



Child Sponsorship

At a recent international meeting the Loreto province leaders drew up a policy regarding the use of Child Sponsorship as a way of funding Loreto projects, programmes and enterprises.

The Loreto Sisters do not favour child sponsorship as a way of raising money, as the focus tends to be on one child or one family rather than empowering communities or responding to community needs. Focus on a specific individual or family can limit the effectiveness of the funding.

In most cases Child Sponsorship programmes require reciprocity: photos of the child, regular letters, and quarterly reports. These activities involve considerable cost and are of questionable benefit to the children or their families. Knowing the identity of the child can lead to direct contact – letters, telephone calls and even unsanctioned visits which pose considerable risks to the child and to the organisation.

This policy does not preclude individual young people from receiving direct support from donors such as funding for school fees, books for university and language classes but it endeavours to ensure that the identity of the recipients is protected and that there is no expectation that there will be any relationship between the donor and the recipient.

Of greatest concern to the Loreto Sisters is the focus on a specific child as a way of raising money – the child becomes a marketing tool. While there is a “feel good” component for the donor there is no evidence that this is the most effective way of developing the capacity of the community.

The Loreto Sisters support funding principles which provide opportunities for whole communities to become self-sustaining. Digging wells, training teachers, equipping clinics, supporting community gardens and running a variety of training programmes enables whole communities to grow and develop.

CHILD SPONSORSHIP SCHEMES

IBVM POLICY

Donations specifically targeted to an individual child have been judged to have adverse consequences. They can disrupt relationships in a village and family. They can lead to exploitation by unscrupulous donors.

All enterprises owned or administered by Loreto Sisters will ensure that no new funding with this format is sought or accepted. Existing instances will be phased out over time.

Sensitivity to existing donors requires education as to why this policy has been implemented, and should include examples of appropriate ways donations can be made today.

Where this policy has implications for the survival of an enterprise, MWI will work with the administrators to seek alternative funding.

Reporting to donors is essential and can at times feature individual stories, but should not directly link a donor to a particular child, except in extraordinary circumstances.