



Albanian Mission Against Human Trafficking

Annual Report

January 2022 – December 2022



Annual Report

January 2022 – December 2022



Albanian Mission Against Human Trafficking

► CONTENT

The introductory note from the executive team	6
Overview of the MWL programmes and approach	8
Key changes this year	10
Special achievements this year	13
Outputs	17
Activities	18
Some unexpected benefits	25
Cross border work	27
Agnes' story	29
Capacity building of MWL staff	30
Key observations and learning from MWL projects and approaches	32
Working with very vulnerable and marginalised people	32
Professionalism and commitment of staff	32
Focus on empowerment	32
Acting as advocates	33
Support for MWL staff	33
Linking and Networking	34
Building Capacity of Duty-bearers	34
Safeguarding	34
Recommendations from the external evaluation	35
Concluding note from the MWL Foundation Imelda Poole IBVM MBE	37

► THE INTRODUCTORY NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE TEAM

Dear Partners, Collaborators and Stakeholders,

Mary Ward Loreto Executive team is pleased to present the executive greeting for the 2022 annual report.

Despite the unprecedented challenges faced last year, the MWL Foundation remained strong and resilient, and made significant progress towards achieving the goals, in the light of the mission, to combating human trafficking in Albania.

The commitment of MWL Foundation to innovative approaches and beneficiary satisfaction continued to drive the success achieved in the mission. This led to the implementation of new solutions and streamlined processes to deliver high-quality services. This way of thinking and “doing ordinary things well” is inspired by the life of Mary Ward and her remarkable ability to hang on to the truth of her vocation amid a firestorm of opposition, and to do so with great grace, freedom and humility.

The Foundation expanded its operations in new areas and invested in the development of staff, enabling them to retain the quality of delivery for the mission.

Despite the global recession and challenging times, MWL remained committed to its responsibility, supporting communities and contributing to reducing the vulnerability of citizens in Albania toward the risk of Human trafficking and exploitation.

Looking forward, MWL remains optimistic about its future prospects, and will continue to focus on core values of integrity, innovation, and delivering the best services to the beneficiaries to achieve excellence in every action taken.

Thank you for your continued support, as MWL looks forward to another successful year ahead.

Sincerely,
The MWL Executive Team



Ana Stakaj
Executive Leader



Artan Toska
Finance Leader



Pjeter Tanushaj
Chief of Operations Leader

► OVERVIEW OF THE MWL PROGRAMMES AND APPROACH:

MWL has its outreach in six regions of Albania: Tropoja (Kukes), Puka (Shkoder), Lezha and Rreshen (Lezha), Tirana, Lushnja, and Saranda through established Advice and Service Centres (ASCs) and Youth Centres. The ASCs combat human trafficking through rescue, reintegration, rehabilitation, and prevention.

MWL joined the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) in Albania in October 2018, to contribute to the protection of the rights of potential and survivor victims of trafficking and to help the formation of policies and structures to end modern-day slavery. MWL also works with URAT, a network of organisations within Albania, working together against human trafficking; and RENATE (Religious and co-workers in Europe Networking against Trafficking and Exploitation).

The projects funded by Misesan Cara, IBVM Loreto, Medaille Trust, Healing Hands (DoTerra), UNDP, Fonds Pour Les Femmes En Mediterranee, seek to reduce the vulnerability of young Albanian women and men to human trafficking and crime through social and tailored Empowerment Programmes for sustainability. These are community-focused interventions in multiple areas with a three-pronged approach.

1 The Advice and Service Centre approach provides advice and referral to relevant service-providers and authorities. MWL Social Workers and Psychologists help clients navigate the legal procedures to access help to deal with such issues as domestic violence, human trafficking, unemployment, and homelessness.



2 The Economic Empowerment approach provides vocational training for young adults from 16 – 30 years old and includes soft skills training, labour rights training, career orientation, ethics at work, IT training and innovation, and security at work. They are also supported to join the labour market.



3 The Civic Education approach offers training for transformation, including the following topics: leadership, community activism and volunteerism, healthy relationships and self-realization and w-learning methods.



► KEY CHANGES THIS YEAR



Mary Ward Loreto (MWL) has developed a multidimensional intervention to prevent human trafficking: the key element is the prevention of trafficking, but reintegration services aiming at personal empowerment are also provided. As well as the services provided in the ASCs, MWL works with stakeholders to extend holistic services to vulnerable people as far as possible. MWL has successfully reached areas where there is significant lack of statutory and private services, as well as lack of community activities.

MWL, with its partners, has brought about a reduction in the numbers of young Albanian women and men vulnerable to human trafficking and crime. Vulnerability to Trafficking in Human Beings (THB), Domestic Violence (DV), and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) has been reduced through help and support, empowerment of survivors, economic development, raised awareness, and improved institutional practices and coordinated response within local and national networks.

The MWL ASCs provided advice, referral, and support to 2300 people (575 clients, multiplied by 4 - which is the average number of family members) through a victim-centred approach and customized plans guided by the ASC needs assessment, with coordinated input from relevant agencies. This number includes people vulnerable to exploitation, trafficking, forced labour, street begging, prostitution, and petty crime. It also includes identified victims of trafficking.

Victims of domestic and gender-based violence are not officially identified by the authorities as people who are at high risk of trafficking. We are particularly committed to support this cohort of people given their extreme vulnerability. We aim to support ASC clients with minimum bureaucracy. We support victims to apply for the official status of victims/potential victims of trafficking in human beings according to the official Standard Operational Procedures. Similarly,

domestic violence victims are referred for formal recognition, protection and support as survivors.

MWL's effectiveness is shown by the quality of its services to people in need. 575 ASC clients, who were vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation, have improved their life situation through the support they received at ASC centers, and accompaniment to services. Most of the clients reported having been denied these services previously, but through the mediation of ASCs, they have been able to access the appropriate resources.

The quality of local services at municipality level, and first line responders, has been improved by the provision of capacity-building training with local officials. This has improved services for communities in need, specifically for victims and survivors of human trafficking and gender-based violence. Good coordination of local referral mechanisms and agencies in providing specialized support services to victims of DV-GBV has resulted in better protection and support through joint interventions.

Young people, 16-25, have benefited from opportunities for skills development and qualifications through vocational courses, coaching for employment, and placements at local businesses.



Communities have an increased awareness of gender-based violence and trafficking of human beings, and greater engagement in promoting gender equity. The lives of community members have been improved by getting involved in community initiatives led by youth. Young people involved in Service Learning initiatives have developed their awareness of civic responsibility principles, and become engines for change, through working together on confronting difficult challenges, assisting each other and collaborating to find solutions. Service Learning is a very up-to-date methodology which helps create good models of school and community engagement to address problems. MWL is the leading organization in Albania for this methodology, which is implemented in schools but also engages local structures, parents and key community members to follow up problems identified by students. Through the application of this methodology we have contributed to the improvement of students' learning skills, engaging them at every stage of the project. The beneficiaries also gain new skills and competences such as planning skills, critical thinking and problem solving.

► SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENTS THIS YEAR

- A special achievement was the implementation of our EmpowerFull program, promoting a better future through economic empowerment for 10 survivors of trafficking and domestic violence. The economic empowerment of vulnerable individuals was supported through the ongoing offer of employment coaching, vocational training, and job placement assistance. In addition to one-to-one trainings, a Business Club was created, for peer support and connections among survivors, followed by a training program of 8 sessions developed to equip them with entrepreneurial skills and prepare them to enter the labour market and become financially independent. Furthermore, the survivors were provided with self-empowerment tools consisting of entrepreneurial resources for business start-up and business ownership, and materials to support personal empowerment. A key aspect of this programme was to treat the participants with dignity, offering not just basic needs, but a better quality of life. This increased their self-esteem and confidence as well as their presentation for job interviews. Showing them routes to success triggered the strengths to build a better future.



- Another special achievement for MWL this year is the initiation of work with the Afghani migrant population in Albania. This happened via a collaboration with the VATRA Psycho-social Centre with funding provided by the International Refugee Centre (IRC). Mary Ward Loreto was contracted to provide services in Shengjin area in the Lezha District where almost 800 refugees were sheltered. Albania offered a transitional phase to this target group while the migrants dealt with the necessary documentation to emigrate legally to a western country. Since April 2022:

- **291 migrants** had a needs assessment. **5 Focus Groups** were developed with migrants, respectively: **3 Focus Groups with men (74 participants)** and **2 with women (42 participants)**, on raising awareness against human trafficking and exploitation.
- **34 cases, namely 18 women and 17 men**, were supported with services.

This served as a beneficial experience in raising the organization’s capacity level to work with migrants in Albania.

- "The True Friend" was the theme of the first summer camp of 2022 in Delvine, which was organised by MWL and Delvine Municipality, with the support of the volunteer youth group from 2 social clubs, the Youth Council and Delvine Parish. Before starting the camp, the staff of Delvine Municipality, the city's Cultural Center, representatives of the school's psycho-social service, as well as young volunteers, conducted a two-day training for Social Animators. In two intensive days of training, the team of volunteers gained knowledge about animation, techniques and games. The second day focused on the division of work groups and the concrete plan of activities for each day: social, cultural, sports and traditional games, and creations with recycling. The MWL youth trainer equipped the volunteers and the organizers with materials, including games, group techniques and the “True Friend” module which gives this camp its name.

The main goal of the summer camp is the growth and engagement of young people and children in the community, providing quality time for them and the opportunity



to have fun during the summer holidays, as suggested by the young people on previous stages of the YES project.

Other special achievements during the project implementations:

- “Pro Sport, Against Violence” championships organized with young people, aimed at the civic engagement of young people from 15 schools. This championship was used as an education program for youth as well as an awareness-raising activity against Domestic Violence and Gender-Based Violence. Young people attended 3 workshops to train them for the championship, and to equip them with personal skills and opportunities to address attitudes that lead to aggressive behaviours. During the whole process, the young people were successfully coached by the ASC workers on self-control, patience, conflict management, positive interactions, anger management, and gender equality.

Local government and the wider community were involved, sending representatives to attend the sports events.



- Through the provision of psychological support in all ASCs, beneficiaries understand its benefits and are more engaged in the process.

- Training was given on the Coordinated Referral Mechanism (CRM) for cases of domestic violence in Rreshen. In the following two days, the CRM mechanism was formally restored in the Municipality of Mirdite. MWL became an official member of the CRM. This event

also marked the first round table with members of CRM and active organizations in Rreshen.



- With MWL’s support through capacity building at municipal level, the Municipalities of Delvine and Konispol (Saranda District) were able to launch for the first time, a social plan and specific budget for direct services, embedding these as a long-term sustainable practice.
- MWL Service Learning won recognition as “best practice”, awarded by the Central and Eastern Regional Network of Service Learning at the Regional Awards in Prizren Kosovo on December 10th, 2021.

► OUTPUTS

1. Services, referrals and accompaniment provided – **2,334**.
Delivery of vocational training – **189** Participants.
2. Delivery of support for the development of youth-owned businesses and start-ups – **113** trained.
3. Meetings and awareness sessions conducted with industries/businesses – **14**.
4. Workshops and training delivered to local officials – **107** officials trained.
5. Training in service learning, leadership and social transformation – **330** young people trained.
6. **291** non-Albanian migrants had a needs assessment.
5 Focus Groups were developed with migrants, respectively:
3 Focus Groups with men (74 participants) and
2 with women (42 participants) on raising awareness against human trafficking and exploitation.

► ACTIVITIES

- We provide services for vulnerable youth and families: social, psychological, legal and financial advice and referral, and accompaniment to the local statutory services.
- We provide tailored vocational training, and support for the development of youth-owned businesses.
- We foster links between up-skilled young people and employment opportunities through meetings and awareness sessions with business people in the tourism sector or other local industries.
- We conduct workshops to enhance the capacity of local officials to coordinate networking of services and support systems for youth and their families.
- We conduct training in service-learning, leadership and social transformation techniques for youth, to promote active engagement in problem-solving for themselves and their communities.

ASC

ADVICE & SERVICE CENTRES PROGRAMME



1

Identification,
advice and
referral
to services

2

Emergency
response
& Sheltering
program

3

Psychological
Counselling
& Legal Aid



4

Capacity
building of
Service
providers

ASC

ADVICE & SERVICE CENTRES PROGRAMME

ASC served: 1442 people



575 beneficiaries have received advice support and referral to services

37 victims and possible victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence Identified

Immediate protection and support services have been provided to **342** victims and survivors of DV/GBV, P/VOT and their children

223 Emergency Food and medicines packages were delivered for families in need

Psychological Counselling has been provided for **59** cases, victims of DV-GBV to cope with trauma and post trauma, and for reporting violence and abuse.

Legal aid has been provided to **206** victims of DV-GBV and PVoTs

ASC - ADVICE & SERVICE CENTRES PROGRAMME

Beneficiaries:

Coordinated Referral Mechanism of cases of domestic violence (CRM) and Civil Society Organizations

Regions: Lezha, Rreshen, Lushnja, and Saranda

Build capacities: 57 Service providers



Committed on addressing violence effectively, and the improvement of services for victims/survivors of domestic violence and gender-based violence, through signing a common declaration of commitment

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT



ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

47

beneficiaries received vocational training

35

businesses run by youth that need support have been identified

29

beneficiaries have been assisted with job search and employment intermediation

17

of them are now employed

32

young people have participated in entrepreneurship training

8

of these young people have been awarded with **50,000 ALL** grant support for their new businesses

10

Business Club has been created with 10 survivors of THB in the MWL ASC Tirana





“Pro Sport Against Violence”
involved **12** high schools and
135 students and **20** teachers.

Service Learning initiative
was realized in Rreshen.
With a class in the Professional School
Shen Jozefi Punetor

Exchange visit with **11** youth from
Tropoja for SL projects implemented
previously was organized in Lezha.

4 trainings with **42** teachers
in Lezha, Rreshen and Lushnja



CIVIC
EDUCATION

330 children and young people
have been involved in SL methodology

2 summer camps with children
in Delvina and Tropoja benefiting
to **150** children and their families

37 persons of good will
who will reflect and take concrete
action on solving concrete issues
in their communities



► SOME UNEXPECTED BENEFITS

Dragon-boat sailing!

Broad-based Organising (BBO) is a methodology that tries to engage communities in solving issues of common concern. A group of 15 women from Lezha adopted this methodology. They were trained to understand how it works, and they identified a list of issues they wished to address.

BBO engaged women for the first time in facing unusual challenges. One initiative was to support the sport of dragon-boat activities for women on the local river, an activity which is very unusual for women in our communities. These courageous women served as role models for others. This sport had significant psychological positive effects. Another issue the women identified is the lack of inclusion of vulnerable children in extracurricular activities. They took this concern to the local key education authorities, in order that teachers would be reminded to offer equal inclusion opportunities to all categories of children.

A positive Effect: Tropoja outreach approach.

In Tropoja, although MWL no longer offers direct services via an ASC, our outreach intervention has been continuing in collaboration with local schools and also a partner organization, SDI, which operates in Tropoja. Through this partnership the following small projects were developed:

- Summer camp: More than 70 kids took part in the week-long summer camp in the city of Bajram Curri, involving 25 volunteers. This is the third time that MWL in collaboration with the Municipality of Bajram Curri, SDI, Peace Corps volunteers and local school teachers have organized this event in the city. The funding was provided by the RENATE network.

- Sa-pun Mjedisi is an ongoing project in partnership with SDI, targeting young people in 3 different cities, Dibër, Kukës and Tropojë, with the objective of awareness and advocacy about the environment and the “circular economy.” For the first time in Albania, three local and north-east regional organizations combined their efforts, to create awareness, build strong advocacy and propose local policies for local governments in three different cities. The result is the project "SA-PUNE MJEDISI" which involves local youth, as a vital factor contributing to the continuous improvement of the environment. The cities where the project will be implemented are: Dibër, Kukës and Tropojë. Although there have been occasional schemes to address environmental problems by various stakeholders, much remains to be done, in particular the aspects of youth involvement and community engagement.



► CROSS BORDER WORK

Over the year some international organizations have approached MWL foundation's executive team to request their assistance in developing various events and programmes.

RENATE's 3rd Assembly in Fatima Portugal

During the year the finance and operations leaders of MWL assisted the RENATE Core Group in planning and executing the 3rd General Assembly held in Fatima Portugal in November 2022.

UK Home office researches and meeting

In various meetings organized by the Embassy of Great Britain in Albania and the UK Home Office, the executive leader of MWL has gave feedback and insights about the situation of migration, economic and social vulnerability of Albanian young people and their high risk of becoming victims of exploitation and human trafficking.

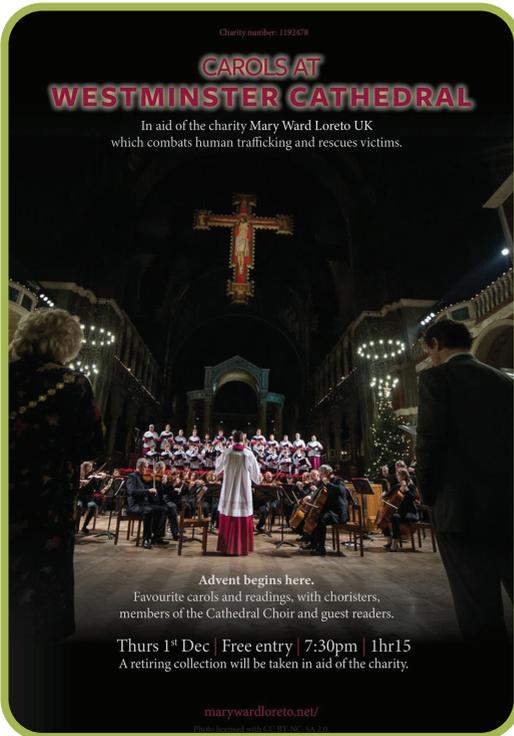
Online therapy for victims sheltered in Medaille Trust safe houses

The long-standing collaboration between the MWL foundation in Albania and the Medaille Trust UK has been ongoing for 9 years, developing programmes jointly. For six years MWL has been supporting Albanian victims of human trafficking in the UK with online therapy sessions. This year, six survivors of human trafficking sheltered in Medaille Trust safe houses in UK received online counselling to start the process of addressing the trauma of trafficking. Survivors were also provided with written reports for their asylum request with the Home Office in the UK. One psychological report was provided to the Home Office for an asylum seeker, and three support letters verifying attendance at counselling.

Entrepreneurship Academy by the Medaille Trust UK

The Medaille Trust UK asked for the support of our Executive Team to deliver a project aiming to reduce the vulnerability of young Albanians to illegal migration and human trafficking. This project, a training programme with less theoretical and more practical information, uses the Enterprise-Led Development approach, offering trainees the skillset to build and succeed in their start-ups and their economic development. The project, called Entrepreneurship Academy, had its launch event on October 24th 2022. The MWL executive team has been involved from the beginning and throughout the development process of this project in Albania.

Westminster Carols and the Launch of MWL UK.



The MWL executive team provided assistance with the two main events organized by the newly founded MWL UK: the launch ceremony in May 2022 at the Albanian Embassy in London, and the fundraising event at Westminster Cathedral on December 2nd 2022.

AGNES' STORY

Agnes is 26 years old, a single mother of one child. She managed to escape her abusive partner, and flee Albania to the UK for safety and protection from the danger to herself and her child. She was sexually exploited by her own partner, who is also the father of her child. Using brutal physical violence and threats, her partner forced her into sex work. He would bring clients for her at their own house, and then punish her for that. She also heard rumours that he was involved in sex trafficking.

Agnes escaped from her partner, and left her town. She had no support from her family of origin, who had disowned and blamed her following sexual harassment of her by an adult neighbour, committed when she was 13 years old. After that time, she lived with her grandmother, who died a few years later.

Knowing that her partner was powerful and being told that he had connections with the police, she was scared to report his abuse. A few months later, her partner found her and continued to treat her violently. Under these circumstances, she fled Albania and claimed asylum in the UK.

Sheltered at a safe house, she and her child received the support and protection they needed. She was also provided with online counselling by MWL.

► CAPACITY BUILDING OF MWL STAFF

During 2022, the MWL foundation conducted a capacity building programme consisting of training and meetings for their staff. Staff also attended training available through previously established partnerships with other entities which offer programmes for NGO staff. Training included:

- Revision of approaches according to emerging needs
- Fundraising skills
- Process Improvement
- Total Quality Management
- Project Management.

MWL staff members understand the importance of performing and completing their tasks within the given time-frame and learn how to react and take initiatives to respond to the emerging needs of the communities they serve.

Other positive effects of this training include:

- Developing in-house skills building operational efficiency and achievement of long-term goals.
- An understanding of different perspectives, helping them to communicate more effectively among team members, partners, networks, donors, communities and other stakeholders.

- Understanding the importance of ethical behaviour as essential for front-line personnel. Reaching or exceeding expected standards, which requires an understanding of quality concepts.

The capacity building of staff has continued this year via the collaboration of MWL and the ERSTE foundation. The economic empowerment programme leader achieved certification in Innovation and Management, and other members attended several trainings in Mindfulness and organizational skills.

In addition to these, training was given in many other areas, such as raising awareness about their mission. These all play a key role in a modern and productive work environment.



► KEY OBSERVATIONS AND LEARNING FROM MWL PROJECTS AND APPROACHES:

- **Working with very vulnerable and marginalised people.**

The people the project supports, who are mainly women, are generally living in very high levels of stress, may feel very isolated and are generally in very difficult and sometimes dangerous circumstances. Many have been living for months, if not years, in this state of trauma. There may be a sense of hopelessness and/or desperation.

- **Professionalism and commitment of staff.** The staff are extremely competent and committed. They understand how important it is to develop a relationship of trust with the people they support. This support is holistic, person-centred and designed to empower. It includes psychological, legal, economic and other support required to enable clients to reintegrate into society, and to stand on their own two feet as dignified members of society.
-

- **Focus on empowerment.** This focus is particularly striking. There may be a temptation, given the high need and limited resources, to provide support to as many women as possible – a “something is better than nothing” approach. However, with MWL there is a deep commitment to provide support that empowers, that does not make their clients dependent or “stuck.” Clients may have very low self-esteem, may feel great shame and may be living without dignity. This is a consequence of their lived experience and the traumas they have endured. The project makes a very deliberate effort to restore dignity and build self-esteem. The empowerment programme, while it has a relatively low number of participants, is designed to be impactful and effective. The participants get to enjoy a better quality of life, and experience some “luxuries” like new clothes or

body treatments. Training is conducted in a pleasant venue, with a quality lunch provided. While this may cost more, it is deliberately designed as part of the strategy to restore, and enhance, dignity. There is evidence to suggest that, in the long term, this approach is more impactful and produces more sustainable results.

- **Acting as advocates:** MWL staff act as advocates for the women, and other clients that they work with. In encountering police, who can be apathetic to the experience of the clients, it can take real strength to persevere and support clients to get the justice and support that they need and are entitled to. Staff must be fearless in their support, and have confidence in their professionalism, to counter apathy when it is encountered.
-

- **Support for MWL staff.** Vicarious trauma is a real risk for staff. Without proper processing, they can take on their own shoulders the stresses they hear from their clients. Workloads are also significant given the demand and the very limited availability of quality services. Stakeholders, and in particular the police, may not take issues like domestic abuse, or gender-based violence, seriously enough. This fits within wider society where there is a strong patriarchal mentality, albeit that has significantly evolved over the years. This can all take its toll on staff, and support for their wellbeing is of critical importance to prevent burnout. The recently approved innovation proposal from Misesan Cara to assist in addressing this need is, therefore, of real importance. Supervision is provided for all the members of the staff to not only enhance their performance at work but also to relieve them from work-related stress. Philosophy of Mary Ward. The philosophy of Mary Ward is very evident in the work. Staff work with courage to speak out truthfully, when injustices occur, and to speak out to power. They expect to be treated with dignity and respect

and are well able to speak up for themselves if, and when, the need arises. This is also evident as they advocate with their clients and accompany them on their difficult journey towards rehabilitation and justice-seeking, and asserting their freedom in the way they are and experience themselves.

- **Linking and Networking.** MWL Albania is part of an impressive network of organisations, police, judiciary and other public bodies working to tackle social ills like human trafficking, gender-based violence and domestic abuse. Most of the people who come to the Advice and Service Centres are referrals from other organisations or churches. MWL is also part of the National Referral Mechanism in Albania, which is a testament to the Albanian government's high regard for the work of the organisation.
-

- **Building Capacity of Duty-bearers.** One of our key activities is working with the police, and others in authority, in building knowledge and capacity to tackle issues like human trafficking. Policy and guideline documents are in place at national level, but these documents are large and detailed. MWL plays a key role in animating policies, making them relevant to the day-to-day work of the police and other public officials that they work with.
-

- **Safeguarding.** Given the vulnerability of the clients they work with, safeguarding is a key element that needs to function clearly and effectively. MWL is guided by a comprehensive policy, and procedures are in place. The policy was last reviewed by the Board in May 2021. It is planned to be reviewed again in the first quarter of 2023, and on an annual basis after that.

► RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION

Recommendation 1:

- Identify cases and create a list of success stories of economically empowered participants. Describe their story from assessment to vocational training, internship and finally employment, highlighting the role and social responsibility of the business. Share this with businesses as a reference guide and inclusive tool, to encourage them to collaborate with MWL and projects with similar approach to economic empowerment.

Recommendation 2:

- Given that MWL approaches and understanding of grassroots support is still unique and other NGOs are not able to follow in their efforts for social inclusion for women, it is recommended that MWL reviews its efforts toward initiating systemic change at national level and to sustain female empowerment in the communities in which they are active.

Recommendation 3:

- Initiate a small survey or research on the roots of violence in the family environment, of human trafficking and illegal migration and serious organized crime.

Recommendation 4:

- Continue with the pivotal role and participation in various networks to improve existing policies in a manner that addresses gender equality and introduces sustainable empowerment interventions.

MWL foundation agreed with the recommendations provided by the external evaluator and the following steps are being taken accordingly:

- **Recommendation 1:** To mark its 10 years' anniversary MWL is collecting success stories of people who entered our programmes, to use them as models of interventions.
- **Recommendation 2:** MWL is considering the right approach to achieve this recommendation.
- **Recommendation 3:** A survey has already been done in collaboration with the University of St Mary's in London UK. When it is published this will be shared with all our partners and collaborators.
- **Recommendation 4:** MWL is part of networks and encourages working in joined-up approaches in the communities to have a more holistic intervention and thus achieve more sustainable outcomes.

► CONCLUDING NOTE FROM THE MWL FOUNDATION IMELDA POOLE IBVM MBE

2022 has been the year when the world experienced two challenging realities:

- ‘Coming out of Covid’
- The War in Ukraine.



It is within the background of this reality in Albania that Mary Ward Loreto has fulfilled its mission, facing the challenges and struggles in the most vulnerable and isolated regions with incredible magnanimity and courage. The Annual report for this year illustrates so many of these actions of wisdom and magnanimity in response to the cry of the poor.

The words of Ursula Van Leyden (President of the European Commission) are a rallying cry to the world at this time in its history:

“Together, we’ll overcome this pandemic, prepare to face future ones, reduce the impact on the vulnerable and address root causes”

These words are very real for MWL working at grass roots during this time. They are reflected in the incredible mission to combat human trafficking. The annual report is a reflection of the huge challenges faced by the staff and by the people of Albania. The Mary Ward Loreto staff hear and speak out with the voice of the most vulnerable and are given energy by this voice. The words below resonate with the intentions of MWL Mission at this time.

“Alongside these efforts to overcome the pandemic, we must work together to end hunger, promote education and the resumption of learning, and protect the planet. By doing so, we will be contributing to a fair, just and inclusive recovery.” Cyril Ramaphosa (South African Government Official).

The War in Ukraine, coming so closely on the back of the world recovering from the pandemic, has led to four painful impacts in Albania of this war, gradually increasing the risk of greater poverty and vulnerability of the lives of the people. These four impacts are:

- The increase in oil prices;
- An increase in the prices of everything connected with cereals and especially wheat;
- The negative impact on tourism;
- The general impact of all three on the cost of living.

Despite the inability to increase the wages since the beginning of Covid, as was the norm annually in the history of Mary Ward Loreto, the staff have worked even more passionately and with a deep commitment to the mission to work to combat human trafficking. They deserve a sincere congratulations and gratitude for fulfilling this task at such a highly professional level and with such commitment throughout this most difficult time. We know from the many comments in the external evaluation, that Mary Ward Loreto is a known and extremely trusted NGO in Albania, recognized by both civil society and statutory organisations, for their high level performance and dedication. The below quotes reflect this recognition:

“Most organisations come and leave before our needs are properly met. Working with MWL Foundation is different. Through their actions we’ve learned that internationals can be impactful. They can listen, respond, adapt, understand and address the need of our youth in an impressive and effective way. We are grateful and look forward for more projects together” (Majlinda Qilimi, Mayor of Delvina)

“The project of MWL foundation have brought life and purpose to our small city. Our youth look forward to being firstly invited to the activities, and now leading them. True leadership investment, because now our students have no longer fear to initiate change themselves” Ms. Kieda Molla, Teacher. Part of the Service-Learning Project Saint Joseph School, Rrëshen

These words give encouragement and hope into the future, despite the fact that the crime of human trafficking increases in numbers every year and more so in cyber space since the onset of the pandemic. Human Trafficking is now an 80-billion-dollar industry yet this does not diminish the determination to make a difference, every day, in the lives of so many Albanian people who work together to prevent the crime in local communities.

May the words of Pope Francis, spoken on St Bakhita day February 8th 2023, give us continued new life in the call to walk with the suffering day by day:

“May Saint Bakhita pray with us and for us. I heartily bless all of you who work against human trafficking, and every person you meet on this journey for dignity.” Feb 8, 2023

May this report inspire all who are walking alongside Mary Ward Loreto in the mission against human trafficking. Together we do make a difference.

Imelda Poole IBVM
(President Mary Ward Loreto)

Annual Report

January 2022 – December 2022

www.marywardloreto.net

To donate directly in UK bank account:

Registered UK address 6 Albert Street,
Durham, UK DH1 4RL

Regular donations can be bank
transferred to:
Mary Ward Loreto UK,
CAF Bank LTD,
sort code 40-52-40,
account 00034322

Mary Ward Loreto UK is
a registered charity
No. 1192478



Albanian Mission Against Human Trafficking

Mary Ward Loreto Foundation

Address: Rr. Skenderbej, 4.1.14, Tirana, Albania

e-mail: info@marywardloreto.net

FB: MaryWardLoreto