

65

VIATORES CHRISTI



Annual Report 2025

Celebrating 65 Years of Viatores Christi in Ireland

Our Vision:	A world of freedom, peace and justice, where marginalised and vulnerable people have greater opportunities to realise their goals.
Our Values:	<i>True to our Christian roots, we are committed to these key values:</i> • Inclusion All are welcome in our global interconnected family. Inclusion is reflected within all levels of our association and our work. • Compassion Support, empathy, love, honesty, and respect are at the centre of all that we do. • Justice We work to achieve a just world where people can realise their human rights in an ecologically sustainable way.
Our Beliefs	• We celebrate our Catholic roots while embracing diversity. • We believe in the dignity and rights of all people. • We warmly welcome and work with all regardless of faith, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, race, culture, nationality, or ethnicity. • We believe in environmental stewardship by taking a holistic approach to the protection of our common home. • We believe in local-led decision making.

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Front cover picture:

Celebrating 65 years of VC at Wynns Hotel Dublin Tina and Leslie

Foreword by the President –

Dear VC Members and Friends,

It is an honour to write this forward for the 2025 Viatores Christi Annual Report which also includes activities from 2026. This is my first year as President, having served on Council for the last 3 years. I joined VC in the early 2000's and had the good fortune to be a VC volunteer in Malawi from 2004 to 2006 with the Medical Missionaries of Mary. This experience added enormous richness to my life and I feel privileged now to act as President.



2025 marked the 65th Anniversary of VC. This significant milestone was marked by various events during the year including a celebratory lunch at Wynn's Hotel. We were very pleased that many of you were able to join us that day. While a lot has changed in VC over those years, I believe our core has not. As Denise Flack remarked during her address at the lunch VC "continues to respond to the teachings of Jesus, working in a spirit of fellowship and collaboration, with some of the most marginalised people of our world". This is evident today through the work of the VC Volunteers, Brian Lynch in Uganda and Dan Ferguson in El Salvador, and our partners. Within the Member Managed Grant, for example, VC supported a total of 23,732 people through 9 partners in Uganda and 2 in Haiti. Most importantly there was a significant reach to furthest behind populations including children with disabilities, older persons, disenfranchised women and widows. Our partners work is the most significant contribution to helping VC reach our vision of "a world of freedom, peace and justice, where marginalised and vulnerable people have greater opportunities to realise their goals". The examples of their key achievements provided in the report are inspiring.

When my predecessor, Pauline Conway, wrote the forward for the 2024 Annual Report, Gena Heraty, along with 7 of her colleagues, were kidnapped by a gang in Haiti. This was one of the most serious and stressful events to happen in our 65 year history. News of their release came with great joy and relief. The work that Gena, and her colleagues, do is truly life giving. The story of Alexis in this report is beautiful and uplifting and an indication of the humanity and importance of Gena's work. We wish her and her colleagues strength, wisdom and courage as they continue to shine a light in one of the darkest corners of the world.

2025 saw the beginnings of a new chapter for lay mission with a renewed VC Volunteer Programme. This has not been an easy road but I am hopeful that the programme can blossom over the coming years, built on the work of the Volunteer Committee who have steered it through. I wish the Projects Team well as they implement it.

We are blessed in VC to have dedicated and talented management and staff. I would like to thank Mike, Patricia and Victor of the Projects Team for managing the Member Managed Grant with Misesan Cara. The projects team are not simply administrators of

this grant. They engage respectively and effectively with our partners, enabling locally led development and building capacity particularly on areas like advocacy, disability inclusion and environmental stewardship. In their section of the report you will find excellent examples of effective advocacy, particularly related to improving sanitation for older people. There is also an account of a “groundbreaking” collaboration between Age and Opportunity Ireland and one of our Ugandan partners.

For the first time VC is leading a European Solidarity Corps Programme. This is a very significant achievement and is a testament to the professionalism and dedication of the staff, particularly the programmes Team, Zara and Rose. The “Amplifying Voices for Climate Action” programme is currently being implemented and aims to facilitate 31 volunteers in Uganda, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Bolivia.

A special word of gratitude to the support staff Ann in finance and administration and Bernadette and Rob in Finance. Rob resigned from his role as Financial Accountant in 2026 and we thank and wish him well. I am grateful to Bernadette for her support in this critical area. Ann plays many roles, including managing the house and our tenants.

Leading and guiding the organisation is Shane as CEO. In what has been a challenging year with the kidnapping of Gena, leading a European Solidarity Corps Programme, multiple maintenance issues with the VC house, to name a few, Shane has maintained remarkable levels of discernment, professionalism and perhaps most of all, calmness.

I would like to thank the dedicated Council Officers who are a pleasure to work with. A special word of thanks to Pauline Conway, who stepped down as President last year but stayed on Council as Secretary. It has been wonderful to have her guidance and support. There are also people who are not on council but who are members of committees established by council. A new Programmes Oversight Committee was established this year to support the Projects and Programmes Team. Many other friends of VC have assisted with our Parish Promotions and other events which we are very grateful for. We are fortunate in VC to have such talented and dedicated people to give their precious time to assist VC thrive and to meet our governance obligations.

Finally, I would like to thank our supporters and donors, Mísean Cara, the European Solidarity Corp, St Patrick Missionary Society and all those who donated so generously. A special word of thanks to Sally Roddy who does trojan work organising and partaking in the Parish Promotion Programme and the Missionary Cooperation Plan in the USA.



Anthony Hannon
President

Overview by the Chief Executive Officer

The 2025 financial year was one of significant progress for Viatores Christi (VC). We strengthened our organisational foundations, expanded strategic partnerships and invested in the systems and programmes that will support our mission for years to come. Alongside these achievements, the year also reminded us that our greatest strength lies in our people and our ability to respond with resilience and compassion when challenges arise.



The wellbeing of our staff remains central to the organisation. During the year, our Programmes Manager, Zara O'Driscoll, unfortunately took ill, creating a significant challenge for both the team and our programme delivery. I am delighted that Zara returned to work early this year following her recovery. The experience also prompted a review of our long-term illness policy, resulting in greater clarity while reinforcing our commitment to balancing good governance with care for our employees.

A significant achievement during the year was the successful completion of our first annual report under the Misesan Cara Member Managed Grant. My sincere thanks to Mike Greally and the team for this excellent work. The report was very positively received and demonstrated the strength of our programme management while identifying opportunities to further strengthen the sustainability of our overseas partners. Our programme approach continues to evolve, placing greater emphasis on local leadership, partnership and capacity strengthening—principles that are central to our current strategic plan.

This year also saw the successful redevelopment and launch of the Viatores Christi website. More than a visual refresh, the new platform strengthens how we communicate our mission, recruit volunteers, engage supporters and deliver services. New features include online training registration, automated volunteer opportunities and enhanced fundraising functionality. While further work remains, particularly around photography and communications capacity, the new website provides a strong foundation for future growth.

Our Venture Training Programme once again brought together participants from across Uganda, Sudan and the United Kingdom for an engaging programme exploring global citizenship, climate justice, inclusion and project management. Accessibility remained a priority, with financial support enabling participation by individuals and organisations who might otherwise have been excluded. My thanks to Miriam Hockey, Rose Salaama, Cormac Daly and all our facilitators for another successful programme.

The commencement of the EU-funded AVCA programme marks an important milestone for Viatores Christi. As lead partner in an international consortium spanning Europe, Latin America and Africa, we have strengthened our capacity to coordinate

complex, multi-country programmes while reinforcing our systems for governance, safeguarding, financial management and accountability.

Beyond programme delivery, Viatores Christi continued to contribute to national conversations on lay mission through the Association of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland (AMRI), the Lay Mission Committee and the pre-Synodal process. These engagements reflect our commitment to shaping the future of lay mission in Ireland alongside our international development work.

Advocacy remained an important part of our work, particularly in promoting disability inclusion and environmental sustainability through campaigns linked to Africa Day for the Environment and the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. I would like to acknowledge the leadership of Patricia Callanan and Victor Okonga in advancing this work.

Financially, the organisation continues to grow from a stronger position. The Misesan Cara Member Managed Grant has provided greater stability while enabling us to deepen investment in our overseas partners and advance locally led development. Our EU programmes have also strengthened the diversification of our income, increasing unrestricted revenue and reinforcing our long-term sustainability. During the year an independent financial review identified several priorities for the organisation, including investment in fundraising, financial management, governance, organisational systems and human resources. These recommendations provide a valuable roadmap as we continue to build a resilient and sustainable organisation.

As we look to the future, our priorities remain clear: strengthening partnerships, increasing programme impact, investing in our people and systems, diversifying income and continuing to accompany communities through high-quality lay mission and international development. The global development environment continues to present significant challenges, but I remain confident that Viatores Christi is well placed to respond. Our dedicated staff, committed volunteers, engaged Council, generous funders and trusted partners continue to demonstrate the values that have sustained this organisation for more than sixty-five years.

My sincere thanks to everyone, council, staff and members who all contribute to the mission of Viatores Christi. Together, we continue to strengthen partnerships, support local leadership and work towards a more just, inclusive and sustainable organisation.



Shane Halpin

CEO

Who we are

Viatores Christi CLG is a development and humanitarian organisation working within the faith-based international development sector. Working in solidarity with partner organisations to improve the lives of local people by improving access to basic services Viatores Christi addresses needs through long term capacity building development interventions and recruits, trains and places skilled personnel. The member-based organisation works across multiple sectors: education, health including disability, income generation, livelihoods and human rights in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. The organisation in the current year is a consortium lead in the European Solidarity Corps humanitarian aid volunteer programme. We believe in a local-led development approach supporting communities to identify their needs and find their own tailored solutions. We aim for an impact that is sustainable and will benefit communities over the long-term. Our approach is consistent with the Missionary Approach to Development.

Council: Board of Directors

President:	Anthony Hannon
VP:	Denise Flack
Treasurer:	Mamohapi Byrne
Secretary:	Pauline Conway
Directors:	Sally Roddy, Prince Banda, Claire McCartan, Aisling Foley
Trustees:	John O'Loughlin-Kennedy, Máire Ní Bhroin, Kevin Goodwin, Brenda Hynes, Helen Flaherty.

Staff

Shane Halpin
Ann Waldron
Zara O Driscoll
Mike Greally
Victor Okonga
Patricia Callanan
Rose Salaama Bavuga

CEO

Financial and Administration

Programmes & People Manager

Projects Manager /MDO

Deputy Projects Manager/AMDO - Kenya

PSO & Designated Child Safeguarding Officer

VC Regional Office Uganda, EU ESC/Training Support

Bernadette Murtagh/ Rob O' Hara **Finance**

Volunteers

Sally Roddy
Dianne Kavanagh

Mission Awareness (PPP Ireland and MCP USA)

MCP USA Coordinator

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VC's Strategic Plan 2024-27

VC organisational Goals are to influence transformative change; enable impactful development; and enhance our organisational capacity. New initiatives include mainstreaming environmental awareness throughout our work; embracing localisation – where local people take responsibility for their own future; revitalising and reenergising our membership; and developing an ambitious and robust financial sustainability strategy.

OUR STRATEGIC GOALS AND PRIORITY ACTIONS – Contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

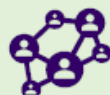


Goal 1: Influence Transformative Change

Be responsive to emerging and fast changing global needs.

We will do this by...

- Journeying with marginalised and vulnerable people in communities to realise their goals.
- Advocating for systemic change and supporting progress towards achieving the SDGs through our four key programme areas: health, education, livelihoods and human rights including disability rights.
- Establishing and fostering linkages and networks with other likeminded organisations for reciprocal learning and partnerships and promoting international solidarity volunteering.
- Working within the missionary approach to development and contributing to its evolution.
- Engaging with global citizenship education through different platforms.
- Mainstreaming environmental awareness throughout our work.



Goal 2: Enable Impactful Development

Be responsive to communities and partners with whom we work.

We will do this by...

- Proactively researching and identifying target areas and stakeholders to ensure we are effectively meeting our vision and mission.
- Supporting the role of lay missionaries/volunteers as a component of VC's approach.
- Expanding and updating our training in line with global challenges.
- Building the capacity of partners through training, deployment of skilled volunteers, accompaniment, and financial support.
- Embracing localisation – where local people take responsibility for their own future.
- Effectively building capacities of vulnerable communities to address/mitigate the challenges they face.
- Being guided by relevant international policies and frameworks.



Goal 3: Enhance Organisational Capacity

Be responsive to changing organisational needs; become a more effective change agent.

We will do this by...

- Adopting an inclusive and consultative approach to our strategic decision making and governance.
- Revitalising and reenergising our membership.
- Improving communication internally and externally.
- Ensuring governance, accountability and organisational safeguarding is in line with evolving standards.
- Supporting the welfare of staff and members.
- Developing an ambitious and robust financial sustainability strategy.
- Identifying new donors and partnerships.

Our full strategy is available on our website
www.vcvolunteers.ie

News and Updates from 2025/6



Since 2025 Viatores Christi (VC) volunteer committee and more recently VC's project team has been working on a new chapter in its long tradition of lay mission with the planned launch of a reimagined Lay Missionary Volunteer Programme due to take place formally in 2026. Rooted in more than 66 years of experience, the programme builds on VC's history of accompanying people who feel called to share their time, skills and lives in solidarity with communities around the world. Since 1960, VC has supported over 2,000 people in their journeys of volunteering and mission.

The renewed programme has been designed to respond to the changing realities of volunteers and partner communities today. At its heart is a commitment to genuine partnership, solidarity, accompaniment and mutual learning. The programme focuses on longer-term placements where volunteers can become part of the life of a community, develop a deeper understanding of local cultures and contribute their skills in ways that are meaningful and sustainable.

The programme is open to all who share VC's values and desire to stand in solidarity with people who are marginalised or facing disadvantage. Recognising that every volunteer and every community is different, placements will be flexible and tailored to the needs of local partner organisations and the experience, skills and circumstances of each volunteer.

The first placements are expected to begin in 2026, with VC initially working with established mission partners, mainly in East Africa and particularly Uganda. Volunteers may contribute in areas such as education, healthcare, administration, agriculture, pastoral work or other locally identified areas of need. A key emphasis of the programme is skills-sharing and capacity-building, supporting local communities and organisations as they continue their own important work.

Preparing volunteers carefully is central to the programme. Those interested in volunteering will be invited to begin a process of reflection, discernment and training, combining online learning through VC's Venture programme with in-person preparation at VC's headquarters in Cabra, Dublin. This journey allows potential volunteers to explore their motivation, develop

practical skills and prepare for the opportunities and challenges of living and working in another cultural context.

VC is committed to ensuring that every placement follows best practice principles, with robust safeguarding policies, due diligence processes and appropriate support structures in place. Volunteers will receive ongoing support during their placements, including local mentoring, regular contact with VC, welfare support and emergency and medical assistance.

The programme represents an exciting continuation of VC's mission: creating opportunities for people to cross boundaries, build relationships and accompany communities through shared experiences of service and solidarity. As the programme develops, VC hopes to grow its network of partners and continue sending volunteers who are ready to listen, learn and contribute to communities around the world. The programme will be supported primarily through its parish promotions mission awareness appeals which take place in specific dioceses each year. Volunteers will be required to fundraise in support of the programme but will receive a significant contribution towards their expenses. The programme will dovetail with VC's European Solidarity Volunteer programme and will be managed through our projects team.

Volunteers in the Field

Volunteer: Brian Lynch

Location: Diocese of Fort Portal, Uganda

Role: Working alongside a Diocesan team, Brian is leading a comprehensive research and data-gathering project to review all active health, education, and livelihood initiatives in Fort Portal. His final report will establish a vital baseline of parish-based community development, serving as a strategic roadmap for the Diocese's future development work.



Volunteer: Dan Ferguson (VC Volunteer & Lay Missionary)

Location: CEBES Perquin (Association For The Promotion Of Community Development), Morazán, El Salvador

Role: Dan is driving digital transformation initiatives to empower local youth and strengthen regional connections through three core objectives:



- **Community Hub:** Building a centralized digital platform and library to securely share resources, daily event feeds, and community updates across El Salvador.
- **Tech Empowerment:** Delivering specialized training in AI and Web3 technologies for local youth and partner institutions.
- **Archival Innovation:** Integrating a customized AI language model trained on the archives of St. Oscar Romero and Fr. Rogelio Ponsele, enabling users to search and analyze key theological themes across their homilies.

NPFS in Haiti



During the first week in August 2025, VC received word that the Nos Petits Freres et Soeurs (NPFS) project in Port-au-Prince, Haiti had been attacked by a gang and that eight people, including Irish lay missionary and longtime friend of VC, Gena Heraty, had been kidnapped. After 27 days of captivity in traumatic conditions, Gena and her friends were released.

Notwithstanding the harrowing ordeal, Gena has vowed to remain on in Haiti where she is crucial to the ongoing care for and support of children with a wide range of disabilities. Port-au-Prince continues to be a very violent city with ongoing battles between gangs and the government in a struggle for power.

Sad News from Kiyinda Mityana

On 26th December VC received the very sad news that Mr Anthony Kizito Ssenyonga, Kiyinda-Mityana's Diocesan Inspector of Schools and project focal person for VC had passed away following a short illness. Anthony was a very good friend and supporter of VC and he will be greatly missed. *Ar Dheis Dé go Raibh a Anam.*



AGM Mass 2025 at VC House – A celebration of 65 years in person and online for members who wished to join remotely.

Member Managed Grant (MMG) 2024-27

Projects Manager and MDO Mike Greally



As part of our commitment to ongoing improvement and our new commitment to a more programmatic approach, associated with the MMG, a thorough review of all VC policies was undertaken, resulting in a stronger portfolio of policies being put in place. Having a strong set of policies is key part of ensuring that the regular Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA) commissioned by Misesan Cara is passed with flying colours.

An important change in MMG Year 2 was the planned withdrawal of 2 partners – SFFHP in Uganda and Partners in Compassion in Cambodia - from the programme. This reduced VC's MMG partners from 12 to 10 with the surplus funding emanating from the withdrawal distributed across other partners. This additional funding enabled the Weaver Nest Early Childhood Project in Moyo Uganda to complete a roof for a dormitory and provided some funding to those partners receiving the lowest levels of funding to bring them up to €20,000 per year.

In addition to the MMG funding, VC also applied for, and received, a €15,000 Member Capacity Development grant which was utilised to explore the potential for resource mobilisation for VC. Two consultants, David Dalton and Donal Maher, carried out the work and produced a comprehensive report, which VC is now working through. One important aspect raised was VC's website - the public's window into VC – which was an area that was immediately addressed by VC and which is also subject to ongoing improvement.

In April 2026, Misesan Cara carried out an evaluation of selected VC projects in Uganda. The feedback received was positive and Misesan Cara is encouraged by VC's adaptation to the more programmatic approach to development. Misesan Cara was also impressed by the high quality of projects and partners being supported by VC in Uganda.

Advancing Locally Led Development through Partnership

Locally led development continues to reshape international development practice, with increasing recognition that sustainable change is most effective when it is driven by local organisations and communities. Dóchas has described this shift as a "sectoral transformation", reflecting the growing commitment among Irish development organisations to strengthen equitable partnerships and support local leadership in decision-making, implementation and advocacy.

Viatres Christi (VC) has embraced this approach by placing partnership, participation and mutual learning at the centre of its programme delivery. Throughout the reporting period, VC continued to strengthen its commitment to locally led development by creating opportunities for partners to influence programming, share expertise and shape organisational learning.

Building Stronger Partnerships

A cornerstone of VC's locally led approach has been the investment in strong, trusted relationships with partner organisations. Regular one-to-one engagement alongside quarterly partner meetings has created consistent opportunities for dialogue, problem-solving and shared decision-making. These forums have strengthened communication, fostered collaboration across organisations and reinforced a culture of partnership rather than project management.

VC has also prioritised peer-to-peer learning, recognising that partners themselves are a valuable source of knowledge and innovation. During quarterly partner meetings, organisations shared practical experiences and successful approaches with one another, including presentations on community-led initiatives such as cooperative models that reach the most marginalised groups. These exchanges have enabled partners to learn directly from one another while showcasing locally developed solutions.

Listening, Learning and Co-Creating

A significant achievement during the year has been VC's commitment to ensuring that partners actively shape organisational processes rather than simply implementing them.

Partners participated in a range of reflection and learning events that informed programme development and organisational improvement. These included reporting workshops to strengthen partners' confidence in programme reporting, reflection sessions on the first year of Multi-Annual Grant (MMG) implementation, and dedicated listening and learning sessions that gathered partner feedback on reporting templates and systems. Feedback from these sessions has directly informed improvements to VC's own processes.

This participatory approach has extended to safeguarding, where partners were actively involved in developing safeguarding reporting processes and testing revised monitoring templates before wider implementation. Their practical experience has helped ensure that reporting systems are appropriate, accessible and responsive to local realities.

Similarly, VC introduced a partner self-assessment process designed to strengthen organisational ownership of capacity development. The tool was initially piloted with a small number of partners before being refined based on their feedback and rolled out more widely, demonstrating VC's commitment to co-design rather than top-down implementation.

Supporting Local Leadership Across Cross-Cutting Themes

VC has increasingly involved partners in shaping cross-cutting organisational priorities. During 2025, partners participated in disability awareness and knowledge-sharing sessions to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, contributing their own experiences of inclusive programming and identifying practical priorities for strengthening disability inclusion across projects.

Partners have also played a leading role in environmental action, with VC supporting locally designed initiatives to celebrate Africa Environment and Wangari Maathai Day. Community-led activities—including environmental awareness campaigns, tree planting and local clean-up initiatives—demonstrated the capacity of partner organisations to mobilise communities around locally relevant environmental priorities.

Amplifying Local Voices

An important aspect of locally led development is ensuring that local organisations receive recognition for their expertise and achievements. Throughout the year, VC continued to amplify partner voices through its website, impact stories and communications, highlighting partner-led innovations, advocacy successes and contributions to international awareness days, including Africa Environment and Wangari Maathai Day and the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

VC's advocacy approach is itself grounded in local leadership. Rather than leading advocacy on behalf of partners, the organisation supports and strengthens existing local advocacy initiatives. During the reporting period, VC facilitated an Advocacy Learning and Sharing Session, accompanied by practical guidance materials and advocacy toolkits, enabling partners to strengthen their own advocacy strategies while sharing successful approaches with one another.

Missionary Approach to Development – the 6As



VC continues to emphasise and promote the Missionary Approach and the 6As above to reach the furthest behind. Increasingly our work is focused on local communities taking greater responsibility and leading their own development work with support and encouragement from the VC team in East Africa and in Ireland.

Key Achievements on VC's MMG Programme

Livelihoods

VC strengthened sustainable livelihoods by expanding access to finance, improving cooperative governance, and supporting national advocacy for small cooperatives in Uganda.

- **Expanded access to finance:** Through the Caritas Kampala Cooperative Project, **725 people** across **12 cooperatives** benefited from a revolving fund totalling **€75,525**, improving access to affordable credit for poor and marginalised communities, including displaced households.
- **Strengthened cooperative systems:** Support to **43 cooperatives** in the Archdiocese of Kampala enhanced leadership capacity, strengthened compliance with national cooperative regulations, and improved collaboration across the cooperative movement through networking initiatives such as the Kampala Cooperative Exhibition.
- **Influenced national policy:** Caritas Kampala played a key advocacy role in responding to regulatory changes affecting Savings and Credit Cooperative Organisations (SACCOs). Collaborative lobbying successfully contributed to the postponement of the planned closure of non-compliant SACCOs, giving small cooperatives until **September 2026** to adapt while regulatory requirements are reviewed and harmonised.

Education

VC continued to strengthen education systems by investing in teacher training and improving governance and quality assurance across diocesan schools.

- **Strengthened early childhood education:** Funding for Weaver Nest Early Childhood Development Teachers Training Institute supported the completion of a boys' dormitory and the establishment of a model Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) centre, while continuing to strengthen the training of ECDE tutors serving northern Uganda.
- **Improved school governance and quality assurance:** Support to the Diocese of Kiyinda-Mityana strengthened education oversight across **400 diocesan schools** by enhancing the inspectorate system, increasing the effectiveness of School Boards of Management and Parent Teacher Associations, and expanding regular school monitoring to improve educational quality and inclusion.

Health

VC strengthened healthcare systems for children with disabilities by sustaining specialist services and improving access to essential equipment.

- **Maintained specialist rehabilitation services:** Continued support to NPFS enabled the retention of **26 specialist healthcare professionals** across projects in Haiti and Uganda, ensuring children with disabilities continued to receive essential physiotherapy and nursing services.
- **Improved access to essential equipment:** Funding for Potter's Village and Karidaari Seed School in Uganda enabled the procurement of medical equipment and assistive

devices, improving the quality of care and rehabilitation services for children with disabilities.

Human Rights

VC promoted access to justice, strengthened disability inclusion, and built the capacity of faith-based development institutions.

- **Expanded access to community justice:** Support to the Justice and Peace Commission in the Diocese of Hoima trained **75 community mediators**, who successfully resolved more than **75 disputes**, strengthening mediation as an accessible alternative to formal justice systems.
- **Promoted disability rights and inclusion:** Potter's Village and Karidaari Seed School engaged communities and duty bearers to raise awareness of the rights and wellbeing of children with disabilities, helping to foster more inclusive and supportive communities.
- **Strengthened institutional capacity:** VC supported the development office of the Sacred Heart Sisters in Uganda, enhancing its capacity to coordinate and sustain development programmes across **Uganda, Kenya, and South Sudan** in line with its missionary approach to development.



Strengthening Advocacy Across Our Partner Network

Following the recommendations of VC's Advocacy Working Group, the Projects Team placed increased emphasis during the year on supporting partners to integrate advocacy into their development programmes. Recognising that lasting change requires influencing the systems and policies that perpetuate poverty and exclusion, VC encouraged partners to complement direct service delivery with evidence-based advocacy, particularly across the organisation's cross-cutting themes of **disability inclusion** and **environmental sustainability**.

To support this shift, VC shared a practical "**How to do Advocacy**" guidance note, together with briefing materials and advocacy toolkits, with all partners. These resources informed a dedicated **Partners' Advocacy Learning and Sharing Session**, held to mark International Day of Persons with Disabilities, where partners exchanged experiences, reflected on common challenges, and showcased examples of advocacy in action.

The discussions demonstrated that advocacy is becoming an increasingly important component of partners' work.

Several partners highlighted advocacy as an essential tool for changing public attitudes and strengthening inclusion for people with disabilities. **Village of Joy, St Francis Family Helper Programme (SFFHP)**, and other disability-focused partners continue to work with schools, local authorities, families and communities to promote the rights of children with disabilities, improve access to education, and challenge stigma. Their advocacy extends beyond awareness-raising to encouraging greater accountability among duty bearers and fostering more inclusive communities.

Similarly, **Weaver Nest Early Childhood Development Training Centre** has expanded its advocacy efforts to raise awareness of the importance of quality early childhood education. Through radio programmes, community outreach, church platforms and public awareness campaigns, the organisation is challenging misconceptions about Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) and promoting greater recognition of its importance in children's lifelong development. While acknowledging that changing attitudes takes time, the organisation recognises advocacy as fundamental to achieving sustainable improvements in education.



Children of the Early Childhood Programme learning to care for their environment in Weaver Nest Project, Moyo, Uganda

Partners also reflected openly on the challenges they face in undertaking advocacy. Common issues included limited staff capacity, insufficient funding for long-term advocacy initiatives, difficulties accessing reliable data and evidence to inform policy engagement, and the time required to influence public attitudes and government decision-making. Several partners also identified the need for stronger collaboration, legal expertise and regional coordination to maximise the impact of their advocacy efforts.

The learning session demonstrated that VC's partners increasingly recognise advocacy as an essential element of sustainable development. By equipping partners with practical tools, facilitating peer learning, and encouraging a stronger focus on influencing policies, institutions and public attitudes, VC is helping partners move beyond addressing immediate needs towards creating the systemic changes that underpin lasting development outcomes.

Advocacy Through Evidence: Improving Sanitation for Older People

Bishop Magambo Counsellor Training Institute (BMCTI) Fort Portal demonstrated how practical service delivery can generate evidence to influence policy and improve public services. Through the **"SATO Stool Construction and Installation for the Elderly in Fort Portal City"** initiative, funded by the Irish Embassy in Uganda, the organisation sought to improve the safety, dignity and independence of older people experiencing difficulty using traditional pit latrines.



Mike and Victor sit with Miss Kabanekera Mary at BMCTI, October 2024

Working with local councils and community elder groups, BMCTI identified **175 older people**, prioritising those with mobility challenges and disabilities. Before installing the SATO stools, the team carried out a comprehensive assessment of sanitation facilities in each household to ensure they were suitable for installation.

The assessment highlighted significant sanitation challenges facing older people in the region. Of the 175 households surveyed, only **125** had pit latrines suitable for installation. Many existing facilities were in poor condition, including latrines that were full, structurally unsafe or deteriorating, placing older people at increased risk of injury and undermining their dignity and wellbeing.

Most significantly, the survey found that **36 older people had no access to a pit latrine at all**. Rather than treating this solely as a project finding, BMCTI used the evidence to engage with government. The results were presented to Uganda's Ministry of Water and Environment during preparations for the Albertine Regional Water and Environment Week. The findings prompted discussions on the sanitation needs of older people, and the Ministry subsequently requested further information on households without access to sanitation facilities to inform follow-up action.

This initiative demonstrates how partners are increasingly combining direct service delivery with evidence-based advocacy. By documenting community needs and engaging decision-makers with credible data, BMCTI not only improved sanitation for vulnerable older people but also contributed to raising the visibility of ageing and disability issues within local and national planning processes.

Age & Opportunity Ireland and BMCTI: Connecting Older People Across Continents

Age & Opportunity is Ireland's national organisation for promoting positive ageing and improving the quality of life of older people through advocacy, arts, sport, physical activity, and lifelong learning. This year, Viatores Christi facilitated a unique collaboration between Age & Opportunity and our Ugandan partner, Bishop Magambo Counsellor Training Institute (BMCTI), supporting research on the disproportionate impact of climate change on older people.

Age & Opportunity had received funding from the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) to explore older people's experiences of climate change. As part of the research, the organisation sought to include international perspectives to enrich the findings and ensure that the voices of older people from different contexts were represented.

Our Projects Team coordinated the partnership, bringing together representatives from Age & Opportunity and BMCTI in Fort Portal, Uganda. Following a series of planning meetings involving Fr. Pascal, Sr. Florence, ((both from BWCTI) Mary Harkin (Age & Opportunity), researcher Seamus Mullen, and Maureen Bassett of BOLD – Older People for Climate Action, an online consultation was held on 7 May.

The consultation brought older people from Ireland and Uganda together to share their lived experiences of climate change, exploring themes including:

- Weather events, food security and daily disruption
- Physical health impacts, including dust, air quality and pollution
- Mental wellbeing and climate-related stress
- Support systems for older people

The innovative approach was described by IHREC as "ground-breaking", recognising the value of creating a space for older people from different parts of the world to learn from one another and contribute to a shared understanding of climate justice.

Mary Harkin of Age & Opportunity described the consultation as "a wonderful experience", noting that the exchange would be invaluable in informing the research and supporting future engagement with both the Department of Foreign Affairs and IHREC to raise awareness of the disproportionate impacts of climate change on older people. Sr. Florence echoed these sentiments, sharing that participants in Fort Portal were delighted by the opportunity to connect with their peers in Ireland.

Age & Opportunity expressed its appreciation to Viatores Christi for facilitating the collaboration, which has laid the foundation for future joint initiatives, including activities planned for International Day of Older Persons on 1 October.

Advancing Environmental Stewardship & Disability Inclusion

Across the world, progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) continues to face significant challenges. SDG 6.2, which aims to ensure access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation by 2030, is currently off track. Achieving this target will require progress to accelerate fourfold in the provision of safely managed sanitation and hygiene services. Although the number of people practicing open defecation has declined globally, an estimated 494 million people continue to do so. In Uganda, open defecation remains a significant concern, particularly in rural areas where an estimated 23.6% of the population continues the practice, compared to 10.3% in urban areas. Much of this is attributed to households failing to upgrade from unimproved sanitation facilities.



An older lady setting an avocado tree in BMCTI programme Fort Portal for Wangari Maathai Day, 2026

At the same time, the climate crisis continues to intensify. The Climate Change Advisory Council Annual Review 2026 reports that the years 2015–2025 were the warmest eleven years in the 176-year observational record, with 2023–2025 being the three hottest years ever recorded. Atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide have reached unprecedented levels, accelerating global warming and contributing to increasingly frequent and severe weather events. Ocean temperatures have also reached record highs, with profound consequences for ecosystems, food security and livelihoods.

These interconnected global challenges disproportionately affect the poorest and most marginalised communities, including persons with disabilities. They reinforce the importance of integrating environmental sustainability and disability inclusion across all development programming rather than treating them as stand-alone issues.

Mainstreaming Environmental Stewardship

Viatore Christy (VC) recognises environmental stewardship as an essential component of sustainable development. Guided by its Strategic Plan 2024–2027, the organisation is committed to protecting our common home by embedding environmental awareness and action across its programmes and partnerships. With support from Misesan Cara, VC has continued to strengthen the environmental capacity of its partners across Africa, aligning with

Misean Cara's Strategy 2022–2026, which places increased emphasis on addressing climate change and strengthening community resilience to environmental shocks.

Throughout 2025 and 2026, VC worked alongside partners to promote practical environmental action and raise awareness within local communities. Partners implemented activities including tree planting, community clean-up campaigns, environmental education, improved waste management and climate awareness initiatives, demonstrating that local action can contribute meaningfully to global environmental goals.

VC has also continued to encourage partners to commemorate Africa Environment and **Wangari Maathai Day** each year on 3 March. Inspired by the legacy of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Professor Wangari Maathai and her well-known "Hummingbird" story, partners were encouraged to demonstrate that individual and community actions—however small—can collectively make a significant difference. Preparations for the 2026 campaign began in January, enabling partners to organise a wide range of environmental activities that engaged schools, faith communities and local residents. Activities included tree planting, environmental awareness campaigns, school-based initiatives and community clean-up exercises, all contributing to environmental protection while supporting progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

The sustainability of these initiatives has been particularly encouraging, with many environmental activities initiated through Wangari Maathai Day continuing well beyond the campaign period, reflecting growing ownership and commitment among partner organisations and communities.

VC lead Climate Action Programme



Further demonstrating its commitment to climate action, VC is also leading the European Solidarity Corps Humanitarian Aid Consortium, AVCA (Amplifying the Voice for Climate Action), strengthening opportunities for international collaboration and volunteer engagement in environmental action.

Strengthening Disability Inclusion



Joshua excited to be playing football at Village of Joy Franciscan Project Uganda.

Alongside environmental stewardship, disability inclusion remains a key cross-cutting priority across VC's international development work. VC is committed to ensuring that no one is left behind by supporting partners to strengthen inclusive programming and improve access to services for persons with disabilities.

To mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities in December 2025, VC organised an online disability awareness and learning session with partner organisations. The event formed part of VC's wider strategy to mainstream disability inclusion throughout its projects and provided a valuable opportunity for partners to share experiences, good practice and practical challenges.

The discussions highlighted the significant progress already being made by partner organisations. Many partners intentionally prioritise persons with disabilities within their programmes to ensure that the most marginalised communities are reached. Caritas incorporates disability inclusion within its community development programmes; BMCTI supports older persons with disabilities; and the Justice and Peace Commission, Hoima has advocated on behalf of persons with disabilities affected by land grabbing.

St. Francis Helper Centre (SSFHP) demonstrated a particularly strong commitment to inclusive education by recruiting a teacher with a visual impairment and introducing mandatory sign language training for all staff to better support learners who are deaf or blind. These initiatives reflect a growing understanding that inclusive development requires both accessible services and organisational change.

Partners also identified areas where additional support would strengthen their work. Priorities

included disability awareness training, organisational capacity building, support for disability-inclusive data collection, policy development and modest grant funding for assistive devices and mobility aids. Partners further recommended revisiting the findings of the 2023 Report on the Situation of Persons with Disabilities in Masaka, Uganda, commissioned with support from VC, to help inform future programming and strengthen disability-inclusive practice across partner organisations.

The story of Alexis in NPFS Haiti – a real-life story of success

– Gena Heraty, NPFS Haiti

People frequently ask me what is the most difficult thing about my work. Without hesitation, I tell them the two things that I find most difficult- when the residents suffer and when they die! Nothing is worse than that and unfortunately suffering and death are very much a part of our lives here. Despite our best efforts, there are times when our residents, have to endure great suffering and this is so hard. There are times when they have to leave us and this is terrible.

My story today is about Alexis Frechette and how he has overcome great suffering in his life with us. Alexis came to us back in 2003- he was abandoned in front of St. Damien's hospital and they estimated he was born in 2002. I remember very clearly when he came to us, this very cute young toddler with cerebral palsy. Even though he could not talk, walk or even use his hands - his eyes were bright and cheery! He responded to attention and settled in very quickly into the family.



Alexis in 2007

Back then, I had no way to know, that as he grew, he would have to endure great suffering. The picture here is from 2007- not very clear but see how adorable he has always been!

As the years went by, he started to have health issues. He seemed to have digestive problems that lead him to have terrible cramps, constipation and his little body would tense up in pain. As the years went by, nothing improved. He had days when he was ok and then days and nights when nothing would relieve his pain. He was always very skinny- all his calories seemed to go into fighting the pain.

When he was not in pain, he was always happy and smiling but once the pain started, he would sweat and twist and turn in attempts to find relief. Carers took in turns holding him as sometimes this brought him some relief. He was always hungry for his food and ate it like a starving boy. The food just led to more discomfort. We tried everything and got nowhere. I remember days when I held back the tears as nothing seemed to work. Days when he was well and days when I feared he would die. Throughout it all we prayed. Sometimes I would hold him during night prayer, and I would whisper prayers in his ears- prayers that he would be free from pain and grow big and strong. Prayers that his suffering would be no more and he would put on weight. He would always laugh at my prayers- he has a great laugh. He loved when I whispered prayers in his ears.

The years rolled by and then one day in 2024 things started to change. We noticed that he was less constipated. We noticed he was in less pain. We noticed he had more good days than bad ones. We noticed he was sleeping better. We noticed he was putting on weight. We noticed he seemed to be growing. We dared to hope these changes would improve! We hoped and we feared. Among ourselves we commented he seemed to be doing better. The night staff commented he was sleeping better. I had altered his big bed- made it smaller as it was too long and we needed the space. I teased him that he waited 'til I cut his bed before he started growing.

18 months later and I am happy to relate that Alexis is doing really well. He has grown a lot and he is so much better. It is amazing. It is fantastic. I don't find the words to express how grateful we all are. Alexis is a new Alexis! He can be sitting peacefully in his chair- watching everyone and frequently he will burst into laughter as he will see something he finds funny. He frequently laughs at us- especially if he sees us frazzled. When there is shooting and he sees everyone panicking, he is usually laughing at everyone- as if to say we are crazy because he knows we will be ok. While we noticed the improvements, well before we moved to Tabarre- living in Tabarre suits Alexis. He seems very content here- the heat does bother him but if you put him next to a fan, he is happy out! He no longer looked like a small boy. He is already 23 yrs old- imagine!

What brought about these changes? A small tweak to his diet? Persistent, whispered prayers into his ears? Whatever the reason, we are most grateful. Alexis is now enjoying life and might even outgrow his bed! I tease him all the time about this. For so many years he was tiny. Finally he is catching up- his body has finally started to grow. He is delighted and so are we! May God and all the forces of Good continue to watch over our dear Alexis and may he enjoy many more pain free years!

Safeguarding continues to be a top priority in VC

Our 2026 Child and Adult at Risk Safeguarding policy as well as a PSEAH policy has recently been approved by the Board. A European Solidarity Corp Safeguarding policy specific to our AVCA project has also been developed by the AVCA Team to guide all involved in that project. 2026 Safeguarding Monitoring is continuing using Misesan Cara's newly developed Safeguarding Monitoring report template.

Looking Ahead

VC's work during the reporting period demonstrates that environmental stewardship and disability inclusion are not separate programmes but integral cross-cutting themes that strengthen the impact and sustainability of all development interventions. By working alongside committed partners, supporting capacity development and promoting practical action, VC continues to advocate for a more inclusive and environmentally sustainable future—one where communities are empowered to respond to today's global challenges while ensuring that no one is left behind.

VC's EU Volunteer Programme

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS (ESC) PROGRAMME 2026/2027



The ESC programme is now on its 5th year within VC and continues to grow from strength to strength. The programme started with the *Humanitarian Aid for the Needs of Development* (HAND) project from 2022 to 2024 in which VC supported and successfully deployed 17 volunteers in India, Bosnia and Uganda. The 2 year *Amplifying the Voice for Climate Action* (AVCA) project, which started in 2026 saw VC lead the programme for the first time representing a significant upward path in our EU ESC involvement.

Programmes Manager, Zara O Driscoll

Together, the two programmes represent more than €1.26 million in programme value. AVCA has a slightly lower overall budget and fewer volunteers than HAND but generates approximately €65,925 more direct income for VC, an increase of 39.5%. This strengthens VC's position within ESC Humanitarian Aid while increasing the need for strong systems, compliance and staffing capacity.

Area	HAND	AVCA
Full title	Humanitarian Aid for the Needs of Development	Amplifying Voices for Climate Action
Programme period	2022-2024	2026-2027
Main theme	Humanitarian aid and development	Climate action, environmental protection and community resilience
Total programme budget	€636,700	€631,361
Direct VC income	€166,741.80	€232,667
Volunteers	37 sent; 17 assigned through VC; 4 hosted by VC Uganda	31 planned; 11 assigned through VC; 4 to be hosted by VC Uganda
Countries of activity	Uganda, Bosnia and Herzegovina and India	Uganda, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Bolivia
VC role	Consortium and programme partner	Lead and coordinating organisation
Current status	Closed	Implementation, recruitment and systems development
Main challenge	Completion and closure requirements	Recruitment of eligible long-term volunteers

ESC Humanitarian Aid

The European Solidarity Corps (ESC) Programme 2026/2027 is being implemented by an international consortium led by Viatores Christi (VC), Ireland, in partnership with ASPEm

(Italy), Visoneers (Germany), and host organizations in Uganda, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Bolivia. Named the **Amplifying the Voice for Climate Action** (AVCA) project, it aims to



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address in practical ways critical environmental and socio-economic challenges common across the three regions.

Climate change on a global scale is having life-changing effects on the poorest peoples in these regions. Erratic weather patterns, prolonged droughts, and changing rainfall patterns are increasingly threatening food security and livelihoods for farmers in rural areas. This is coupled with deforestation and habitat destruction and uncontrolled urbanisation.

A key focus of this intervention under the ESC broad theme of Environmental Protection, Sustainable Development and Climate Action, will be on raising awareness about the need to protect our environment, to invest in processes and practices that are more sustainable.

AVCA Amplifying the Voice for Climate Action

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS
THE POWER OF TOGETHER.

Uganda, 2026-2027

Open to young people between 18-35 years
Part of the European Solidarity Corps Volunteering Programme

Volunteers wanted for positions in Uganda, Bolivia, Costa Rica and Guatemala

Register now
<https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity>

Supporting partners:
VC | ASPeM | VISIONEERS | Asociación CDRO

Funded by the European Union

The AVCA intervention gives participant ESC volunteers a first-hand experience of the issues faced by those in these at-risk communities. At the same time the volunteers will learn from those on the ground most affected by the issue. It will provide them with clear and practical opportunities to raise the issue of climate change and environmental awareness not just while at their project but also on their return to Europe.

During the reporting period, programme implementation commenced successfully with the recruitment of short-term volunteers for Costa Rica early in 2026. Recruitment for both long-term Individual Volunteering and short-term Team Volunteering placements is ongoing across all four host countries in preparation for volunteer deployments scheduled to begin in October 2026.

The programme plans to engage in total 31 volunteers, comprising 13 long-term volunteers serving for eleven months and 18 short-term volunteers participating in three teams of 6 members each. Volunteers will support community-based initiatives while gaining valuable personal, social, and professional skills through intercultural learning and international cooperation. Recruitment has been conducted through the European Solidarity Corps Portal, social media platforms, partner networks, youth organizations, and educational institutions. Particular emphasis has been placed on inclusivity, equal opportunities, and participation of young people from diverse backgrounds, including those with fewer opportunities.

The consortium experienced some recruitment challenges related to the European Solidarity Corps 12-month participation rule, which reduced the pool of eligible candidates in certain categories. Despite this, partner organizations have intensified outreach efforts and recruitment remains on track. Strong governance, safeguarding, and risk management systems continue to guide programme implementation. Comprehensive safeguarding policies,

designated safeguarding focal persons, volunteer codes of conduct, risk assessment procedures, and monitoring mechanisms are in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of volunteers and host communities. My thanks to Rose Salaama Bavuga for her excellent support in the area of recruitment and local partner orientation which has been ongoing since our advanced planning visit to Uganda in 2024.

Local Partners Prepare for ESC Volunteers



Fr Deo of Justice and Peace Hoima Uganda, with team members and VC's Rose Salaama Bavuga

Behind every successful volunteer placement is the dedication of local partners who work tirelessly to ensure that each arrival is welcomed with care, purpose and preparation. Throughout the year, strong relationships have been maintained with our partners in Hoima through regular engagement with Rose and direct collaboration with the Justice and Peace Commission Hoima, the Bulindi Chimpanzee and Community Project, VC Uganda and the local accommodation provider.

Together, these partners have been laying the foundations for the arrival of volunteers in autumn 2026. Planning has been a truly collaborative effort, with partners shaping volunteer roles and activities, reviewing budgets and funding arrangements, and ensuring that practical preparations are in place. From organising accommodation, office space and reliable Wi-Fi to coordinating food, transport and induction programmes, every detail has been carefully considered.

Safeguarding, communications support and volunteer wellbeing have remained central to these discussions, reflecting our shared commitment to providing placements that are safe, meaningful and beneficial for both volunteers and host communities. Through regular dialogue and joint planning, our partners in Hoima continue to demonstrate their commitment to creating a programme that is well organised, sustainable and closely aligned with our shared objectives.

As autumn 2026 approaches, these preparations are a testament to the strength of the partnerships that underpin the programme and to the warm welcome that awaits the next group of volunteers in Uganda.

Strengthening partnerships

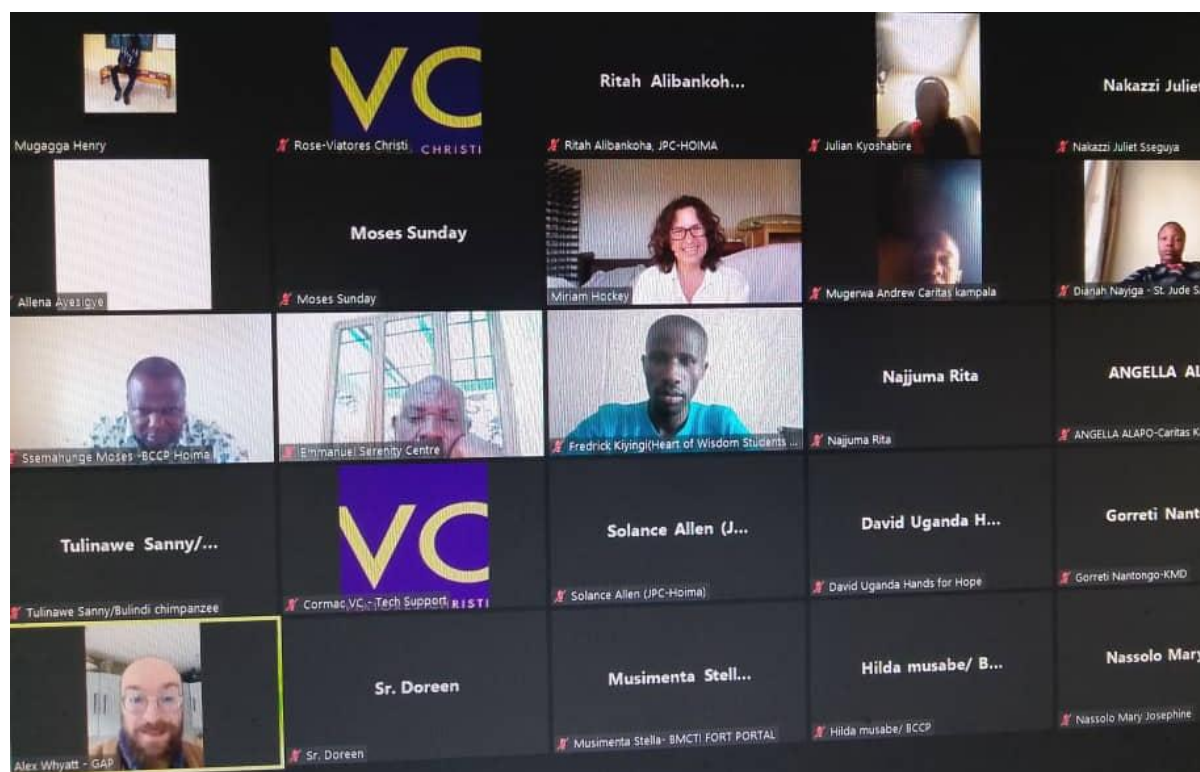
VC continues to prioritise the identification, development, and strengthening of strategic partnerships that align with its mission, values, and programme objectives. Throughout the reporting period, the organisation actively engaged with a range of local, regional, and international stakeholders to explore opportunities for collaboration, capacity strengthening, knowledge exchange, and the co-creation of projects that address community needs and promote sustainable development.

A notable achievement during the year was the initiation of partnership discussions with organisations such as the local episcopal conference of Uganda for venture programme partnerships, Viatores Christi Dublin and Safe Corner NGO (Armenia) under the Erasmus+ Programme framework. These engagements focused on identifying areas of mutual interest, exploring opportunities for joint funding applications, strengthening volunteer mobility and exchange initiatives, and promoting innovative approaches to youth engagement, community development, social inclusion, and active citizenship. The relationships established through these discussions have laid a strong foundation for future collaboration and have expanded VC's international network and visibility.

Despite these successes, partnership development continues to face several challenges. Competition for international funding opportunities remains high, requiring significant time and resources to build relationships, develop quality proposals, and meet donor requirements. Differences in organisational priorities, timelines, and administrative procedures among potential partners also occasionally slowed progress towards formalising collaborations. Additionally, limited staff capacity and the increasing demands of programme implementation affected the pace at which new partnerships could be pursued and developed.

Nevertheless, VC remains committed to strengthening existing partnerships and cultivating new relationships that enhance programme quality, expand outreach, increase access to funding opportunities, and ultimately improve outcomes for the communities it serves. The organisation views strategic partnerships as a critical component of its long-term sustainability and impact, and will continue investing in collaborative approaches in the coming year.

VC Venture Training Programme 2025 – Online and Interactive



The Viatoes Christi (VC) Venture Training Programme continued to strengthen the capacity of current and aspiring development workers, missionaries, volunteers, and community leaders through a series of virtual training weekends conducted between October and November 2025. The programme attracted participants from Uganda, Sudan, and the United Kingdom, including NGO staff, diocesan and congregation personnel, university students, community leaders, and self-employed professionals.

The training was delivered through live online sessions facilitated by experienced practitioners from the VC network, including Miriam Hockey, David Nyaluke, Alex Whyatt, Rory Halpin, Mark Cumming, Rose Salaama, and Patty Abozaglo, with technical and administrative support provided by Cormac Daly and the VC training team. An average of 25 participants from African and European countries participated and completed the course. The number would have been bigger than that but some were constrained by finance despite benefiting from a subsidized fee.

The programme focused on equipping participants with practical knowledge, skills, and competencies required for effective engagement in development and humanitarian work. Key topics covered included Introduction to Viatoes Christi and the Venture Programme, Global Awareness, Global Citizenship Education, Climate Justice, Mission and Development, Community Development, Field-Based Community Development Case Studies, Conflict Resolution, Accessibility and Inclusivity in Project Cycle Management, and Research Methods. Training was delivered using participatory and learner-centred methodologies including presentations, breakout discussions, case studies, peer learning, experience sharing, and self-paced online learning modules. To enhance accessibility and inclusion, recordings and learning

materials were shared after each session, enabling participants to revisit content and supporting learners with visual impairments. Special provisions were made to ensure participation of vulnerable groups, including participants from a visually impaired organisation in Sudan and individuals who lacked the financial resources to pay training fees.

Participant feedback demonstrated high levels of satisfaction with the quality of facilitation, relevance of content, and interactive learning environment. Participants reported increased understanding of global development issues, strengthened community development and project management skills, enhanced communication abilities, and greater confidence in applying development approaches within their communities and organisations.

Key achievements during the year included successful completion of the training weekends, strong attendance and engagement, establishment of online learning accounts, successful completion of online learning modules, and continued expansion of access to training through scholarships and subsidized participation. The programme generated participant contributions while maintaining support mechanisms for vulnerable groups, reinforcing VC's commitment to inclusive learning and capacity development.

Strategic Enhancements for Greater Impact

Building on lessons learned during 2025 and on feedback with the participants of the training, VC has identified the following potential areas to strengthen the Venture Training Programme and increase its accessibility, relevance and long-term impact:

Strengthening Accessibility and Inclusion: Online learning modules should progressively incorporate voice-over narration, accessible formats and inclusive learning tools to support visually impaired learners and participants with additional needs.

Expanding Contemporary Development Content: Future training cycles should address emerging and priority development issues, including gender equality, domestic violence prevention, mental health and psychosocial support, basic financial management, and digital development practices.

Strengthening Practical Learning and Impact Measurement: Participants should be encouraged to develop action plans, community initiatives or mini-projects that demonstrate the practical application of their learning. A structured monitoring and evaluation framework could complement this approach by tracking skills application, employment and volunteer outcomes, and the wider community impact of programme graduates.

Developing a Youth Venture Stream: VC could explore a dedicated pathway for young people aged 16–20, equipping school leavers and university entrants with leadership, volunteering, active citizenship and life skills in response to growing interest from parents and youth organisations.

Establishing an Alumni Community: VC should explore the creation of a Venture Alumni Community to support continued engagement through networking, mentoring, peer support, volunteer opportunities and ongoing professional development.

Expanding Scholarships and Strategic Partnerships: VC could seek to strengthen partnerships with donors, dioceses, faith-based organisations and development agencies to expand scholarship opportunities and improve access for participants who may otherwise face financial barriers.

Next training cycle schedule - October/November 2026 and recruitment is ongoing

The VC Venture Training Effect: Accounts Assistant to Debt Manager

One of the most inspiring outcomes of the VC Venture Training Programme comes from Grace Nantale, now the Debt Manager at Nsambya Hospital. Grace joined the programme while working as an Accounts Assistant at the hospital, seeking to strengthen her professional and leadership skills.

Shortly after completing the Venture programme and presenting her certificate, Grace successfully competed for a promotion to lead the hospital's debt management section. Despite competing against colleagues with higher academic qualifications, she was selected because of the practical competencies, confidence, and leadership qualities she demonstrated—many of which had been strengthened through the Venture training.

The impact of the programme extended well beyond her promotion. Grace quickly became a trusted resource within the finance department, with colleagues regularly seeking her guidance on teamwork, communication, project management, and problem-solving. By applying the skills gained through the Venture programme in her daily work, she not only enhanced her own performance but also contributed to the effectiveness and growth of her team.

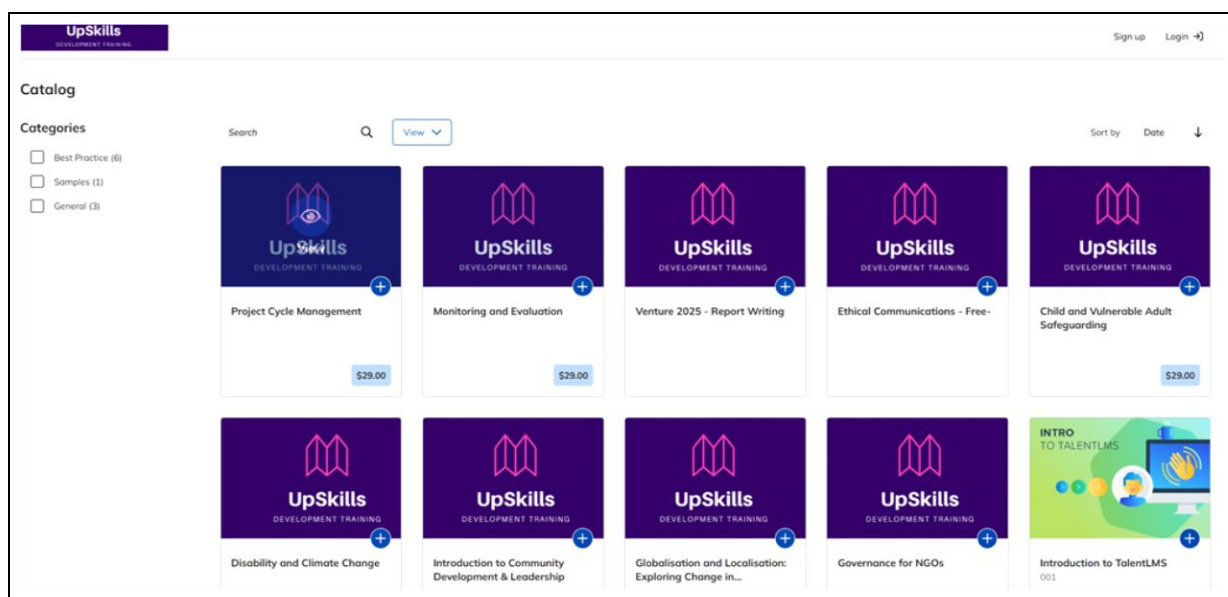
Reflecting on her experience, Grace said, "The VC Venture programme equipped me with skills that went beyond technical knowledge. The interactive and encouraging approach of the tutors and the participants from all over the world I feel has helped me to develop as a confident professional, an effective leader, and a valued contributor within my organisation."

Grace's journey demonstrates the transformative power of investing in personal and professional development. Her story highlights how practical skills training can unlock opportunities for career advancement, strengthen workplace performance, and create lasting benefits for individuals, organisations, and the communities they serve.

For more information and to register on our next course log on to www.vcvolunteers.ie/training



VC Upskills Programme



<https://viatores.talentlms.com/>

The VC Upskills Programme continued to provide development and humanitarian workers with practical, context-specific skills required to design, implement, monitor, and evaluate effective NGO and community development projects. Delivered through regional hubs, including Kampala, Uganda, the programme aims to strengthen the capacity of local organisations, faith-based institutions, volunteers, and community leaders to respond effectively to emerging development challenges.

During the reporting period, a number of European Solidarity Corps (ESC) volunteers, project staff, and members of religious congregations enrolled in safeguarding and other professional development courses. Participants reported increased knowledge and confidence in applying safeguarding principles, project management skills, community engagement approaches, and best practices within their respective organizations and communities.

The programme continues to be recognized for its affordability, flexibility, practical orientation, and relevance to contemporary development and humanitarian contexts. Participant feedback and engagement levels confirmed strong demand for quality capacity-building opportunities tailored to the realities faced by local development practitioners and faith-based organisations.

Despite the quality and relevance of the training programmes, overall enrolment remained below projected targets. This was largely attributed to limited visibility and promotion of the available courses, as well as increasing competition from other online and in-person training providers. Nonetheless, the programme's strong reputation and positive participant experiences indicate significant untapped potential for future growth.

Appeal for Support:

Expanding Access to Learning Through the VC Venture and VC Upskills Programmes

The VC Venture and VC Upskills Programmes continue to provide valuable opportunities for individuals working and volunteering in development, humanitarian, faith-based, and community sectors to strengthen their knowledge, skills, and leadership capacity. Through practical, accessible, and globally relevant training, these programmes equip participants with the tools needed to create positive and lasting change within their communities.



Over the years, we have witnessed the transformative impact of these programmes on participants from diverse backgrounds. Many graduates have gone on to lead community initiatives, improve organisational effectiveness, enhance volunteer engagement, and contribute meaningfully to local and global development efforts. However, for many aspiring participants, financial constraints remain a significant barrier to accessing these learning opportunities.

To ensure that no one is excluded because of their economic circumstances, Viatores Christi has established a sponsorship and bursary initiative that provides free or subsidised access to training for individuals who demonstrate financial need. This commitment reflects our belief that learning opportunities should be accessible to all, regardless of income, location, or background.

We therefore invite individuals, organisations, foundations, faith-based institutions, development agencies, and corporate partners to join us in supporting this important initiative. Your contribution can help cover training fees, learning materials, internet connectivity support, accessibility accommodations, and other participation costs for learners who would otherwise be unable to attend.

By sponsoring a participant, you are not only investing in an individual's personal and professional development—you are contributing to stronger communities, more effective organisations, and a more inclusive and equitable development sector. Every contribution, regardless of size, helps create opportunities for motivated individuals to gain the skills, confidence, and knowledge needed to become agents of positive change.

We invite you to partner with us in making the VC Venture and VC Upskills Programmes accessible to all and in building a future where capacity development and lifelong learning are within everyone's reach. For further information on sponsorship opportunities or to discuss partnership options, please contact Viatores Christi at Rose@Viatoreschristi.com. Your support can make a lasting difference in the lives of learners and the communities they serve.

VC's 65th Anniversary Lunch Address

In October 2025 Viatores Christi marked a very significant milestone by celebrating its 65th Anniversary. A large turnout of friends and supporters attended the anniversary lunch at the Wynns hotel. Many former VC volunteers attended. The following is the opening address by Vice President Denise Flack.



Denise Flack Council Member

Good afternoon, it is my great pleasure to welcome all of you here this afternoon for our 65th anniversary lunch.

It is also an unexpected pleasure as, unfortunately, our president Anthony cannot be with us today, much to his own disappointment and he sends his apologies. Also Shane Halpin our CEO is representing Viatores Christi today at the pre-synodal assembly of the Irish Synodal pathway in Kilkenny and he too is disappointed not to be here today.

65 years is certainly a significant milestone. Looking around the tables. I'm sure you will agree that we are privileged to have with us some of those who have been involved since the 1960s in setting up and giving shape to Viatores Christi so maybe those people could give a wave. And I think I am safe in saying that we have people present today representing each of the 6+ decades of our existence. Both those who have gone overseas and those who are part of our family through their involvement here in Ireland supporting our training and governance and communicating with overseas volunteers.

By coincidence, my own very first memory is of a summer day 65 years ago, when as a 2-year-old I got lost at a football match in Casement Park- the GAA ground in Belfast. And as I have changed over the past 65 years, so of course, has VC. However, I believe our core has not changed. We continue to respond to the teachings of Jesus, working in a spirit of fellowship and collaboration, with some of the most marginalised people of our world. And even just here in this room are people who have served as far east as Thailand and Cambodia; as far north and west as Canada; as far south as South Africa and Argentina, and of course, many more countries in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

VC offered the opportunity, not just to realise our dreams and deepest desires, but to do so in a way that responded to the needs of those we went to, and in turn expanded the opportunities of those people. It gave me opportunity to make friendships with the people I worked among and "sharing life journey with the poor and marginalised" has been a central tenant of Viatores in the 38 years I have been involved.

And I also think back to that day 38 years ago when I stood outside the door of the house in Gardiner Street, debating whether to ring the doorbell or turn round and go straight back home to Belfast. Thank God, I rang the bell, and a couple of hours later I was hooked. And over the course of the next two years (I was a slow learner) training weekends were a source of learning, reflection, discernment, prayer, and friendship - a highlight of life at that time.

So today we celebrate the opportunities. VC has offered us: our global citizenship having learnt from and been inspired by people in so many parts of the world; our solidarity with people across the globe and our spirit of friendship and welcome. I hope you all have a great time, catching up with old friends, and making some new ones. Speaking of friends, I have some very good friends and I hope they will still be my friends in a few minutes time, I wish to acknowledge the huge amount of work put in by Nora, Mary, and Sally in preparation for today.

We are delighted to have with us today: John Moffett, and Sam Kapplar from Misean Cara. (who have enabled us to realise many of our projects over the past 15 years); Frs Tom O'Connor and Donal Dorr of the Kiltegan Fathers, who have been long time supporters of VC, (and of course, Donal has not just been an inspirational friend and facilitator, but also is one of our honorary members); and we are also expecting Toni Pyke representing AMRI of which VC is proud to be a member.

As we gather in this room, we remember those members no longer with us, and I ask Mary to light a candle in love and remembrance of our many deceased members and friends. We also keep in our hearts, those members who due to age or infirmity are unable to be with us today. We ask God bless them, and of course, we also remember and ask God's blessing on our members currently overseas Dan in El Salvador, Gena in Haiti and Brian in Uganda. So let us together ask God to bless us all, to bless the food we eat today, to bless the hands made the food and all the staff here and Wynns, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

VC 65th Celebrations in Pictures – October 2025







MMG Projects by Sector

VC EDUCATION PROJECTS 2025



Partner	Country	Title	Project Description
Kiyinda Mityana Diocesan School Inspectorate	Uganda	Strengthening and capacity building of the Diocesan Inspectorate of schools in Kiyinda-Mityana Diocese	The main aim of this project is to continue strengthening the governance processes of the school inspectorate function, developing and standardising the inspection process, training relevant stakeholders especially the Chaplains who have a responsibility to oversee activities and needs of 391 schools on behalf of the church and trustees, and to develop the programme within the Archdiocese. The Education Department has been working in partnership with VC since 2017 on its inspectorate of schools programme. This proposal builds on the preparatory work under MC Funded Project No. V01/MED/0519/11, in the area of training but importantly seeks to embed this intervention, training, support and mentoring into our refined approach. We will continue implementing and strengthening the child protection policy, training of key stakeholders like chaplains; school management, teachers and students in appropriate disciplines; developing new and nurturing existing school inspectors clubs; conducting school inspections; and maintaining and updating the existing data base
Sacred Heart Sisters, Weaver Nest.	Uganda	Weaver Nest Early Childhood Development (ECD) Teacher Training Institute Development Project at Kolokolo, Moyo	This project seeks to contribute to equal access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education. Previous phases of the project identified a lack of early childhood education facilities as a root cause of low literacy and low school retention among children in the Moyo District of Uganda. A subsequent phase constructed an ECDE center - Weaver Nest ECD Teacher Training Institute - to address the gap in training the local young men and women drawn from this high-poverty area to equip them with the necessary skills to return to their own communities, and use their skills for the betterment and empowerment of marginalized village children, including those from the nearby refugee settlements. At the same time, the project will seek to see an increase in the number of pupils enrolling in ECDE within the project's catchment area by at least 10% as a result of project's initiative in meeting teacher demand as well as sensitization of communities on the importance of early childhood development and education.

Sacred Heart Sisters Development office	Uganda	Strengthening the Sisters of Sacred Heart of Jesus (SHS) Central Development Office in Kampala	The aim of this project is to continue the development of the SHS programme management function, centred in our development office, in order strengthen the Congregations capacity to coordinate and manage all SHS' development programmes. The office is located in Kampala which is already a central hub for most of the communities of the SHS coming from Uganda, Kenya, South Sudan and Sudan. The development office supports projects located throughout these four countries in very disparate geographical locations. In Uganda, the sisters are most active in Northern Uganda.
Religious of Jesus & Mary RJM (separate education project to MMG)	Haiti	IT Skills training	Provision of IT skills training and resources to teachers, disadvantaged children and remote communities in Jean Rabel. Providing them with access to technology and enhanced learning.

LIVELIHOODS PROJECTS UNDER MMG 2025



Partner	Country	Title	Description
Caritas Kampala	Uganda	Strengthening and Capacity Building of Cooperatives in the Archdiocese of Kampala	The project seeks to develop, grow and support the parish-based cooperatives within the Archdiocese of Kampala by improving the capacities of 37 cooperatives and addressing the following issues: • Lack of good governance systems to enforce monitoring and management systems at cooperative and diocesan level • Financial illiteracy ranging from beneficiaries to management bodies which puts these cooperatives at risk • Poor/low saving culture among the various parish communities • Lack of basic resources like office furniture/equipment for efficient operations • Lack of skilled and capable leaders and staff to run the cooperatives due to insufficient training, audit and technical support services

VC HUMAN RIGHTS PROJECTS UNDER MMG 2025



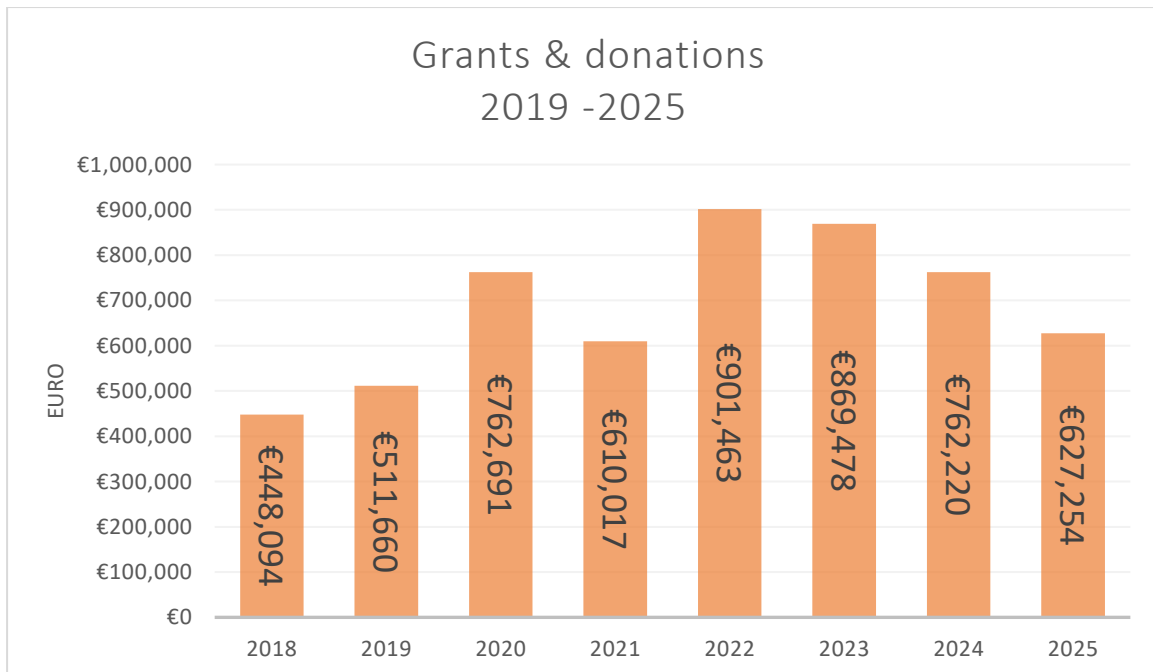
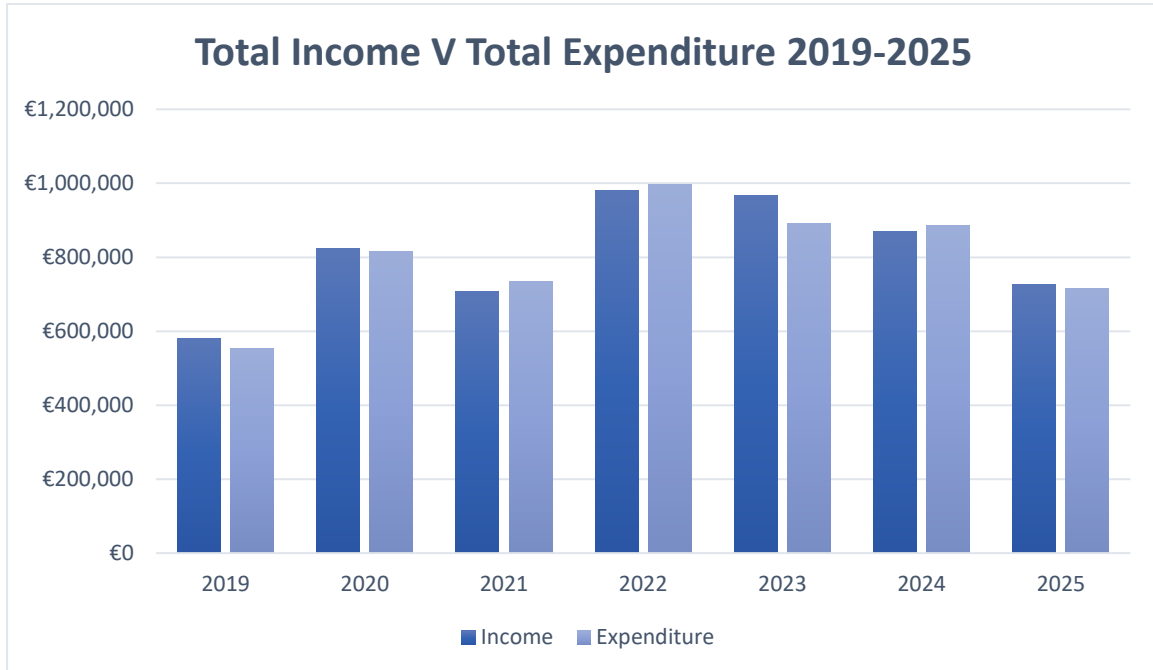
Partner	Country	Title	Project description
Bishop Magambo Counsellor Training Institute (BMCTI)	Uganda	Psychosocial & Nutritional support to the elderly in Fort Portal Municipality, Kabarole District Uganda 2024-27	This project seeks to address challenges faced by the elderly persons in Kabarole district Uganda through raising awareness on their rights and addressing their wellbeing both psychosocial and basic needs. The project will integrate a nutritional support programme through development of kitchen gardens for selected elderly persons to improve their health, resilience and self-sufficiency. We will continue empowering the elderly to stand up for their rights & entitlements through advocacy and awareness raising and advocate for their rights of access to statutory support – the social assistance grant for the elderly (SAGE), medical care, and protection. We will elevate their voices in order to ensure that the elderly participate in discussions on issues which affect them and improve food security and self-sufficiency for their improved health outcomes– both mental and physical – supporting elderly people to re-affirm their full place in their communities.
Potter's Village, Muhabura Diocese	Uganda	Strengthening & Capacity building of Potter's village for Children with Special needs	The main aim of this project is to improve early detection, intervention and therapeutic measures for children born in crisis situations within the village communities served by the Diocese of Muhabura (DoM). A key aspect includes reducing the incidence and severity of developmental disabilities, particularly those caused or exacerbated by malnutrition, and improving the knowledge and attitudes of the local communities towards those with disabilities, especially children. During this phase of the project we intend to integrate an outreach programme with home visits to follow up with those children and families who have been discharged and live long distances away. This will ensure greater adherence to the treatment programmes and provide an opportunity to raise community awareness about issues around disability and nutrition and the work of the centre itself, increasing the number of referrals, combating stigma and improving attitudes towards those born with disabilities. Trained community members will function as resource persons and points of contact.
Foundation of	Uganda	Social Protection	The project seeks to continue to provide more focused

Hope Organisation (FOHO)		of Disadvantaged Children & Youth in Masaka District	and quality responses to the furthest behind groups in the Masaka district by improving the health, socio-economic well-being and psychosocial status of the most marginalized in the community, particularly the street children, teenage mothers, school dropouts, people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC), and unemployed youths and their families and other vulnerable groups, many of which have little or no access to social justice, education, employment or healthcare. Between 2020 and 2021 over 4,105 benefited from hands-on skills training, psychosocial support and counselling, home visits, medical care (especially for PLWHA and victims of domestic violence), child protection, and temporary shelter and resettlement for street children among others. The project aims to build on this success to meet the continuing and growing needs of the most marginalized groups in the streets, squatter areas and slums of the Masaka district
Nos Petits Freres et Soeurs (NPFS)	Haiti	Developing services for people with disabilities	NPFS seeks to improve the life situation of vulnerable children and young adults with special needs and at high risk of abandonment, exploitation & neglect in Haiti. Through the promotion of sustainable community-based care and support for people living with special needs, the project seeks to ensure that their education, well-being and their rights to survival, protection, development, & participation. The project will also support caregivers and those offering advanced therapies in the provision of life giving services to this vulnerable minority population. NPFS will provide core services to children and adults with disabilities, supporting them and their families in this time of great need. Approx. 800,000 individuals have disabilities in Haiti with 200,000 being children (WHO). Stigma around disability is widespread & while the constitution supports the idea that people with disabilities should have autonomy & education, there are no laws to mandate implementation, nor is there a strategy to promote inclusion.
Karidaari Seed, (Village of Joy)	Uganda	Rehabilitation and Awareness Raising through Village of Joy's Karidaari Seed Educational program	To provide a multidisciplinary rehabilitation service for the children with disabilities attending on-site, an outpatient service and outreach into the community. The programme aims to increase the well-being, confidence, independence and self-value of the children and their families. A network of local facilities will be developed by the rehabilitation team



Some of our PPP Volunteers in Dublin Christmas 2025 L-R Pauline Conway, Lucia and David Deegan, Javiar Deegan, Gabrielle Farren, Sammy Deegan and Sally Roddy

Finance at a Glance



Our sincere thanks to our donors



St. Patrick's Missionary Society

Founded in 1932



Parish Promotions Programme

(Volunteers visited Dublin Diocese in 2025)

Mission Cooperation Plan (USA)

(Volunteers visited Los Angeles, Cleveland and Chicago Dioceses in 2025)

VC Donors and legacies 2025 Many thanks!

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