

**A CASE FOR
SUPPORT**

MISSION CRITICAL: Girls' Education



misean cara
Mission Support from Ireland

“ We want to educate people, so they become good citizens in the future. Some will become doctors, pilots, engineers, or lawyers. But they all learn from teachers. I like being a teacher with small children, when you tell them something, they listen, unlike adults. Teachers can tell the truth, they can remove illiteracy and teach good communication skills. If they see something wrong they can speak up. Teachers are the light of the communities all around the world.”

- Basamat Alnoor Jakolo Aldabi, Teacher, South Sudan.



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Misean Cara means 'Friend of the Missions' in the Irish language.

Front Cover image: Esther, a young student, is dressed up by her classmates in exam papers as is the custom to mark the end of exam time at the Ndeini Primary School in Kenya. The Edmund Rice Network (ERN) has been instrumental in ensuring students receive a nutritious meal every day in school by mobilising parents of students to contribute maize and beans, and fulfilling shortfalls of supplies for students whose families cannot afford the extra expense. ERN has also planted fruit trees around the school grounds, which offer additional food for students, and provided large rainwater collection tanks to water the trees.

Photo: Lar Boland.

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The Fratelli educational project in Beirut, run jointly by the De La Salle and Marist Brothers, caters for vulnerable children and youth from Syria, Iraq and Lebanon. Hidaya (front left) is from Syria and now lives in the Abra shelter in Beirut. While she and her family were fleeing the fighting in Syria in 2013, her mother was killed when a missile hit their vehicle. Hidaya attends the Children's Club programme at the Fratelli Centre in Rmeileh on Saturdays. She wants to be a doctor when she grows up. **Photo:** Marco Amato.

The Power of Educating Girls

The evidence is incontestable:

To alleviate poverty, invest in a girl's education.

To make a society more equal, invest in a girl's education.

To make the world safer, invest in a girl's education.

Girls' education is the great multiplier of benefits. It will deliver social, economic and environmental dividends for generations. More than 1,000 studies provide the most robust evidence that investment in high-quality girls' education leads to the highest-impact returns such as:

- A better life for the girl, her family and her community
- Education can lead to paid employment supporting economic growth and higher family incomes. Each year of education can increase a woman's income by at least 10%, and up to 20%
- Reduced rates of HIV/AIDS and malaria: Women with a secondary education are five times more likely to know the facts about HIV and AIDS
- Reduced rates of child marriage: Girls who complete secondary education are more likely to marry later and have smaller families
- Mothers who have completed secondary education are more likely to send their daughters to school
- Reduced rates of infant and maternal mortality: Educated mothers are more likely to have a skilled birth attendant present when giving birth to their children
- Educated girls and women tend to be healthier: The children of educated mothers are more likely to be vaccinated and are less likely to be stunted due to malnutrition
- A child born to a literate mother is 50% more likely to survive past the age of five. Each additional year of a mother's education reduces the probability of infant mortality by between 5% and 10%
- Increased agricultural productivity
- Better preparedness for and resilience to natural disasters
- Women's empowerment and leadership
- In times of conflict and displacement, access to education can help to promote a sense of stability and continuity

Based on our extensive front line experience in over 50 countries, Misen Cara knows first-hand the vital lifeline that supporting girls through education provides.

Sr. Orla Treacy and her students at the Loreto Secondary School, Rumbek, South Sudan





The Presentation Junior High School in Logre, Ghana is managed by the Presentation Brothers. The Brothers work to overcome barriers to girls' education, such as long travel distances and limited transport, by providing bicycles to students living farthest from the school. Photo: Out of the Box.

Why Girls' Education is more important than ever.

"We have endured insecurity, war, hunger and local displacement, but we have always been able to keep our schools open... until now."

– Sr. Orla Treacy, Rumbek, South Sudan

Girls' education was already in crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic threatens to exacerbate the disparities in education even further, affecting many of the most vulnerable children, youth and adults, and potentially erasing decades of progress.

Between 1998 and 2018, the number of girls out of school worldwide dropped by 79 million, though there were still 130 million girls out of school, and two-thirds of illiterate adults were women.

Kenya, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Zambia report similar concerns.

By March/April 2020, school closures prompted by COVID-19 had affected 92% of the world's student population – 1.5 billion, including 734 million girls. Many of these girls are in danger of not returning to school.

Before COVID-19, girls' education in developing countries was already in crisis, but the pandemic has exacerbated a critical situation, pushing more and more vulnerable girls out of education and into a life on the margins.

Experience with the Ebola crisis in West Africa in 2014–2015 suggests that, as a result of COVID-19, up to 20 million secondary school girls in poor countries may never return to education. Assuming a conservative average of three children per girl in this group, that's 30 million children deprived of the benefits, as listed earlier, of having an educated mother.

With our vast in-country experience, Misesan Cara has an opportunity to help girls' education recover from the Covid-19 pandemic, ensuring that the reconstruction of the education sector in the wake of this crisis is done inclusively and safely. For the most vulnerable children, education is lifesaving and there has never been a more pressing time to upscale our support.

Projections from the UN Population Fund suggest that there could be up to two million additional cases of female genital mutilation and up to 13 million more girl child marriages. Misesan Cara Members in Ghana, Sierra Leone, South Africa,

To this end, Misesan Cara is launching a new landmark campaign to keep girls in education, and away from vulnerability. Mission Critical: Girls' Education is your chance to be part of a transformational recovery in girls' education.

Mission Critical: Girls' Education – Your Support



Basamat Alnoor Jakolo Aldabi teaches school in the Kaya Refugee Camp in Maban County, South Sudan. Photo by Paul Jeffrey, 2018.

The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed the world into the deepest global recession in living memory, which will have lasting effects on economies, public financing and the developing world's ability to protect and maintain funding for education. Now is the time for us to increase our support for the young girls and women most vulnerable.

With your help we will help an average of 120,000 girls and women per year get back into education, including early childhood care and education, formal and informal education and vocational training.

Mission Critical: Girls' Education will help more of the young and vulnerable girls and women in danger of not returning to school

access safe, quality education, escaping some of the most disadvantaged circumstances.

With your help, girls will remain in and complete their secondary education and will go on to further study or to find meaningful employment. With the knowledge and confidence acquired through education, girls will be able to assert their rights and demand a better life for themselves. In the future, their children will benefit from improved household income, better health care and nutrition, and will themselves complete their education.

Misean Cara needs support urgently, now, to combat the impact of COVID-19 and to get thousands of girls back on track to an education that will transform their lives.

Misean Cara needs your help to raise €500,000 to increase our support for young girls most at risk of not returning to education as a result of COVID-19.

Cost & Impact

Over the past three years, Misean Cara has invested, on average, more than €4 million each year in education activities.

Specifically for girls' education, Misean Cara has spent an average of almost €1.7m per year in 2017–2019, with a total investment of just over €5 million in the period.

During those years, the total number of school girls supported was:

29,317 in 2017;
37,886 in 2018;
147,620 in 2019

In 2018 alone, 58 projects brought improved education to 30,547 schoolgirls. Of those, almost 27,000 were in pre-school, primary or secondary education.

Through the same projects, over 4,400 girls and women returned to education having previously dropped out.



The impact of quality education on one girl is vast. She will:

- Earn at least 10% more for every year in secondary school.
- Reinvest 90% of her earnings in her family.
- Be 3 times less likely to become HIV-positive.
- Marry later and have a smaller, healthier family.
- Resist gender-based violence and discrimination.
- Invest in her children's education.

Education is not only a fundamental human right; it is an enabling right with direct impact on the realisation of all other human rights.

With your support Misean Cara will be able to increase our support to help at least 120,000 more girls. With your help we can continue to remove the barriers to girls education.

One Girl's Education

Elizabeth Ayen: Living Proof

How education changes the lives of 240 girls each year in one Loreto-run school in conflict-ridden South Sudan.

In South Sudan, the devastating effects of years of conflict, violence and destroyed livelihoods have left about two thirds of the population in dire need of some form of humanitarian assistance and protection. Five years of the most recent conflict have forced nearly 4.2 million people to flee their homes in search of safety.

In the midst of this, a secondary school run by the Loreto Sisters is providing education to 240 girls. It's as if two worlds exist in one. It demonstrates how modern missionary-led development and education can utterly transform lives – even in the most dangerous and challenging situations.

The impact of the school speaks for itself. On completion, 97% of the girls are either graduating to third level education or entering employment. Every girl that gains a tertiary degree or certificate, or finds formal employment, becomes a role model and challenges the cultural stereotype of girls and their role within families and society.

Elizabeth Ayen is a graduate of the Loreto Secondary School. While waiting to commence her nursing studies, Elizabeth helped out by teaching classes at the Loreto Primary School. Sister Orla Treacy, the school's Principal, speaks of Ayen as proof of both the need for, and the success of, a quality Secondary School:

"Elizabeth is strong and confident and ambitious, and has a good sense of who she is and what she wants to do with her life. She can stand on her own two feet and say what she wants and doesn't want. And remember, these girls live in a culture where they can't go anywhere by themselves. That person could be their six-year old brother, as long as he's male. They are usually disciplined through beating if the shirt isn't ironed properly or the food is not prepared right. Many of these girls grow up in very difficult circumstances."

Elizabeth almost didn't have that choice. When she was 14, she was taken out of school by her family who were prepared to accept a large number of cattle in exchange for accepting an offer of marriage. Ayen remembers a turning point:

"One of my uncles said, 'This girl is very intelligent and she should get educated.' The teachers came and talked with my parents. They talked and talked. Finally, my parents accepted and I was taken from the cattle camp and returned to school".

Elizabeth went on to study nursing and has since qualified.



Formerly a pupil in the school, Elizabeth Ayen taught first grade at the Loreto Primary School in Rumbek, South Sudan, before going on to qualify as a nurse. **Photo:** Paul Jeffrey.



Mwenda Kacana teaches at the Presentation Sisters' Secondary School in Kaoma, Zambia. It was no surprise to Mwenda's family when she decided to become a teacher – as a young girl, she would help her brothers and sisters with their homework. When she completed secondary school, Mwenda went straight into teacher training, first to teach at primary school and later to become a secondary school teacher.

"At home, if there was a difficult sum to be done, Dad would call me and say, 'can you come and help your siblings with their homework?' He was a head teacher and at his school he did not have enough teachers. When I was in Grade 12, he would ask me to teach one of the lower grades in case a teacher was not in or there wasn't one available at all. Before sending me to the class, he would guide me on what and how to teach. Everyone kept saying that I taught very well. They once secretly recorded me teaching and when they showed it to me, I liked it and told myself. 'I'm going to be a teacher!'"

Why Misesan Cara?

**A unique movement.
An authentic mandate.
A powerful record of impact.**

Established in 2004, Misesan Cara is an international and Irish faith-based missionary development movement made up of 88 member organisations working in over 50 countries in the Global South. This makes us one of the largest NGOs in Ireland with extensive reach.

The missionary approach is powerful. The holistic view, where all people are seen as dignified human beings with a wide range of capacities, needs and rights, combined with a drive and belief in a better life for all, is transformative.

Missionaries speak the language of the people they support, in more than a merely linguistic sense. Relationships of respect, trust and mutual understanding, built up over years of presence, provide the starting point for efficient and effective development or humanitarian interventions. The long-term personal commitment and prophetic vision inherent in the missionary approach mean also that missionaries are drawn to work in environments and on issues that could be considered risky, for example in conflict zones, on land rights, or in seeking justice for past wrongs. Any sense of danger or fear is countered by the fundamental belief in the rights and dignity of the community.

What we do. How we work.

Misesan Cara accesses and distributes funding to its Member organisations for high-quality development and emergency initiatives. We accompany our Members at every step of their journey, from the initial identification of need to the evaluation of completed projects. We provide advice and mentoring, visit projects to monitor and evaluate their success, and draw on the breadth of the missionary movement by forging connections and sharing learning across projects as part of our quality assurance initiatives.



Jane Kabugi is a teacher of KiSwahili at the De La Salle School in Karemeno, Kenya.

As someone who has benefited from education herself, Jane is keen to share those benefits with her own students, bringing understanding and compassion to her role:

"Sometimes you find students who don't interact, play or do activities with other students. You can easily assume that they are either undisciplined or that they are introverts, yet in most cases they are going through a difficult time and need someone to listen to them. Some have given up on life. I have learned to listen to them and when you listen, you learn that they go through a lot. They appreciate being listened to and being given some advice. In case I cannot handle a particular issue, I refer it to the school principal. Back in the [previous] school where I used to teach, the teacher had the final say in any matter. I don't think that was fair!"

Impact of Misesan Cara Projects

The scale of Misesan Cara's impact is far reaching. Since 2015 – supported by the Irish Government – we have invested €62 million to fund 1,069 projects, helping millions of people. Year after year, the findings of rigorous external evaluations and effectiveness reviews strongly endorse the high-quality standards of the work and the proven, positive impact on the lives of families and communities.

The four key goals that underpin all our work are:

1. Deliver quality education to those who need it most and whose lives can be most transformed by it
2. Support communities to uphold their rights to access better health, clean water and sanitation
3. Help the most marginalised build sustainable livelihoods
4. Promote human rights and educate on how these rights transform lives

Ireland's Missionaries' impact overseas

Missionaries have often been referred to as the first development workers at the forefront of delivering vital services in education, health, human rights and humanitarian response while crossing boundaries of nationality, culture and identity.

Today, carrying on a cherished legacy of centuries, missionaries confront oppression, save lives and rebuild futures. They heal. They build. They help people gear-up to survive emergencies. At times like now, they do everything from the basics such as teaching people to wash their hands properly, through to making sure people have enough food to survive.

They are new missionaries for a new and ever-changing world. They do exceptional work. It's tough, no-nonsense, determined. Caring, trusted, skilled. Never wasting time, money, resources. Strategic, demanding, honest.

And when the going gets tough, they don't leave. When the guns and bombs and diseases strike, they stay. When everyone else thinks it's too dangerous or difficult, they stand shoulder-to-shoulder with local vulnerable communities.

They build relationships of respect, trust and mutual understanding to deliver life-changing interventions in the places of greatest need in the Global South.

The Power of Your Investment

It really is a moment in time. A moment of great need and opportunity.

The next 12 years of a little girl's life in a remote village somewhere in the developing world could be transformed by your generosity. The first day she attends school, you will have changed the trajectory of her entire life. For every year she spends in secondary school, she will earn at least 10% more. She will marry later, have fewer children, and avoid HIV/AIDS. She will be less likely to suffer abuse. She will in turn invest in her family, her children, who will be healthier and more productive. Her community will do better. Now multiply that by the 120,000 girls who will benefit from **Mission Critical: Girls' Education**. That's the seismic change you will have brought about.

Thank you so much.



Trust, transparency and impact

In Misesan Cara, we take seriously the need to account for every euro invested in the work that we do, whether that's public or private funding.

Based on their deep understanding of the challenges faced by the people they support, our Members work with communities to create solutions. We work closely with our Members at every step of the journey from identifying the need, planning and implementing the response to measuring and reporting on the outcomes and impact – the real, lasting change in people's lives. We provide advice, mentoring, and regular project visits. We draw on the breadth of

learning from generations of missionary development and relief work.

We offer extraordinary value for money – during 2019, our work cost just €10 per person overall for all projects supported.

Our reach across the globe is extraordinary too – each year, we impact directly over 1.4 million children, women and men, and more than 4 million others indirectly.

These are families, communities and villages in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Middle East whose lives are being transformed through our Members working in solidarity with them.



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Misean Cara has signed the **Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages** for Non-Governmental Development Organisations



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