

# mma newsletter

sharing hope, health and life

medical mission aid inc.

ACN A0042669K  
ABN 36062783362

March 2022



Episcocare has a vision to provide better life opportunities for the poorest communities and marginalised groups in Egypt. As a part of our preventative health program, MMA is partnering with Episcocare to improve the health and wellbeing of refugees from Syria and Sudan, as well as women and children from 6 slum communities around Cairo, Alexandria, Giza and Suez. The women's health program is focussing on education around reproductive health and raising healthy children. The awareness sessions are also addressing sexual harassment/domestic violence and its effects, especially on young children, with ideas on prevention and response. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is also being discussed to increase the understanding of the complications of this practice and its serious psychological and physical effects on girls.

Over 125 million girls and women alive today have experienced FGM in the 29 countries in Africa and Middle East where FGM is concentrated. It occurs primarily between infancy and 15 years of age and is a violation of the human rights of girls and women. According to the United Nations, girls who undergo FGM face short-term complications such as severe pain, shock, excessive bleeding, infections, and difficulty in passing urine, as well as long-term consequences for their reproductive health and mental health. Although a positive change in attitudes about FGM is occurring in Egypt, there is still widespread support for the continuation of this practice. Episcocare, through this program, aims to help the Egyptian government to reduce the incidence of FGM. There has been a noticeable decline among younger women, with rates among girls aged 15–19 dropping from 97 per cent in 1985 to 70 per cent in 2015. However, there is a long way to go.

- 99.3% of Egyptian girls and women have reported experiencing some form of sexual harassment in their lifetime
- 87% of Egyptian married women between the ages of 15 and 49 have undergone FGM
- 26% of Egyptian women have experienced physical and/or Sexual Intimate Partner Violence

Source: [www.unwomen.org](http://www.unwomen.org)

The United Nations, in its plan to build a better world for people and our planet by 2030, outlines 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)- the global blueprint for a better and more sustainable future for all. Although MMA primarily targets SDG3 - good health and well-being, this program also targets SDG5- achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. SDG 5.2 specifically aims to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls and SDG 5.3 seeks to eliminate all harmful practices, including FGM.

## MMA Supporter Survey

A big thank you to those who responded to the recent MMA survey. It was so encouraging to have such great feedback and to understand where you, our supporters, would like to see MMA head in the future. It was wonderful to chat to many of you and discuss what types of projects you feel will have the most impact on global health going forward, and what we can do to keep you informed about MMA's work.

A few of the highlights:

- 73% felt medical scholarships would have the biggest impact to improve health in impoverished communities, with 28% feeling preventative health measures would make the most difference
- 63% of supporters felt current levels of communication were adequate. However, some respondents would like more email updates and short video stories
- 78.9% of supporters had 'a great deal' of confidence in the work of MMA and its impact, and 21.1% having 'a moderate amount' of confidence

A couple of concerns raised are addressed in the Finance section on the back page of this newsletter.

It's not too late to share your ideas and have a say about the direction of MMA – please call me (Shanta) on 0410 696 037. Looking forward to hearing from you!

## CMA Standards Council Accreditation

MMA is thrilled to announce that we have received accreditation from the CMA Standards Council. The CMA Standards Council is a ministry of Christian Ministry Advancement Ltd, a not-for-profit charity, seeking to help the Christian not-for-profit sector in Australia govern, lead and manage their organisations more effectively.

MMA was assessed on the 9 Principles of Ministry Accountability and the 54 standards that fall under those principles and received a 100% passing grade. CMA accreditation is indicative of an organisation that values good governance, accountability and stewardship and is a valuable endorsement of MMA's integrity. Please see <https://www.cmasc-generosity.net.au/seal/index.php> for more information.

## Giving Tuesday Nov 2021

In November 2021, MMA participated in #GivingTuesday, a day that is celebrated in more than 50 countries across the world. This day brings together individuals and communities from across the world to celebrate generosity together.

In our first year, we wanted to rally to empower women in Nepal through medical scholarships. We hoped to raise \$12,000 to support 12 women in Nepal, giving each of them the opportunity to go to university to study medical professions such as medicine, nursing, pharmacy, dentistry and counselling. We didn't quite make our target but did secure enough to support 4 women – which is fantastic! Thank you so much to those who contributed!



MMA Graduates



### from the president



Dear friends,

As I write, I am very conscious of the pandemic that has circled the world in the last couple of years. Many of you will know friends who have contracted the virus, some may have been in situations where they have been isolated from loved ones, and some may know of dear ones who have died as a result of the pandemic.

All have experienced a sense of fear and uncertainty as to what was to come with churches closed, provisions rationed at times and many of our activities curtailed. At the same time, we can be thankful for the wonderful medical facilities we have in Australia and the efforts of those who invented vaccines at short notice and provided ways to keep us safe.

Experiencing the pandemic in our developed world gives us a small glimpse into the daily situations facing many in the countries and programs MMA supports. The pandemic has only added to their difficulties, with diseases we no longer experience still being a problem for them. The limited medical services they have are truly stretched to the limit and we are so thankful for those who work in these situations.

MMA continues to work alongside Christian organisations supporting grass roots programs that are seen as essential in improving the health of participants and we have seen some really great results leading to wonderful outcomes.

Alongside the health programs, MMA also continues to sponsor the training of local medical workers, empowering them to help their own communities.

An initiative of MMA this past year has been to develop a prayer diary as we believe your prayers are a very important part of our ministry. For those who have asked, we are now sending a monthly email prayer update to keep you informed of the current needs of the various projects.

We thank God for your ongoing support, both financially and in your prayers.

Yours in Christ,

Meryl McEwen

Please visit MMA's website or follow us on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn



<https://medicalmissionaid.org.au/>



<https://m.facebook.com/MedicalMissionAidAustralia/>

<https://www.instagram.com/medicalmissionaid/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/medical-mission-aid-inc/>



## Berega, Tanzania - Scholarship Program



From Left - Maria, Christopher and Deborah

Berega Hospital, situated in a rural and poor area of the Kilosa District in Tanzania, is under the direction of the Anglican Diocese of Morogoro. The health services there were started by missionaries in 1887, but the hospital was officially registered in 1929. The hospital has a capacity of 120 beds and serves many communities with a catchment area of over 400,000 people.

In much of the developing world, healthcare workers are in incredibly short supply. The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2021) estimates that an additional 18 million doctors, nurses and other health professionals are needed to reach universal health coverage in low income countries. Berega Hospital is no exception, having a critical shortage of trained doctors and nurses. Currently, we are supporting 7 students studying clinical medicine and nursing, 5 of whom started recently and 2 who are due to complete their studies later this year. MMA was intending to assist in the training of 2 pharmacists also, but unfortunately the accreditation of the Berega Institute of Health Sciences pharmacy course by the Tanzanian government has been delayed by Covid-19.

MMA's scholarship program is giving hope to many bright young women and men from poor families to serve their communities, while providing for their families. Many of our graduates will go on to teach other medical professionals, thereby greatly expanding capacity and helping to achieve long term sustainability of the local healthcare system.



## International Nepal Fellowship, Nepal

INF Nepal, a Christian NGO, has been serving the people of western Nepal, particularly the poor and marginalised, since 1952. It provides services for people affected by leprosy, spinal cord injuries and other disabilities including cerebral palsy, orthopaedic and spinal problems, ear problems, and obstetric fistula. There are also services available for those in need of palliative care. INF Nepal's largest hospital, Green Pastures Hospital (GPH) located in Pokhara, was established in 1957. The average number of patients treated each year at GPH is 37,541. The size of population served is 492,098.

A key component of the provision of holistic care at GPH is the pastoral care team. There are historically very significant counselling needs associated with GPH patients, many of whom come from disadvantaged social situations, and with challenging physical and mental needs, and stigma due to conditions such as spinal cord injury, leprosy, and end-stage disease. Covid-19 has brought with it increased

mental health and complex grief issues that do and will continue to require increased counselling skills and capacity.

Poonam is a Christian lady who is wheelchair bound due to a spinal cord injury. She is a key member of the hospital pastoral care department, particularly in empowering and counselling others with spinal cord injury and teaching practical skills. Unfortunately, she has had little opportunity for formal training and therefore MMA is supporting Poonam as she studies a three-year accredited diploma course in counselling run by the Elijah Counselling Training Centre in Kathmandu. We wish her all the very best and know that she will make a huge difference to many people's lives, particularly in terms of improving mental health.

## DHERSEC, Nepal

SR, aged 8 has been living in extraordinarily poor conditions on a riverbank in Nepal with her unemployed, illiterate mother. Her father died from liver disease when SR was very young. Recently, DHERSEC took care of her when it was discovered she had Nephrotic Syndrome. This is a kidney disorder that causes the body to pass too much protein in the urine. Although there is no cure, it is treatable with medication. DHERSEC paid for the treatment of SR at the BPKHIS Hospital, as well as providing several months worth of food. DHERSEC, based in the Dharan district of Nepal, does incredible work to support people with disability as well as the extremely poor.



SR - before and after treatment.

## There are four ways of donating to MMA:

### 1 Electronic transfer to MMA's account:

BSB 033 112 Name and Number: MMA Inc. 378527

Please enter your surname as 'description/reference' and email your contact details to: [mmaacts@gmail.com](mailto:mmaacts@gmail.com)

### 2 MMA Website

Please visit

<https://medicalmissionaid.org.au/ways-to-give/donate/>

Please note 1.4% fees are deducted from these donations and a receipt will be automatically issued.

### 3 Cheque/Money Order payable to MMA Inc.

Mail cheque/money order together with your name, address or email address for receipt to:  
Medical Mission Aid, PO Box 1142, Surrey Hills North, Vic 3127

### 4 Paypal/Credit Card via MMA Inc Facebook page

Please visit

<https://m.facebook.com/Medicalmissionaidaustralia/>

No fees are deducted from these donations and a receipt will be automatically issued by email if your FB page is linked to your email account.

## Donations may be designated to:

- General Funds or,
- Any specific project. Visit our website to see the list of current projects.

Thank you for your prayerful consideration of a **Legacy Gift** to MMA. For more information, please contact [mmaexd@gmail.com](mailto:mmaexd@gmail.com)

MMA Inc. is registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission and has been endorsed by the Australian Taxation Office as a deductible gift receipt. ABN 36 062 783 362

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MMA is a not-for-profit Christian charity. Our mission is to show God's love in practical ways by supporting people in disadvantaged countries to improve health outcomes.

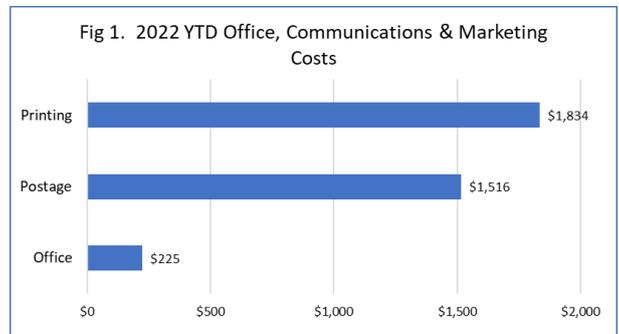
## Finance

In addressing the occasional concern of supporters regarding marketing costs, MMA is acutely aware of the need to minimise administrative costs to ensure maximum impact in the communities we serve.

Printing & postage costs associated with MMA's promotional material are the major portion of MMA's comms & marketing expenditure (See Fig 1). \$1,800 is significant, but it has resulted in hundreds of newsletters (at \$0.75 cost), prayer diaries (\$1.30) and annual reports (\$3.20) being produced. Postage is required to share these with MMA supporters and members. They are important for sharing the good news of what MMA has been able to achieve through the faithful stewardship of the resources that God has provided you & which you have provided MMA. Research shows that if we want to attract interest, a publication must be visually appealing, informative, and professional looking.

If you are mailed a publication, once you've had a read, please share it with your loved ones & friends, so that they, with the help of prayer, might consider stewarding their resources to support communities less fortunate than ours, either via MMA or other worthwhile charities. This is the marketing outreach MMA seeks. Should any potential recipients decide to contribute to MMA, our spend is more than covered. Please let us know if you would prefer to receive these publications online or via email, rather than via the mail. This would help MMA save costs in postage.

The other way of helping with costs is the way you invest in our mission. Electronic transfers to MMA's bank account, cheques and donations via Paypal on our Facebook page are free of charge. However, giving through the MMA website does incur a 1.4% fee. Every little bit helps!



MMA's incredibly devoted supporters, Dawn and Margaret, running a trading table at a deputation at Greenwood Village Mews Retirement Village, Nov 2021

## Autumnfest 2022

### MMA's Autumnfest

Date: *Saturday* April 30th, 2022

Time: 1.30pm for a 2pm start

Venue: St Thomas Anglican Church, 44 Station St, Burwood

MMA's Autumnfest will be a great opportunity to catch up with the MMA Community. Please feel free to bring a friend!