the autumn (September, October, November) and this increased the incidence of malaria. Thanks to the supply and use of mosquito nets the maternal and infant death rate was nonetheless reduced and there were fewer miscarriages. Because of the evident benefits of the mosquito nets some parishioners have tried to save money to buy the nets for themselves, because prevention is better than cure. The drugs for the treatment of malaria are so expensive as to be unaffordable: a dose of quinine and panadol costs over UGX140,000, the equivalent of £30 sterling.

Father Sebastian assures BOAT and the 9.30 congregation that they will always be remembered gratefully by his parishioners, who have learned the necessity of sleeping under the mosquito nets.

## **Karungu Convent, Kigumba**

Sister Clemensia begins her report on their solar energy project in 2025 with her sincere gratitude to all BOAT members and the 9.30 congregation for the financial support given to them.

In April 2025 she bought the necessary wires and other accessories for the proposed solar system in Bweyale town. The rest of the materials like panels and six heavyweight batteries, plus holders and lamps, were bought in Kampala in August.

In September the rains and winds were so severe that the roof of the convent was blown off completely! It had to be reinstated before the solar system could be installed. Obtaining the money took some time, but by mid-November 2025 the electrical engineer was able to install the system.

She then goes on to describe the difference that this installation has made. They now have a good light system at night, which means that they can read books and recite their evening and night prayers in the chapel. Previously they were disturbed by thieves at night, who broke in to steal chickens, goats and the cereal foods. Since security lights have been installed, thanks to BOAT's donation, this threat is much diminished. Most importantly, their health has improved because they no longer have to breathe the smoke from paraffin lamps and are able to work in the evenings, preparing for their work teaching the school children or the catechumens. They are also able to do simple domestic work in the evening like washing up, tailoring, sewing and general cleaning, before retiring at midnight.

Sister Clemensia and her community are very grateful to BOAT, as 'living in darkness has been eradicated completely around our campus here at Karungu' and 'all is from your special concern and support, united with BOAT members'.

She wishes us well in all our charitable activities.

*Rosaleen Ockenden*

## **Zimbabwe and Uganda**

### **African Mission**

African Mission is a well-established small charity, which has been running now for just over 20 years.

There are two aspects to their work: medical training in Uganda and supporting schools in a Franciscan mission at Fatima in Zimbabwe, which has been running since 1947. Over the years most of our money has gone to Zimbabwe, but in 2023 we provided a one-off grant to the medical side of their operation, paying for a portable anaesthesia kit, which remains in use.

At the school in Zimbabwe, the main expenditure is to cover the living costs of 22 young people with special needs. Of these young people, 11 are deaf and mute, three are completely blind, three are visually impaired, three have Down's Syndrome and two are physically handicapped. Disabled living is difficult everywhere, but especially so in rural Zimbabwe, where in the past these children would have lived very impoverished lives.



In a country where power cuts are now commonplace the Mission has put a lot of emphasis on increasing self-sufficiency, installing solar panels and digging a borehole planting vegetables and rearing both pigs and chickens. Our money was used to establish a new piggery in 2024/2025 (which now boasts 33 pigs), and helped pay for the renovation of the dining room, providing chairs and tables.

We have been supporting them for many years, and seen them make great progress, but the need remains high. 2025 was very challenging year on the financial front. Donations to African Mission dropped from £60,000 in 2024 to £39,000 in 2025, making our grant ever more important.

*Mick Conefrey*

## **2025 Lenten Appeal Project**

### **Mziwothando Soup Kitchen, Cape Town**

The Mziwothando Soup Kitchen serves children living in the Qandu-Qandu, an informal settlement in Cape Town, South Africa. The settlement was established in 2018, when a small number of people began building makeshift homes from sheet metal and wood on marshland. Today, it is home to over 10,000 residents. Like many informal settlements in South Africa, Qandu-Qandu lacks basic infrastructure. There are no legal electricity connections, no running water, very few municipal taps, and only minimal sanitation facilities. These conditions make daily life extremely difficult for families living there.

A particular challenge is the high number of single-mother households, often with several children, combined with very high unemployment. Many families rely on the South African government's monthly unemployment grant, but this amount is far from sufficient to cover both food and the fuel needed to cook it. As a result, many households regularly go without breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

The Mziwothando Soup Kitchen was founded in summer 2023 by Sharon Nthombothando Vanqa, a Christian resident of the settlement, together with three other unemployed women from the community. Since then, the kitchen has been providing a daily warm meal for children when they return home from school.



Food supplies must first be collected and carried over two miles to the kitchen and then cooked using makeshift equipment, which limits what can be prepared. Typical meals include rice with curry, maize meal or rice with stewed offal, and freshly made steamed bread.

The BOAT Lent Appeal helped increase the number of meals provided and improved food storage and safety. Donations were used to acquire several important pieces of equipment, including a chest freezer, a refrigerator, hotplates, pressure cookers, a connection to nearby solar electricity panels, safety equipment, including a fire extinguisher and fire blankets. Thanks to these improvements, the soup kitchen was able to provide approximately 15,000 meals in 2025.

For 2026, the team hopes to reach a target of 20,000 meals, despite the significant food price inflation currently affecting South Africa. The continued generosity of donors makes it possible for the Mziwothando Soup Kitchen to provide children in Qandu-Qandu with something many of them would otherwise miss: a reliable, warm meal each day.



*Rinaldo Caprotti*

## **BOAT Fundraising Events**

Another source of support for BOAT's projects around the world are special fund-raising events held throughout the year. These include three cafés (Advent, Mothering Sunday, and the start of Summer) to which members of the congregation and the Blackfriars MCR generously donate delicious cakes and biscuits (with particular kudos to Autum Rowan Hull for her spectacular creations), Yinghui Carraro bakes wonderful fresh bread, and Jenifer Dye and Joshua Durbin bring beautiful vintage

china for fresh coffee and tea that is enjoyed on table clothes carefully ironed by Helen Ghosh and, more recently, Kath Roberts. There is also an auction held after the annual Harvest Mass to which members of the congregation bring the bounty of their gardens, with generous bids encouraged by Geoff Emerson's persuasive auctioneering. These events not only raise funds for BOAT's projects, but also make a valuable contribution to the life – and liveliness – of the 9:30am congregation, whose members are able to enjoy convivial conversation whilst supporting BOAT's global mission.

*Geraldine A. Johnson*

## **BOAT Greetings Cards**

Card sales were up this year: £1,303 – more than twice what they fetched last year. Not a huge sum in the great scheme of things, but the card factory is a social occasion, and the team take comfort from the understated but effective publicity BOAT gains from our efforts. We would welcome more hands to stick the boxes, once the mounts have been printed and the cards trimmed to fit. Many thanks to those who created, packaged and sold the cards, as well as to Joshua Dubin and Jenifer Dye who generously funded the costs.

*Ag MacKeith*

## **BOAT and Blackfriars MCR**

BOAT is a great credit to the whole Blackfriars community. I have been proud to serve as the MCR's liaison to the BOAT committee for the past academic year, which has included attending meetings and baking for the Cafes. I look forward to supporting the charity in the future.

*Maura McKeon, DPhil candidate and Blackfriars MCR Link to BOAT*

## **Reserves policy and risk management**

The Trustees' policy is to maintain reserves of approximately £24,000. This sum is sufficient to meet emergencies by covering the outlay for the entirety of two projects. It provides a buffer so that even severe changes in our financial conditions can be cushioned for the projects that we support.

### **Risk Management**

In the light of the Trustees' desire to deliver funds to good causes as expeditiously as possible, any surplus cash is held on a bank deposit until needed. The Trustees monitor the level of cash held and would review this policy if the levels of cash held were to increase significantly.

### **Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements**

Law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs and the charity's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed subject to any departures disclosed or explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare financial statements on the going-concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue its operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 1993. The Trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity, and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

By order of the Trustees

Signed, for and on behalf of the Committee of BOAT

**Geraldine Johnson**, Chair

1 May 2026

# **Treasurer's Report on the Statement of Financial Activities for the Year ended 31 December 2025**

I am delighted to report that BOAT has again finished 2025 in good health and is getting the money generously donated out of the door and to the poor who need it as fast as possible. In 2025 we received £96,594 and we were able to send nearly all of this out. Our reserves of approximately £33,000 are a little above the £24,000 level we target. Thus £89,815 went out. This is only possible because of the generosity of our donors and so on behalf of the many people we help in education, health and wellbeing in the developing world – thank you.

The incoming resources are predominantly received through monthly direct debit donations (£62,002). The next largest contribution is from gift aid: £17,670. Filomena Nave organises our gift aid and it is clearly very valuable. Next some donations are received reserved for particular projects. In 2024 most of this (£13,264) was for our Lenten Appeal which was for the soup kitchen in South Africa, and the Ibn-E-Mariam Dominican Order, Pakistan.

Our costs continue to be as low as it is possible to get. All of us are volunteers and so there are no salaries. We have to pay the bank charges to send money overseas (£240) and we pay to print the annual report (£262). We have also paid for a card reader so we can take credit card donations (£49). Everything else is given to the causes we support.

We continue to have a rich interaction with the 9.30 congregation at Blackfriars, many of whom support BOAT. This is evident in all of the events that we run: Harvest Auction, Christmas café, Mothering Sunday café, and the summer café. There are a team of volunteers, with Ag MacKeith, Gill Emerson, and Josh and Jenifer Dubin prominent among them, who recycle and sell cards in aid of BOAT and so allow even more people to hear of us. The card sales raised £1,303 during 2025.

Finally I am honoured to be able to play my part in getting the sums we raise to the projects we support. This year there were 19 projects, all of which received at least £4,000. My colleagues work hard to follow the story of that money and how it is converted into good works. Stories you can read in this report.

Thank you for your generosity and with prayers of kindness,

**John Thanassoulis**

BOAT Treasurer

## **Further Reference and Administrative Information**

BOAT address: Blackfriars Priory, 64 St, Giles, Oxford. OX1 3LY

Bankers: Lloyds Bank, Carfax, Oxford. OX1 4AA.

Charity Number:288585

# Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the Blackfriars Overseas Aid Trust ("the Charity")

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year to 31 December 2024 which are set out on the following pages 29 to 33.

## Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under Section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act") and that an Independent Examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts (under Section 145 of the 2011 Act);
- Follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act;
- State whether particular matters have come to my attention.

## Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes considerations of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

## Independent examiner's statement

I am therefore happy to declare that in the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 44(1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations;
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations

have not been met, or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: **Stefan Enchelmaier**

23rd March 2026

# BLACKFRIARS OVERSEAS AID TRUST

## Balance Sheets as at 31 December 2025

	2025	2024
	£	£
<b>Current Assets</b>		
<b>Cash at Lloyds Bank</b>	32,826	26,047
	32,826	26,047
<b>Net Current Assets</b>		
	32,826	26,047
<b>Total Assets</b>	£32,826	£26,047
	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>The Funds of the charity:</b>		
<b>Restricted Income Funds</b>	50	-
<b>Unrestricted Income Funds</b>	32,776	26,047
	£32,826	£26,047

Approved by the Executive Committee on 23 January 2026.

# BLACKFRIARS OVERSEAS AID TRUST

## Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2025

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2025	Total 2024
	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>				
Donations	79,983	13,314	93,297	83,124
Events and Sales	3,297	-	3,297	2,467
Bank Interest	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Incoming Resources</b>	<u>83,280</u>	<u>13,314</u>	<u>96,594</u>	<u>85,591</u>
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>				
<b>Costs of Generating Funds</b>				
Fundraising	311	-	311	312
Charitable Activities	76,000	13,264	89,264	92,008
Governance Costs	240	-	240	290
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<u>76,551</u>	<u>13,264</u>	<u>89,815</u>	<u>92,610</u>
<b>Net Incoming/(Outgoing) Resources</b>	6,729	50	6,779	(7,019)
<b>Total Funds Brought Forward</b>	26,047	-	26,047	33,066
<b>Total Funds Carried Forward</b>	<u><u>£32,776</u></u>	<u><u>£50</u></u>	<u><u>£32,826</u></u>	<u><u>£26,047</u></u>

The notes on pages 29 to 33 form part of these accounts.

# Notes forming part of the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2025

## 1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

### General

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2005) issued in 2005.

### Income

- (1) Donations and grants are included in the accounts when they are received.
- (2) Interest income is included in the accounts when it is received.
- (3) Tax recoverable in respect of Gift Aid donations is included in the accounts when it is received.

### Expenditure

All grants to partner organisations and other expenditure are included in the accounts in the year they are paid.

### Unrestricted Funds

Unrestricted funds are donations and other incoming resources received for the objects of the charity without a specified purpose and are available as general funds. From time to time the Trustees may establish Designated Funds out of the Unrestricted Funds to meet contingencies.

### Restricted Funds

Restricted funds are to be used for specific purposes as laid down by the donor. Expenditure which meets these criteria is charged to the fund, together with a fair allocation of management and support costs.

## 2 DONATIONS

	2025	2024
	£	£
Donations received under Banker's Order (unrestricted)	62,002	55,738
Donations received under Banker's Order (restricted)	-	-
Other Donations (unrestricted)	3,609	2,467
Other Donations (restricted)	13,314	11,008
Tax Recovered under Gift Aid	17,670	16,378
	<u>£96,594</u>	<u>£85,591</u>

### 3 EVENTS AND SALES

	2025	2024
	£	£
Harvest Auction	584	589
Christmas café	564	582
Card Sales	1,303	466
Mothers' Day Café	599	388
Summer café	277	242
Donations from the 9.30 coffee team	321	200
	<u>£3,609</u>	<u>£2,467</u>

### 4 CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

#### Grants (Unrestricted) to Overseas Projects

	2025	2024
	£	£
Nicaragua, Leon	4,000	4,000
Jamaica, Christ the King School	4,000	4,000
Uganda Cancer UK	4,000	4,000
Uganda Fr Sebastian	4,000	4,000
Cameroon Arch	4,000	4,000
Ethiopia Jean Grove Trust	4,000	4,000
Uganda, Sr Clemensia	4,000	4,000
Philippines, Columban Sisters	4,000	4,000
Zimbabwe, African Mission, Dungu	4,000	4,000
Peru, San Benito, Br Ed O'Connell	4,000	4,000
India Sugandh	4,000	4,000
India, Operatori di Pace	4,000	4,000
Rwanda, Network for Africa	4,000	4,000
Myanmar Living Water	4,000	4,000
Brazil, St. Paolo	4,000	4,000
Ethiopia, Mission of Hope	4,000	4,000
Sierra Leone	4,000	4,000
Peru , Amantani	4,000	4,000
Peru, Iquitos Fr Miguel	4,000	4,000
	<u>£76,000</u>	<u>£81,000</u>

**SUB-TOTAL**

**£76,000**

**£81,000**

## Grants from Restricted Funds

	2025	2024
Lenten Appeal	13,264	9,508
Operatori di Pace	-	1,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£89,264</b>	<b>£92,008</b>

## 5 COSTS OF GENERATING FUNDS

	2025	2024
	£	£
Costs of Printing the Annual Report	262	312
Card reader machine	49	
	<b>£311</b>	<b>£312</b>

## 6 GOVERNANCE

	2025	2024
	£	£
Bank Charges	240	290
	<b>£240</b>	<b>£290</b>

## 7 TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES

No remuneration was paid or was payable for the year directly or indirectly out of the funds of the charity to any member of the committee or to any person known to be connected with any of them.

## 8 RESTRICTED FUNDS

	2025	2024
	£	£
Balance at January 1	0	0
Incoming Resources	13,314	11,008
Expenditure	(13,264)	(11,008)
<b>Balance at December 31</b>	<b>£50</b>	<b>£0</b>

## 9 GENERAL FUNDS

	2025	2024
	£	£
<b>Balance at January 1</b>	<b>26,047</b>	<b>33,066</b>
Incoming Resources	83,280	74,583
Expenditure	(76,551)	(81,602)
<b>Balance at 31 December</b>	<b>£32,776</b>	<b>26,047</b>
:		
Represented by <b>Current Assets</b>	<b>£32,826</b>	<b>26,047</b>

**A Standing Order for regular donations, which can be cancelled at any time, greatly helps BOAT. We need more people to give regularly so we can predict over a year how much money we can send to our projects overseas.**

## **BLACKFRIARS OVERSEAS AID TRUST (BOAT)**

### **HOW TO SET UP A STANDING ORDER**

- With most banks and building societies, you can set up a Standing Order online or by phone.
- Alternatively, you can go into your bank to complete a Standing Order form. You'll need the BOAT account number and sort code (as well as some personal identification).

*Beneficiary Name:* **Blackfriars Overseas Aid Trust**

*Beneficiary Account Number:* **00087533**

*Beneficiary Sort Code:* **30-96-35**

*Beneficiary's Bank:* **Lloyds Bank plc, 1 High Street, Oxford OX1 4AA.**

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### **GIFT AID DECLARATION (FOR REGULAR OR ONE-OFF DONATIONS)**

**Boost your donation to BOAT by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate, at no extra cost to you.**

*giftaid it*

**Just tick this box  Yes! I would like to Gift Aid this donation and any other donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to BOAT.**

*I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.*

#### **PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS**

Title: ..... First name(s): ..... Surname: .....

Home Address: .....

..... Postcode: .....

**Signature** ..... **Date** .....

Please notify BOAT if you:

- wish to cancel this declaration
- change your name or home address
- no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

**Please return to: The Gift Aid Treasurer, Blackfriars Overseas Aid Trust (BOAT), c/o Porter's Lodge, Blackfriars, St. Giles, Oxford, OX1 3LY. Alternatively, you can email it to: [boatblackfriars@gmail.com](mailto:boatblackfriars@gmail.com)**

**IF YOU ARE HAPPY TO FOR US TO CONTACT YOU ABOUT BOAT'S ACTIVITIES, PLEASE TICK THIS BOX**  Please see the BOAT website at [tinyurl.com/BOATOxford](http://tinyurl.com/BOATOxford) for an explanation of why and how we use your data, and your rights in respect of that data.

**Blackfriars Overseas Aid Trust**

Registered Charity No. 288585

**c/o Blackfriars Priory**

**64 St Giles**

**Oxford OX1 3LY**

[tinyurl.com/BOATOxford](http://tinyurl.com/BOATOxford)