

# M&D ANNUAL REPORT

## 2020

### "Resilience"

*"Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it."*

— Helen Keller

*"Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall."*

— Confucius

*"Do not judge me by my success, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again."*

— Nelson Mandela





## **PREFACE**

Ministry efforts by Mercy in countries other than Ireland have been the primary focus of the M&D (Mission & Development) Office for the past ten years and more. Mandated by the CLT to encourage and facilitate best practice within Mercy ministry, regular reporting, such as the content of this document, serves to document the breadth of activities undertaken by the sisters on the ground.



## INTRODUCTION

2020 was a different year in more ways than one. We have had to learn a new vocabulary (lockdown, social distancing, hand sanitising....) and had to adjust to a very different way of being. Concern for those near and far occupy our waking thoughts. It is particularly difficult when the light at the end of the tunnel is brought tantalisingly near only to fade once again into the distance. Within this setting, those who continue to engage in their ministry must do so with the belief that eventually Life will take on a familiar rhythm and comfort will be found in the presence of those who are dear to us. It is during a time such as this that we discover the length and breadth of our true capacity. It is during such times that we understand what it means to dig deep while thinking of others. In formulating this report there was only ever one title that seemed to ring true and reflect the strength and commitment of the Sisters on the ground - "Resilience."

As always, the content of the Annual Report is the distillation of the perspectives and experiences shared by all the Sisters in ministry. We are surely not surprised if, for 2020, those experiences and perspectives have more in common than ever. It makes sense therefore that this year's M&D Report documents ministry under the one roof - the Mercy "roof" rather than under any geographical heading or boundary.

Context is offered only in terms of sketching what were (and still are in some cases), the prevailing circumstances in each of the three countries - Kenya, Peru, South Africa, when the pandemic was at its height.

## LOCAL SCENARIOS

Worldwide coverage of the pandemic has been constant and inescapable. Little would be gained from repeating statistics and echoing the often heart-breaking narrative of how Covid-19 ravaged countries, some to a greater degree than others. However, in understanding the context within which Mercy has been continuing its ministry, and before handing the narrative over to the Sisters themselves, a brief outline of how each country with a Mercy presence was affected during 2020, is offered here.

## Kenya

- ❖ In Kenya, as in some other African countries, it appears as if the impact on the population wasn't quite as severe as in other places. That said, most recently it appears as if the country is experiencing a third wave and the government has once again placed curfew restrictions, banned political gatherings and large social gatherings and is working on vaccinating at least 30% of the population by mid-2023.
- ❖ The first "wave" in 2020 was not as severe as had been feared although, inevitably there were corona hotspots like Nairobi and the coastal regions. A curfew was in place for almost seven months. As President Kenyatta said at the time: "You can always revive an economy, but you cannot revive a lost life."
- ❖ Overcrowding in hospitals was most apparent during the October-November period due to a rise in cases but certainly in Nairobi because of so many seeking treatment in the better facilities offered in the capital.
- ❖ The economic fall-out has inevitably created significant problems - more than 1.7 million Kenyans lost their jobs according to the National Bureau of Statistics. The absence of tourists was keenly felt in game parks and lodges. An estimated 17% of Kenyans are unable to meet living expenses; only 47% of the population have a source of regular income.
- ❖ In late 2020, economic and political pressures, coupled with vigilance fatigue, led to an easing of restrictions and containment measures.

## SOUTH AFRICA

- ❖ Almost all of the first few hundred cases were imported from Europe.
- ❖ The first recorded death on March 5<sup>th</sup> was of a man who had returned from Italy.
- ❖ The government imposed one of the world's strictest lockdowns at the end of March 2020. Citizens weren't allowed to leave their residence except for essential purposes such as grocery shopping and medical care. All non-essential businesses were shut down and cigarette and alcohol sales were banned.
- ❖ Serious problems of food supply soon occurred in informal settlements, leading to riots and confrontation with security forces.
- ❖ The lockdown resulted in fewer deaths from road accidents and homicides. During Easter (9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> April) there were 28 fatalities compared to 162 the same period of 2019; during lockdown 432 murders were reported compared to 1542 the previous year.
- ❖ During the second wave which lasted up to December, 6000 cases were recorded per day with 1 million confirmed cases reached by Dec 27<sup>th</sup>.
- ❖ When the pandemic began, South Africa was one of only two (out of 54) African countries able to test for Covid.
- ❖ As of March 2021 South Africa has the highest number of confirmed cases in Africa.

## PERU


- ❖ On March 6<sup>th</sup> a 25-year-old man (an airline worker) who had travelled to Spain and France tested positive.
- ❖ Already on 18<sup>th</sup> March a curfew was imposed, with citizens unable to leave their houses between 8 p.m. and 5 a.m.
  - ❖ The first death was recorded on March 19<sup>th</sup>.
- ❖ In April, in an attempt to flatten the curve, movement outside the home was regulated by days and gender: men able to leave home on Mon/Wed/Fri and women on Tues/Thurs/Sat with no one allowed on Sunday.
- ❖ By May 26<sup>th</sup> 85% of ICU beds with ventilators were occupied. The high level of contagion can be partially explained by economic circumstances - daily travel for food purchase with only about half the population owning a fridge ; crowding in banks as many accessing relief funds don't have bank accounts and have to collect their money in person.
- ❖ By mid-August Peru had surpassed half a million cases and by end December that number had risen to 1 million.
- ❖ In Lima some of the hardest hit areas are home to street vendors (70% of the workforce does not have formal employment). Though Peru instituted one of the earliest and strictest quarantines, many could not afford to stay at home for long, so vendors, fruit sellers, florists etc. got on the bus and went to work.
- ❖ An ongoing challenge for the country is the supply of oxygen. As recently as February 2021, it was reported that a second wave of the coronavirus left many hospitals short of oxygen for critical patients even as daily infections continued to climb. "Respira, Peru" (Breathe, Peru) a solidarity initiative within the country donates imported oxygen plants to hospitals one of which is in Trujillo, the location of most of the Mercy Sisters.

## WHAT DID WE DO?

Unsurprisingly, it is precisely in the worst of times that we fully appreciate just how close to the edge live the communities with whom Mercy interacts. As if the loss of life, of family members was not enough, it was the reality of how many depend on casual labour, temporary work as a means of survival that dictated the nature of the overwhelming need on the ground. Often the role of Mercy was one of ensuring that the very basics - food, shelter, medicine - were available and reached those who had nowhere else to go.

Through the clinics and rural healthcare programmes, normal service had to be maintained as far as was possible, as at the **Makadara dispensary** (Kenya): "*During lockdown when clients could not come to the clinic... we made sure that all clients' needs were met - we took the drugs to the clients in their homes, some we had to send them by parcel, we offered counselling services virtually to ensure that none were missing their appointments and to reassure the clients.*" A similar approach was taken in **Winterveldt** through the **OVC** (Orphans and Vulnerable Children) programme (South Africa): "*With the loss of their livelihood for many in the community, we were particularly concerned for those providing a home for orphans and vulnerable children. We tried, as far as was possible, to ensure that they had at least one meal a day so that the guardians/caregivers would not be obliged to leave the house and go to town looking for any means to make money.*"

The situation in **Trujillo** (Peru) was no different and the Sisters' response was practical and immediate: "*Not only was there the danger of the virus but also the lack of food among the poorest families in Alto Trujillo. Approximately 250 families were supported with food and a total of 80 students with school supplies.*"




The homeless of **Johannesburg** were, at the start of the pandemic, obliged to seek a roof over their heads elsewhere - for the most part, in government emergency shelters. Thanks to Mercy efforts and determination *"three months after the lockdown in March we were able to re-open our shelters providing 50% capacity."*

While in **Winterveldt** there has long been the need for nutritional support of the community whereby *"three Fridays a month we distribute food parcels to 510 households.... when the corona virus struck, the number increased. We took on another 10 to the nutrition scheme and the Sisters at the convent took care of many others."*

Meanwhile in the slums of Nairobi, **Mukuru** Promotion Centre explained the role it played: *"Most people in the slums were unable to provide the basic necessities for their families. The source of income for the family was wiped out. Meals were no longer a daily occurrence. Through partnerships with different donors, the Social and Health Services department was able to support over 5,000 of the most vulnerable families with food provisions and immunity booster parcels."*

In the same way that schools in Ireland had to re-invent the classroom, so too did those engaged in formal education elsewhere. The principals of schools in South Africa were unanimous in recognising the vital importance of the role of the school as a place to feel safe, even above the studying that took place. As the principal of **Iona School, Pretoria** shared: *"We implemented an academic intervention programme to help learners cope better and salvage the academic year. I hope the school was seen as a safe haven for learners as we chartered the turbulent wave of the pandemic."*



Similar experiences were echoed in other schools, with the emphasis decidedly on the personal connection: *"Staff supported each other and we developed an outstanding Grade 7 Care group who kept in touch with the younger students, especially those affected by the lockdown. Teachers developed much closer relationships with their students as they could engage one on one in the afternoon when they offered extra support to girls who were struggling with online learning."*

At **St Matthew's primary school, Soweto** (S. Africa), efforts were made to ensure that no-one was left behind: *"Because of Covid we had to learn to navigate the new landscape. The greatest difficulty was finding creative ways to keep learning going when our children were at home. Many of our families could not afford data and had no access to IT. We made learning packs containing worksheets and homework to overcome this issue. "*

The support offered went well beyond teaching: *"Some of our parents were struggling financially due to the impact of Covid in the workplace. Parents were invited to apply for financial aid and we helped as many as we could with our limited resources."*

During the time when many schools were closed, the **Mercy Education Office** in Kenya created platforms for the youth to learn new skills and showcase their talents. Two students from St Michael's secondary school (Nairobi) - Felix O. and Evans B. played a leading role in the production of songs whose messages invite people around the world to stand in solidarity without considering any differences that might risk creating divisions.



## THE UP-SIDE

Hope, optimism, looking forward instead of back.... they all play their part in holding on to that core of resilience. Actively seeking out and treasuring the positive must surely keep the flame of hope alive - like the principal of **McAuley House School, Johannesburg** who rejoiced in the school's improved infrastructure and technological advances:

*"During the lockdown we did multiple repairs and renovations to the school buildings. The school is in fantastic shape!"*


and

*"We have improved our teaching methods using technology. All classes have been fitted with projectors and whiteboards and all pupils have been given access to the Google classroom."*

At this same school, resilience stretched beyond the students to reach the parents who, it is reported, gained an enhanced sense of solidarity: *"With our new teaching style we are in daily contact with parents through WhatsApp groups, and this prompted them to contribute to our school projects such as the clothing campaign for Christmas."*

There is also recognition that the teachers themselves have added to their skill-set: *"I learned to teach online! From preparing slides, to videoing, to capturing audio into slides. I was quite proud of my achievements! I also did a weekly assembly to the whole school through YouTube."* - a declaration made proudly by the principal of **St. Teresa's Primary, Johannesburg.**

The same positive outlook, the ability to acknowledge the "silver lining", shone through reporting from the skills training ministry in **Nuu**: *"Covid-19 requirements brought great changes and improvements - for instance, the building of an isolation room means that we now have a sick bay for future use. Also, instead of the usual rubbish bins, we now have proper bins with pedals, and the regular hand washing has improved sanitation standards which means better health of the students."*



It is perhaps an indicator of the overwhelming impact that this pandemic has had, that the absence of any fatality is a cause for celebration, as reported by a sister who is regular visitor of a home for the **elderly in Alexandria** (SA) when she commented: *"The good news is that to date there have been no deaths among the residents of the Care home."*

## CHALLENGES


It would have been naive not to anticipate that those on the ground would experience significant obstacles or have to face situations never before encountered. A simple statement made by one of the Sisters in Peru whose ministry takes place in El Milagro prison, **Trujillo** might sum up the sentiment of all those engaged in the daily realities of the pandemic:

*"The biggest challenge perhaps was realising that we couldn't do anything in the face of so much need."*

Within some ministries the impact of the pandemic has had consequences which will not readily find solutions, as the following illustrates:

From a school in South Africa: *"Our debt level was three times the usual and many parents have either lost their jobs or had salary reductions"*.

While, inevitably, in Kenya, young people have felt the full brunt of the fall-out from the restrictions imposed, as the sister in **Lodwar** shared: *"With the closure of all learning institutions in March, children of all ages were reduced to hanging around the village with nothing to occupy them. One of the results was a significant increase in unplanned pregnancies. During the period March to May, within **Turkana County**, 389 girls between 10 and 14 were found to be pregnant and 3,869 older girls in the 15-19 age range. This resulted in a 0.4% rate of pregnancy in a two-month period compared to the average rate of 0.1% for adolescent pregnancies."*



Elsewhere in Kenya, within Mukuru slums, significant efforts had to be made to convince many students to return to school as the social services office of **Mukuru Promotion Centre** reported *"students dropping out of school to find means of helping their families has been a big issue"*

In **Lokori** meanwhile, at the clinic there, the sister reports with some humour: *"Water is always a major challenge in these parts but hand washing was the number one requirement. Some of our clients from the interior villages upon arrival at the gate not only washed their hands...but their heads and feet, and I felt the loss of every drop and wondered where the refill was going to come from....."*

At the **Sal y Luz** rehabilitation centre in Peru, as elsewhere, scenarios played out which had never before been witnessed: *"We did not expect that COVID would enter our institution. What surprised us when we took care of our therapist in the hospital was to see so much death and pain in relatives ..."*

While in South Africa, even for those with lifelong experience in healthcare, there were scenes which may never be forgotten - *"It was a very sad experience to see all five members of the same household being buried within days of each other because of Covid 19. With no one left, the house was closed and remains so today. No family members came for the last funeral of the young boy who was left to be buried by the government with no one around."*

Unsurprisingly perhaps, for some involved in educating the community, in **Winterveldt** it was the messenger who was blamed rather than the message being carried: *"With no electricity or radio in some of the areas we visit, educating the community about Covid 19 was not always easy. Sometimes the people reacted by accusing us of making up the stories."*



## LEARNING

It is not always easy to take a step back and reflect on what new insight or different perspective we have acquired along the way.

As a wise man once said:


***"The capacity to learn is a gift; the ability to learn is a skill; the willingness to learn is a choice."***

Sometimes our learning is prompted by a new environment and in 2020 this was a new environment over which we had no control. The key perhaps is in not forgetting the lesson learned.

From the ministries, the range of learning began with a very simple but life-changing statement made by one of the school principals in **Johannesburg**: *"We must never again assume that things will always continue as 'normal' "*

While at **Our Lady of Lourdes** hospital in Mutomo (Kenya), the learning came about as a result of the absence of a resource which up until 2020 had been readily available:

*"The value which the hospital was used to receiving from the time and service offered by volunteer doctors and nurses had been seriously understated and never really quantified - during the time of Covid the gap felt by their absence was simply enormous."*



Often, learning is more practical in nature and can be readily applied to our efforts going forward, such as that experienced by the staff in the schools in South Africa when they shared the following observations:


*"For 2021 the staff are integrating subjects more, so that online learning doesn't become linear and subject driven, but rather topical and research-driven. This is in an effort to ensure that we develop in our students a sound grasp of knowledge and can apply it effectively to problem-solve and disseminate facts from the internet."*

While another staff member recognised today's reality and the absolute dependence on technology: *"Data (understood as Internet content delivered to mobile devices such as smart phones and tablets) has become a new currency in our country and has real impact on how our pupils navigate their learning."*

At the other end of the scale, learning happened at a more personal level - at the Jorge Basadre Grohmann school in **Trujillo** where a sister commented: *"(I learned) The value of solidarity: teachers and school workers giving their time and money for food donations despite the fact that in their own families there were infected, sick and deceased people."*

While in South Africa, a teacher shared her own lesson: *"I also learned not to "sweat the small stuff" and to have a huge amount of compassion towards parents. We need to meet parents (and others) where they are and not where we hope them to be."*

On the topic of parents, there was a significant lesson learned in **Lokori** with the sister declaring *"We are now aware that there is a big gap in parenting. Parents have left that responsibility almost totally to teachers and so when schools closed, things fell apart."*



Learning can also remind us of the basic principles which guide our ministry efforts as evidenced by not one but two pastoral ministries in Peru - : "*(I was) Affirmed again in the value of life in all its forms, and our responsibility to add our "grain of sand", however small it may appear. Also affirmed the goodness of people, despite the widespread corruption...*"


*"That our fragility and vulnerability, although real, are only a shadow of the fragility and vulnerability of the huge number of poor people who live precariously from day to day, hoping not to die of hunger.... or Covid".*

## THE UNEXPECTED

Even or perhaps, especially during a pandemic - when so much is beyond our control, we are more aware of things happening which ordinarily would not occur or if they did, would not leave the same mark. This too was documented by the Sisters.

As one sister in South Africa shared about the unfolding of a new ministry: *While I could not carry out my **prison ministry** (as they were in full lockdown), I was approached by a doctor to work with a group of young adults caught in the spiral of drug abuse. A programme called Home of Hope has been developed involving nurses, social workers, trauma counsellors and a psychologist to put in place a detox and post tox initiative to bring hope and motivation to young substance users. The programme also involves **family therapy** and I am happy to be a part of it. "*

In one of the schools in South Africa it was however the bonding that took place among the teaching staff that prompted the principal to comment: "*The camaraderie between the younger and older teachers was beautiful to witness. The younger ones paired with the older ones to assist them with computer literacy and sometimes do parts of the teaching that the older teachers found overwhelming*".



While in **Winterveldt**, where the community depends almost entirely on the Mercy nutrition programme and the doorstep gardens, there was a surprise donation: *"...in July, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) donated 500 buckets of dried food as well as garden implements and seed to enhance the garden effort and funding to install an electric pump over the borehole. We managed to open up a new section of gardening on the property which we hope will produce results for a long time to come."*

Surely in such a situation the last thing that one might expect to happen would be more learners applying to a school but this is exactly what happened - in more than one school..." *There was an increase in the number of learners applying to Iona **Convent School** after the lockdown in June.*" While at both **Mayfair School**, Johannesburg and **St Matthews** in Soweto new learners joined the student body.

Given the years spent in running the homeless shelters in Johannesburg, it would be understandable if very little could happen which had not been anticipated, and yet... the sister responsible for that ministry found not one but two instances where her reaction was that of surprise verging on disbelief. Both instances involved response of the government to the overall situation: *" We had a recent request from the Department of Social Services for Mercy shelters to participate in a research programme entitled "Covid-19 Crisis reveals the need to focus more on street homelessness" - a concept not new to us ..."* (and a topic which Mercy has been campaigning on since ministry reporting began!) was one cause for her disbelief, while the second was prompted by the government's unexpected generosity:

*"Most amazing and unexpected was the fact that the department did not cut off our grant during the lockdown period when we were closed showing that they understood our situation....and the decisions we had taken."*




Within another ministry - at **Mercy House** in Pretoria - the unexpected lay not just in the donations which flooded in, but also in the fact that these donations prompted increased networking... *"We were surprised and grateful for the extreme generosity of donors (some complete strangers). This led to a lot of sharing among other service providers. Through receiving and offering groceries and toiletries we found out about the work and challenges of those around us".*

In Kenya, at the skills training centre **in Nuu** the principal could not fail to acknowledge the level of commitment displayed by the learners: *"During the pandemic the students did not stay idle even those students who had only been there for one term. They all went for attachment (apprenticeship) which allows them also to make money with sewing /dressmaking. Some of the students have been able to pay their school fees with the income made during the pandemic and some were even able to buy sewing machines, making them ready to start their own business."*

Elsewhere, in **Lokori**, the sister remarked that : *"Once the lockdown was over and the churches opened, still within the guidelines, the church was full to capacity and overflowing with faithful yearning to come back and worship. This surprised me most of all."*

In Peru, where the ministry takes place at a school in the district of **Trujillo** with the highest rate of Covid contagion in the country, the sister noted in particular that, as she engaged with the students, "encouraging them to see life with optimism and face it with strength and energy", what struck her above all was *" the sense of humour during remote classes"*.



Inevitably, when the unthinkable happens and we find ourselves navigating a situation that has no precedent, our reactions can veer between despair at the unimagined consequences and a sense of wonder at the intrinsic goodness of those around us, as this sister in ministry at **'Nuestra Señora de la Misericordia' Pastoral Centre, Trujillo** discovered: *"I did not expect... that the infections would be so numerous and the hospitals would collapse... that several members of the same family would die and it would not be possible to say good bye to them... that so many families would show solidarity with the poorest by helping them with food."*



## GOING FORWARD...

The report would not be complete without pondering how the ministry will move ahead, what will change or improve as a result of the past year.

Some responses to this were:

- *Going forward we will try to get "back on track" - try and understand who will need reconciliation considering the number of incidents of domestic violence which have increased over the year, the number of people who have lost their jobs and the rate of poverty as it continues to spiral.*
- *The support of the parents, staff and learners illustrated that as a family we were able to overcome this very difficult year. We are ,however, more aware than ever that more students than we had imagined are in need of the services of our social worker and this we will facilitate.*
- *Our clients will be able to carry on learning skills online - an opportunity we might never have understood otherwise.*
- *We will be focusing even more energy on our garden project but we will also prioritise trying to find placements at school for children of foreign nationality.*
- *Training received on social media will assist us in future and opened the way for us to avail of national and international assistance in our training methods.*
- *We will be putting the emphasis on customer service but also focusing on staff training in stress management and wellness in the workplace.*



## STORIES

This would not be an M&D report without offering some real-life stories of those for whom and with whom Mercy sustains its ministry efforts.


### *A Story of Forgiveness*

Winnie N. is 14. As a four-year-old child she tested positive for HIV. She was looked after by her grandmother as her mother had passed away. It was her gran who brought her for testing and, seeing Winnie so fearful of needles, asked to be tested too just to give the child support. The grandmother also tested positive and reacted by blaming both Winnie and her own daughter for having infected her.

During one of our support group meetings Winnie found the strength to voice her anger and frustration as a young person living with HIV. At the same time she was able to understand and then forgive her gran's anger. They both went to counselling, grew close and became involved in educating others about the importance of disclosure and self-acceptance. Recently the grandmother tested positive for Covid-19 and initiated a WhatsApp group with a video of how to make masks. Winnie meanwhile has become a leader among her peers and...

### *A Story of Broken Dreams*

When a staff member noticed a woman sitting on the street across from the shelter from morning till late in the afternoon he approached her and asked what was the matter. She was homeless and hungry and had no place to stay. She was invited to the shelter and given supper. Then she put her head down on the table and was overcome with sorrow. The staff arranged for her to stay at the shelter and in the following days. It was established that she had left her family in Zululand and was now stranded in Johannesburg.



With the help of the social worker, contact was made with her family in Zululand and a reunification with her family was effected. This is the story of so many people who leave the rural areas with high hopes and discover there is no gold on the streets of Johannesburg.

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### ***A Story of Survival***

JL was a 60-year-old patient with 42 years of alcoholism when he came to the Centre. Due to his dependence on alcohol and drugs his siblings did not allow him to visit the family home when his father died. He lived on the street, drinking and smoking. He was brought to us and arrived in very poor health, unable to walk and almost choking when breathing. After treatment and undergoing therapy he reached his graduation ceremony with us and re-joined the world outside just before Christmas. In January he came to visit. He is working in the market delivering parcels and looks happy and healthy.

The stories we share are usually positive, uplifting ones. However we recognise that Life can sometimes test our faith in the human spirit. Here is one story which reminds us of that.

### ***A Story of Human Frailty***

The Chairperson of our Reconciliation Forum runs a home for children in distress. She was visited by two young men who had been in the home most of their lives and had moved out a year or two before when they turned 19. They said they had brought a donation for the shelter and were invited in for tea. Once inside, they turned on the two women there and attacked them violently before loading the contents of the house onto a lorry parked outside. So strength had to be found by someone helping others reconcile to forgive those young men and practice reconciliation within herself.

### ***A Story of New Life***

For us in the clinic, we had a caption "NO MASK, NO SERVICE". Therefore most people wore the mask strictly going to church and coming to the clinic. For the likes of 'Beth' (not her real name), it was not a laughing matter. This particular Wednesday was our routine Ante Natal Clinic day. It is a day when we sit all the expectant mothers together for a common talk before individual assessment and care. During this COVID-19 era, we start by giving an intense health education talk on COVID basics for prevention, self and community protection. As per the protocol, we asked all the mothers to sit 'one meter apart'.

This young mother (Beth) stormed in clumsily and bridged the one-meter gap between two moms. She had no mask on either! The nurse giving health education talk got a little irritated and put the culprit on the spot saying, *"this is exactly what we are talking about". "See mama, you walk in through the crowd, no mask on, and you sit close to one another... you and us are at risk!"* The woman said nothing and did not dare look up. After provocation, she shot up and walked away. I happened to be passing by and knew from the energy in her strides she will never come to us again. I acted quickly, sent someone to go after her. When she returned, she was sobbing. After calming down she said, *"Sister, it is my sixth baby and my first time ever to come to clinic. I knew I must wear a mask to be allowed in by the gatekeeper. Since I had no mask, I went to my sister-in-law to borrow hers but she was wearing it bringing her child to this clinic. Next, I went to borrow my neighbour's and she had already lent it to another mother. Wednesday is not a good day. They are all using their masks! I do not have 50 shillings to buy mine. My baby is due. I need clinic."*

That very evening, in our comfortable maternity ward, she was back, and before long she had delivered a real bouncy baby boy weighing 3.6kg and was all smiles. She named him Echwa Peter after the nurse who conducted the delivery!



It is not mere chance that this Report ends with a 'good news' story. While 2020 was a year which brought more than its share of pain and loss, what we might take away from this recounting of ministry efforts is that, with the Mercy presence comes hope and giving hope in times such as these - is that not the very definition of **Resilience** ?

**Mission and Development Office  
April 2021**



## LOCATION OF MERCY MINISTRIES

### **KENYA**

Chepareria  
Lodwar  
Lokori  
Mutomo  
Nairobi  
Nuu

### **PERU**

Lima  
Mache  
Trujillo

### **SOUTH AFRICA**

Johannesburg  
Pretoria  
Soweto  
Winterveldt

