

[SOLIDARITY MATTERS 2018 FOURTH QUARTER]



AUSTRALIAN
Marist
SOLIDARITY
working in partnership for change

[Students in class at the Marist Brothers High School Fiji] Photo credits: Ada Francesca Rizzoli





Welcome to this special edition of Solidarity Matters. In this edition we are launching our 2018 Christmas Appeal.

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Acting CEO Ashley Bulgarelli launches our 2018 Christmas Appeal

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Acting CEO Ashley Bulgarelli launches the AMS 2018 Christmas Appeal.

Today we launch our 2018 Christmas Appeal amidst increasing calls for support across Asia and the Pacific. Education for those on the margins has been the Marist way for over 200 years and at Australian Marist Solidarity we continue to uphold this strong tradition amongst our nearest neighbours.

This Christmas we are turning our attention to four education institutes in the Pacific: St Dominic's Rural Training Centre in the Solomon Islands; St Joseph's College in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea; St Louis High School, Kiribati; and the Marist Champagnat Institute in Fiji. These four schools offer unique opportunities for marginalised young people and play a critical role in equipping these students with skills for the future. We believe that education is the key to unlock opportunities for young people and research shows that education is the number one way to break intergenerational poverty. Unfortunately, many of the students in these schools have struggled to access education due to learning difficulties, rural disadvantage and crippling poverty.

Please join us this Christmas as we bring back the basics and ensure that young people in Pacific have access to quality education

Yours gratefully,

Ashley Bulgarelli
Projects & Partnerships Coordinator
Acting Chief Executive Officer
Australian Marist Solidarity



Marist Champagnat Institute (MCI) helps educate young people with learning difficulties. 118 students currently study literacy and numeracy while building self-confidence at MCI.

Young people with learning difficulties, physical disability or socio-economic disadvantage tend to drop out of school early. The same is true in Fiji, a nation of approximately 300 islands in the South Pacific Ocean, where there has been a recent rise in the number of students who fail to complete a basic level of education.

In 2000 the Marist Brothers in Fiji opened a multicultural and co-educational school for post primary students with learning difficulties and special needs, the only one of its kind to be registered with the Ministry of Education. With a current enrolment of 118, the Marist Champagnat Institute (MCI) offers programs to young people who have struggled to fit into mainstream schooling. An initial two-year course focuses on literacy, numeracy and building self-confidence. At its completion, students are encouraged to return to mainstream schools or undertake a further two years of vocational training in computing, catering, tailoring, agriculture, engineering, woodwork or childcare.

The Fijian government pays a per capita grant per student; however, this figure is far below MCI's operational costs and does not include funds for maintenance, capital

works or the salaries of ancillary staff. The vocational students generate a small but steady income stream each year by selling the items they have produced, learning basic business management skills in the process.

At the beginning of 2018 AMS sent producer Ada Francesca Rizzoli to MCI to follow a student on her daily routine as well as gain an insight into the crucial role the Institute is playing in educating Fijians with learning difficulties. To watch, click this link:

<https://youtu.be/rlxFOjHI8fo>

You can make a difference to the lives of young Fijians by supporting their decision to re-engage with the educational process, thereby expanding their options for the future.

To learn more about this project or to support children with learning difficulties visit: **<https://bit.ly/2qlrd3N>**



St Joseph's College aim to provide a quality education for the young men and boys from Bougainville, however the college is significantly under resourced, especially in regard to IT equipment.

St Joseph's College Mabiri came into being after the civil war destroyed St Joseph's College Rigu, in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea 20 years ago.

The Marist brothers and staff at St Joseph's College aim to provide a quality education for the young men and boys from Bougainville, however the college is significantly under resourced, especially in regard to IT equipment.

St Joseph's College Mabiri has over the years provided quality education and skills training for many young Bougainvilleans, giving the students hope for their futures and the development of their communities. The school currently caters for approximately 600 students ranging from kindergarten to Junior High School as well as offering vocational training. The Division of Education in Bougainville mandates that all Junior High Schools are to teach computers but St Joseph's, like most schools, has never had computers.

A computer room has already been constructed and 20 new computers were recently purchased and installed with the first students having their first ever computer class not long after. The College is now fundraising for the next phase of this project which is to purchase an additional 20 computers which will fill the laboratory. These computers will be sourced in country in order to support the local economy and facilitate back-up and maintenance.

Access to education is very difficult for young people in Bougainville, which contributes to lower school enrolment figures. Your support of this project will create opportunities for young men in remote communities to reach their academic potential.



St Louis High School was established 1984. With aging infrastructure, environmental pressures and a growing cohort, the school requires upgrades particularly to its unhygienic bathrooms.

St Louis High School is located on the small island of Tarawa in Kiribati. Just under half of Kiribati's population (approximately 40,000 people) live on Tarawa, placing significant pressure on the environment and its limited resource base. This region experiences a high level of poverty and vulnerability and is under threat from rising sea levels. Kiribati's population is also growing quickly and is expected to double by 2025 with half the population under the age of 21.

St Louis High School was established by the Marist Brothers in 1984. With aging infrastructure, environmental pressures and a growing cohort, St Louis High School requires upgrades particularly to its unhygienic bathrooms. The current toilet block is dilapidated, with toilets that barely flush and no doors on the cubicles.

The new amenities block will directly benefit 365 students between the ages of 12 to 14. There will be two separate toilet blocks, one for boys and the other for girls. This project will help provide the school and students with a high standard of hygiene.

Supporting this project will help St Louis High School build a new amenities block for students.



To learn more about St Louis High School or to help build a safer community visit: <https://bit.ly/2JxVwNk>



[ST DOMINIC'S RURAL TRAINING CENTRE SOLOMON ISLANDS]
PICTURE OF A STUDENT LEARNING CARPENTRY SKILLS

St Dominic's Rural Training Centre (RTC) educates youth from rural areas in practical vocational skills, allowing them to stay in rural areas and halt the high rate of urbanization.

St Dominic's Rural Training Centre (RTC) is located in Vanga Point on the rural Kolombangara Island, Solomon Islands. It is a 1-hour open water boat ride to the nearest town – Gizo. This Marist-run RTC plays an important role in the Solomon's educating youth from rural areas in practical vocational skills, allowing them to stay in rural areas and halt the high rate of urbanization.

St Dominic's offers vocational training in building, mechanics, poultry raising, agriculture and forestry. As the Solomon Islands consists of six major islands and over 900 smaller islands, residents often have to travel in open water in search of education and jobs. By providing rural youth with small-scale infrastructure and income-generating skills and opportunities it will strengthen the livelihood of individuals in these rural communities.

There are currently 145 students, aged from 18-30 and 12 teachers. To improve the quality of teaching and learning an administration building is needed – something that the school has never had. The principal works out of a room in the Marist Brothers house, and the staff have no area to work.

Without the proper infrastructure the staff of St Dominic's have not been able to properly plan lessons, undertake joint-planning sessions and conduct staff/student meetings. Ultimately, this reflects in the delivery of the curriculum and is impacting the students learning.

The construction of the 13.5 x 11.5 metre administration building will be undertaken by the staff and students as part of their learning. Concrete blocks and a concrete slab will be installed as they require less maintenance and can withstand inclement weather and are termite-resistant.

Supporting St Dominic's RTC will help fund the construction of an administration building.

[*HOW YOU CAN HELP*]

I would like my donation to support:

- Marist Champagnat Institute Fiji (FI0014)
- St Louis High School Kiribati (KI0004)
- St Dominic's Rural Training Centre
Solomon Islands (SO0027)
- St Joseph's College Mabiri
Bougainville, PNG (BO0009)
- To where it is most needed

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