



Annual Review 2024

Contents

Who we are	2
Our Focus	2
Our Governance	3
A Message from the Worldwide President & Chair of Trustees	4
A Message from the Chief Executive	5
Future Plans and Strategy	6-7
Transforming Lives through Faith, Community and Action	8-9
Ending Violence	10-12
Ending Poverty	13-15
Campaigning	16-19
Membership in Britain and Ireland	20-21
Fundraising	22
Finances	23

Who We Are

Mothers' Union is a women-led, international Christian movement dedicated to ending poverty, violence and social injustice in communities in the UK and around the globe.

Active for nearly 150 years, with over 4 million members in 84 countries, we work with people of all faiths and none, transforming lives, strengthening families and advocating for meaningful change.

Rooted in kindness, faith and compassionate action, we strive to create a better future where everyone has the opportunity and resources to thrive.



Our Focus

For nearly 150 years, Mothers' Union has supported communities throughout the world. At the core of all we do is our belief that faith and compassion can transform lives.

Whatever the need, no matter how big or small in their communities, Mothers' Union members are there to help and provide support and love, free of judgment. From producing hygiene kits to knitting warm hats to facilitating safe spaces to talk and parenting support groups, our work helps build stronger, more resilient communities worldwide.

Our three core pillars of transformation are:



Ending Violence
promoting peace and safety



Ending Injustice
advancing gender justice



Ending Poverty
fostering self-reliance and resilience.

Our programmes include literacy and savings groups, parenting and resilience training, and gender-based violence/ domestic abuse awareness campaigns. Alongside these are countless small, everyday acts of service undertaken by our dedicated members. We are guided by the needs of local communities – listening first, then responding with practical, faith-led support.

Where appropriate, we also collaborate with other organisations and governments to extend our reach and impact.

Our Governance

Mothers' Union is uniquely positioned as a member-based global Christian movement. We are committed to transparency, accountability and ethical leadership. Our governance structure reflects our values: we listen to local communities, empower grassroots leadership and uphold the highest standards of integrity in everything we do.

2024 marked the final year in the current triennium term for most of our Board of Trustees, including our Worldwide President. We sincerely thank them for their leadership, dedication, and service to Mothers' Union during these three years of growth, challenge and transformation. We are pleased that an independent review of governance was held in November, 2024, which rated performance as consistently good

Our vigorous and transparent online election process allows our members to vote for the person they want to lead their movement. This ensures their voices are heard. Following this process, Kathleen Snow was elected the new Worldwide President of Mothers' Union.



outgoing Board of Trustees at the end of their term in 2024

From January 2025, the Mothers' Union Board of Trustees is:

Worldwide President (Chair)

– Kathleen Snow

Zonal Trustee for Zone A (Korea, Myanmar, North India, South India, Sri Lanka)

– Joy Hla Gyaw

Zonal Trustee for Zone B (Canada, South America, USA, West Indies)

– (Phylis) Ephena Matthew (from July 2025)

Zonal Trustee for Zone C (Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, Australia, Melanesia, Papua New Guinea)

– Dorothy G Siep

Zonal Trustee for Zone D (Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Jerusalem and the Middle East)

– The Revd Mercy Wanjiru

Zonal Trustee for Zone E (Central Africa, Nigeria, South Sudan, Sudan, Southern Africa)

– The Revd Maria van Staden

Zonal Trustee for Zone F (Burundi, Congo, Indian Ocean, West Africa)

– Estelle Dibo

Zonal Trustee for Zone G (Canterbury)

– Julia Jamieson

Zonal Trustee for Zone H (York)

– Dr Deb Lee

Zonal Trustee for Zone I (All-Ireland)

– (Elizabeth) June Butler

Zonal Trustee for Zone J (Scotland)

– The Revd (Kathleen) Ann Wren

Zonal Trustee for Zone K (Wales)

– Lowrie Washington Jones

Safeguarding (Co-opted member)

– Dr Lizabeth Gailer

Independent Policy Trustee (Co-opted)

– Mathilde Nkwirikiye

Chief Executive

Canon Bev Jullien IMM, MA (Cantab)

Senior Leadership Team

Canon Bev Jullien IMM, MA (Cantab)

– Chief Executive

Richard Miller, ACA

– Director of Finance & Services

Adam Sach

– Director of Fundraising, Communications & Retail

Steph Nunn

– Director of Membership

Sarah Newnham MSc, ACC

– Director of Global Programmes (joined March 2025)

Patronage

Royal Patron – HRH The Duchess of Edinburgh

Patron – The Archbishop of Canterbury

**In 2024,
Mothers' Union
supported over
2.7 million
people**

A Message from the Worldwide President & Chair of Trustees



It is an absolute honour and privilege to have taken up the role of Worldwide President of Mothers' Union in January 2025. A Canadian, I have been a member of Mothers' Union for over 37 years, serving in a range of roles including Provincial President for Canada, Regional Trainer on our worldwide Parenting Programme and most recently as Zonal Trustee for The Americas.

I would like to begin by paying heartfelt tribute to my predecessor, Sheran Harper, and the previous Board. Their leadership was instrumental in shaping our current strategy, developed through an extraordinary listening process that engaged 200,000 members globally. This strategy provided steady guidance through the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was a privilege for us to announce at the start of 2025 that HRH The Duchess of Edinburgh has agreed to become our Patron. And it was a wonderful start to my term to join with her as she visited the English for Women project (see pg 20 for more details) - a powerful sign of her commitment to our mission.

The words on my heart as I take up office are: "Stronger together." As a global movement of four million members, we are already making a real difference in the communities we serve. And by working together with one another and with our partners, we can do even more. I am excited to explore how we can continue to deepen and grow those partnerships in the years ahead.

As we enter this new Triennium and look ahead to our 150th anniversary in 2026, we are inviting others to **"Join us, Join in!"** — reaching out so that our work, especially in supporting those most in need to transform their lives, can continue to go from strength to strength.

Inspired always by our faith, we are reminded:

**"...with God all things
are possible."**

(Matthew 19:26)

Kathleen M. Snow

Kathleen Snow, Mothers' Union Worldwide
President / Chair of Trustees



A Message from the Chief Executive

It is wonderful to reflect on all that our members have achieved in 2024. Inspired by their faith, they continue to reach out to people and families in need in their communities with compassion and dedication. While we encourage members to report annually, we recognise that the stories we receive represent only a fraction of the actual situation. Every day, members do what is needed, wherever and whenever it is required.

It is uplifting to know that, together, we have supported, directly or indirectly, over 2.7 million people around the world – including more than 240,000 through centrally-supported programmes.



This report highlights just a few inspiring examples:

- In Southern Africa and Ghana, 150 girls received reusable period pads, enabling them to stay in school.
- In Uganda, members provided porridge for schoolchildren, helping them start the day nourished and ready to learn.
- In Myanmar, members continued to run generosity courses despite the ongoing political crisis.

In the UK, members offered support in a range of ways- from knitting items for hospitals, to providing 'moving-on kits' for women leaving refuges, to organising much-needed breaks for families who otherwise could not get away. All around the globe, members are working faithfully to create a world where everyone can thrive.

An area of particular focus for us this year has been adult literacy. We campaigned at the UN and in the UK (in the lead-up to the general election) to highlight the importance of supporting women, especially women who missed out on schooling, to become literate as adults. Today, an estimated 480 million women worldwide still can't read or write. This matters deeply to us because our work over more than 20 years has shown that when women become literate, they are better able to feed their families and support their children attending school, breaking the cycle of poverty for future generations.

We have also seen that literacy opens doors beyond the home. For example, in Burundi, around 53% of all literacy participants have gone on to leadership roles. In 2024, we surveyed graduates from Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, and Burundi who moved into leadership in their churches and communities. They reported increased confidence and self-esteem, and their

leadership contributed to more balanced and inclusive decision-making in their communities.

We are hopeful that we will secure funding to expand this work and offer more leadership training, empowering even more women to step into positions of responsibility with confidence.

Organisationally, we continue to invest in transformation to ensure we can support our members and their communities as effectively as possible. A major achievement in 2024 was the successful delivery of a new Customer Relationship Management System (CRM). This was developed in close collaboration with member representatives to ensure it meets their needs. It was delivered on time and within budget, and our next challenge is to ensure everyone can make the most of its capabilities.

We also continue to build a strong culture of safeguarding, with dedicated training in the UK and internationally, and a full-time safeguarding staff member now in post. (pg 20)

Financially, we delivered a small surplus in 2024. However, we remain resource-constrained in our ability to meet growing demand. This year saw the first phase of our new fundraising strategy, as well as consultations on the future of our building, Mary Sumner House. The Board has agreed, in principle, to support a sale of the building in due course, once market conditions are favourable.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all our members, particularly in Britain and Ireland, for their tireless work and continued generosity. We also thank our partners, including Five Talents, Episcopal Relief and Development, Women's Aid, Restored, and many others around the world.

Truly, we are stronger together.

Canon Bev Jullien,
IMM, MA (Cantab)

Future Plans and Strategy

In 2024, we continued to work towards the strategic plan prepared in 2019 at the in-person Worldwide Council in Kigali, attended by Provincial Presidents and board members from around the world

In 2025, we will begin work on refreshing this plan to extend it to 2030. The aim is to have a revised plan ready for approval at the Worldwide Council in October 2026. Given that the 2019 plan was created following a consultation process with 200,000 members around the world, it is highly likely that the three key pillars, of ending violence, ending poverty and ending injustice, will remain, as will the four building blocks of transforming lives, nurturing membership, building firm foundations and accessing necessary resource.

What we have discovered is a need for a secondary level below these, with associated theories of change for transformation, to ensure we have specific milestones and measurables in place across all of our activities. A planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning expert joined the team in early 2025, to support us in this journey

We will refine our Programme Management process further, and invite provinces that have not yet engaged with central funding to come forward with projects suitable for seed funding.

As agreed in Kigali, we are also on a journey supporting provincial Mothers' Unions grow capacity and capability, so that they can undertake more structured community work, and increase their potential to attract funding and resources. We recognise that this will be a long-term journey, but we are very excited about this, as part of the vision of creating "an interdependent network of equals"

Preparing for the 150th Anniversary in 2026 will be an overarching piece of work, with the aims of, as well as celebrating with members and friends, reaching out to new audiences, whether as members, supporters, volunteers or donors.





Whilst membership across the globe remains healthy, numbers in Britain and Ireland continue to decline. In 2025 and beyond, we will build on the work started in 2024, to reach out to new churches and networks such as diaspora groups, to join us and join in, whilst also equipping our current membership with resources to reach out locally. We know that when people learn about MU work, they become very excited! A key milestone in 2025 will be a Leadership Conference in June, where leaders from Britain and Ireland will come together to share and learn from one another.



We will continue to strengthen our foundations by continuing our safeguarding awareness and training, and having as a standard item on the board agenda, with a safeguarding trustee on our board; we will embed the CRM system and launch a new website by the end 2025; we will ensure governance training is provided for the new Mothers' Union Trustee Board.



We will continue to seek to access resources needed through rolling out our fundraising strategy, which in 2025 will include face-to-face fundraising for the first time, trusts and major donors, and further strengthening our strategic partnerships.



As a volunteer-led movement, we recognise that our relationships- with God, with our communities, and with one another- are at the heart of who we are. We remain committed to nurturing these connections through faith-based resources, virtual engagement, and by preparing for an in-person global gathering in South Africa in October 2026.



Transforming Lives through Faith, Community and Action



Each year, Mothers' Union touches the lives of millions across the globe. We do this through our unique, faith-based and community-led approach to tackling poverty, injustice and violence. We understand that these challenges are deeply interconnected. They are often rooted in broken relationships: with ourselves, with others, with God and with the environment. As such, our response is holistic, while confronting the systemic causes and consequences of marginalisation.

At the heart of our work is a commitment to people within communities who are often the most overlooked – widows, orphans, vulnerable individuals, and women and young people living in rural and/or economically disadvantaged areas. Many individuals and communities face barriers to accessing resources and opportunities, limiting their ability to lead safe, dignified and fulfilling lives.

We use an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach to unlock local potential. Rather than imposing external solutions, we help communities

recognise, value and build on their existing strengths. This model fosters self-sufficiency, replaces dependency with dignity and ensures that solutions are driven and sustained by local people. The result is not just transformed lives, but communities strengthened from within, capable of sustaining change long into the future.

In 2024, we continued to address the root drivers of poverty and exclusion, such as illiteracy, gender inequality, food insecurity and limited access to economic opportunities. In doing so, we made a meaningful contribution to global priorities, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This annual review is a summary of the year's impact: a testament to the power of grassroots-led transformation, and a demonstration of what is possible when faith, compassion, and action come together. We hope this evidence inspires your continued support and partnership in our shared mission to bring about lasting, hope-filled change.



Our worldwide impact in 2024

In 2024, Mothers' Union supported **over 2.7 million** people of which MU directly supported **over 481,391** people

We estimate that this has led to **over 2 million** people being indirectly supported by our work



Our Worldwide Parenting Programme has **75 groups** run by **97 facilitators** with **3570 participants**



Our members facilitate **1415 literacy circles** and savings groups, amounting in **28,313 beneficiaries**



We have **1220 participants** in Madagascar undertaking **community resilience** training to improve resilience for future disasters



In 2024, **2174 adults and children** were able to go on an **AFIA holiday** or away day



We work in **36 prisons**, in Britain and Ireland, spanning across **24 dioceses**



In 2024, we awarded **195 bronze RISE UP awards**, **16 silver** and **8 gold**. A total of 190 churches have supported this work in raising critical awareness and taking action against domestic abuse, in every form



Ending Violence: building stronger, safer communities

At Mothers' Union, we believe every person has the right to live in safety, free from violence, fear and harm. Across our global movement, we work tirelessly to end violence in all its forms – especially gender-based and domestic violence. We promote peace by fostering healthy relationships within families and communities, support survivors and challenge harmful cultural norms. From community education and advocacy to practical support and safe spaces, our members are at the heart of this mission. Empowered by faith and compassion, we walk alongside individuals and families, helping to build stronger, safer communities where dignity and respect prevail.

UK Prison work: Compassion in difficult times



For decades, Mothers' Union members across the UK have compassionately worked within UK prisons and prayerfully supported them from outside the prison walls. We work in around 36 prisons, supporting families affected by imprisonment. This work varies depending on the diocese and includes supporting the chaplaincy, offering hospitality in the visitor centres and, in some cases, providing a play area for children.

Some dioceses also run parenting groups and relationship courses for those in prison including delivering the Being Dad course, support prisoners to write letters to family members and give provisions, such as nappies, to women's prisons. We even have a branch of Mothers' Union in a prison!

We support the creative endeavours and wellbeing of prisoners by running craft workshops. At Christmas time, many MU branches will support the Angel Tree project (helping parents in prison provide gifts for their children at Christmas time), in partnership with Prison Fellowship. We also estimate that every year members write approximately 10,000 Christmas cards to prisoners ensuring they do not feel alone.

Mothers' Union continues to be one of the proud sponsors of Prisons Week, which has been running for over 40 years.





Ending Injustice: speaking truth to power

Mothers' Union is committed to challenging the deep-rooted injustices that prevent individuals, particularly women and girls, from reaching their full potential. Our work focuses on promoting gender equality, advocating for human rights and addressing systemic inequalities that fuel discrimination and marginalisation. Our members stand at the forefront of change: campaigning for access to education, amplifying the voices of people who are not being heard and equipping communities to challenge harmful practices. Guided by faith and grounded in dignity, we strive to create a world where justice is not a privilege, but a right shared by all.



Gender equality to empower all women and girls

Mothers' Union empowers women to achieve gender equality through literacy and awareness of their rights, which leads to improved income, financial independence and confidence. In 2024, Mothers' Union contributed to the empowerment of women and girls and the prevention of gender-based violence (GBV) through education, leadership development, trauma recovery, and community and faith-based approaches to challenge and shift harmful gender norms. This included work on advocacy, gender dialogue, and building safe spaces in communities.



Mothers' Union Annual Review 2024

Challenging gender-based violence in Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan



In the Democratic Republic of Congo, women in Kindu, Kamango, Butembo and Beni used their literacy and leadership skills gained from Mothers' Union programmes to stand for local elections, join school boards and lead citizens' committees. Many women became gender champions, trained to identify and prevent gender-based violence (GBV), while challenging menstruation taboos, early marriage and domestic violence. MU groups supported survivors in seeking justice, including successful mobilisations against property destruction and sexual violence, often working with churches and local authorities. Participatory Bible study, integrated into savings group meetings, was a key tool used to explore issues of equality, dignity and agency, empowering women both spiritually and socially.

In South Sudan, 33 women who began in literacy circles became community and church leaders in 2024. 144 facilitators and leaders were trained

in safety and inclusion, and 48 now deliver GBV prevention and rights education through literacy sessions, reaching hundreds of people within their communities. Post-training, 65% of participants showed increased awareness of gender equality and shared decision-making.

We've been encouraged by male participation. In Juba, four gender dialogue groups included male allies and survivors, with participants sharing stories of personal change and renewed family relationships.

These locally led initiatives not only transform individual lives. They also shift harmful norms, enabling women to move from silence to leadership. In areas where GBV is normalised, MU empowers women and men to recognise, prevent and report abuse. As literacy and confidence grow, so does their influence in their homes, wider family, communities, and local politics.

Impact

BEFORE

Women excluded from decisions at home and in community

GBV normalised and rarely reported or addressed

Women unaware of rights or legal protection options

Men dominate leadership and reject gender equality

Taboos prevent dialogue on GBV or early marriage survivors isolated and perpetrators unpunished

AFTER

Women made decisions, lead meetings, vote, hold public roles

Communities trained in GBV prevention

Women pursue justice through community action/protection

Men trained in positive masculinity advocates of gender quality

Safe space, open discussions, challenged harmful norms
Community-led survivor protection networks



Preventing early marriage – Martha's story

(Juba Diocese)



"I had my daughter and planned to educate her, but my husband wanted my daughter to marry – but she was too young for marriage. I talked to him about the dangers of early marriage, but he did not respond because of the culture surrounding us. I used the knowledge gained from the programme to fight for the rights of daughter and she is now at school but not married. I encourage all other women and men out there to join the program so that they will benefit in advocating for the rights of their children at home. I was blind before the program because I did not go to school but the program has empowered me to send my children to school."

Mothers' Union Annual Review 2024



Equality means access to good healthcare and wellbeing

In 2024, Mothers' Union promoted holistic health and wellbeing through community-led initiatives that addressed trauma, mental health, gender-based violence (GBV), menstrual hygiene and physical activity.

In Myanmar, trauma therapy-awareness courses supported psychological healing in conflict-affected communities through faith-based group dialogue. In South Sudan, trauma healing was embedded in literacy circles, leading to the creation of local peer support groups in Munuki, Sherikat and Juba.

In Kenya, MU members in the Diocese of Butere trained over 70 church and community leaders in mental health awareness, helping to reduce stigma and strengthen support systems. In Uganda, MU partnered with Wabusana Health Centre (Luwero Diocese) to promote maternal and child health, with a focus on preventing mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV.

To address period poverty, MU distributed reusable sanitary pads to over 150 girls in South Africa (Paarl Archdeaconry) and Ghana (Accra), enabling them to stay in school with confidence and dignity.

In Rwanda, sports and wellbeing activities were introduced into savings groups across multiple dioceses. Over 200 women in the Diocese of Gahini now participate in regular group exercise, building physical and emotional resilience.

Our approach to health is holistic, integrating physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. While we do not provide direct health services, we empower communities to take ownership of their health, offer support through referrals where needed and strengthen wellbeing through local leadership, prayer and practical tools.





Ending Poverty – breaking cycles of poverty and building a future where everyone has the opportunity to thrive

At Mothers' Union, we believe that poverty is not inevitable and that lasting change begins within communities. In 2024, our members supported families globally through practical, locally led programmes focused on economic empowerment, education, and resilience.

Central to our strategy are two powerful, community-led self-help tools: Adult Literacy Circles and Savings Groups. These initiatives go beyond immediate relief – they equip individuals with the knowledge, confidence and resources needed to take control of their own futures. Literacy Circles provide not only education but also a space for connection, dialogue, and personal growth. Savings Groups foster financial resilience, enabling members, particularly women, to invest in small businesses, support their families and build long-term stability within their communities and for themselves. These outcomes are more than numbers – they represent lives transformed through opportunity, dignity, and hope. Rooted in faith and compassion, our work equips communities to break cycles of poverty and create a future where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Literacy Circles



MU's adult literacy circles enabled women and men to read, write and participate meaningfully in both domestic and public life. In South Sudan, 702 adults (574 women and 128 men) participated in 24 literacy circles, while in the Diocese of Gahini, Rwanda, 57 learners took part in structured adult literacy sessions using participatory learning methods.

Literacy learning often leads to vocational training and micro-enterprise development. In Rwanda, MU-supported savings group members started 81 new small businesses, including tailoring workshops, body oil production and soap-making initiatives. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and the Solomon Islands, literacy was linked to agriculture, animal husbandry and small business planning, creating pathways to sustainable income generation.

MU also promoted literacy for parenting and role modelling, empowering previously illiterate mothers to help their children with schoolwork, monitor progress and interact confidently with teachers. These changes were transformative at family and community level.

Many literacy graduates go on to leadership roles in churches, schools and civic life. MU with the help of an external consultant undertook research tracking the pathways of illiterate women into leadership roles in Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan. The study interviewed over 100 literacy circle graduates across the three countries who are now active local leaders – a testament to the transformative power of education when it is rooted in local communities.

In Uganda, MU supported school feeding initiatives to help vulnerable children stay in school and thrive academically. In the Diocese of Mityana, MU members provided daily porridge, which significantly improved attention and attendance. Parents were more motivated to keep their children in school when meals were provided – often prepared by MU volunteers using local produce, supporting both education and local livelihoods.





Savings Groups

Impact

BEFORE

- Women lack access to funds
- Household income is unstable, families are vulnerable
- Women exploited by traditional lenders & struggle with debt
- Families are trapped in poverty
- Jobless illiterate women struggle to meet basic needs
- High rate of failure of small businesses



AFTER

- Women from savings groups and make micro-loans for businesses
- Women make income and gain financial independence
- New community members join MU's savings groups
- Children fed and educated and community economic resilience improves
- Women gain livelihood skills, start businesses and make income
- Women learn to manage accounts and sustainable businesses

In 2024, Mothers' Union supported over 415 active savings groups in Tanzania alone, engaging 9,347 members, of whom 86% are women. These groups held over £668,703 in savings and issued more than 6,600 active loans, empowering women to fund microenterprises, cope with emergencies and reduce reliance on exploitative money lenders.

In Rwanda, groups such as Abishyizehamwe and Duhinduke in the dioceses of Gahini and Butare collectively saved hundreds of thousands of Rwandan Francs and created at least 30 new businesses across 10 documented groups. This led to increased financial independence and stability.

Income-generating and vocational training programmes helped women to achieve economic independence thanks to tailoring, vegetable production for sale, flower farms, sweater-knitting and animal breeding enterprises.

MU embedded budgeting, record-keeping and pricing strategies into its literacy and savings programmes. In Myanmar, MU delivered generosity courses and business orientation courses and established self-reliant savings institutions despite the ongoing political crisis. In Uganda (Diocese of Luwero), MU worked with FIDA Uganda to educate women on property and financial rights, building the legal foundation for economic empowerment.



Agatha's Story

Agatha Richard once relied entirely on her husband's income. A 39-year-old mother of three from the Diocese of Mara, in Tanzania, Agatha joined the MU group in Pamoja. She took a loan of 600,000 Tsh (around 170 GBP) to start a small restaurant selling chips (Tanzanian food deep-fried potato slices, similar to French fries), tea, and beef soup. The most significant change in Agatha's life has been her newfound financial independence, which has allowed her to provide for her children's education. She now contributes towards their school lunch, pays the school guard fee and buys scholastic materials. Agatha's business is growing to the point where she's hired an assistant. Her story is a powerful testament to the impact of financial empowerment, showing other women in the community how self-sufficiency can lead to meaningful life changes.



Providing Sustainable Futures through Farming

In 2024/2025, Mothers' Union programmes in countries such as Uganda and South Africa strengthened food security, agricultural resilience and nutrition awareness. Our work helped improve household diets, reduce child malnutrition and promote sustainable, income-generating farming practices.

Programmes included home gardens, kitchen demonstrations and training in climate-resilient farming and nutrition. These initiatives, especially focused on women, equipped households with the tools to grow food, diversify diets and build more self-reliant communities.

In Uganda (Diocese of Luwero), women were trained in urban farming and vegetable cultivation, establishing household food sources and improving family nutrition. In the Diocese of North West Ankole, communities were educated on nutrition and better dietary practices.

In South Africa, MU established community food gardens in the Diocese of Zululand, addressing poverty and promoting self-employment. In Molopo Archdeaconry (Diocese of Kimberley & Kuruman), members run a weekly soup kitchen, serving 65 vulnerable people every Friday.

In Rwanda, MU-supported groups in the Diocese of Gahini harvested over 1,600 kg of green beans, boosting both nutrition and income. Women's groups in Karongi and Gasabo maintained shared vegetable plots, supporting food security in the midst of drought. In Mwogo and Birenga parishes, kitchen demonstration sessions empowered women to prepare balanced meals with local ingredients. In Birenga alone, 29 cases of child malnutrition were reversed in just three months.

Across these communities and others, Mothers' Union continues to create sustainable change – feeding families, empowering women, and lighting the way to food security and dignity.



Facilitator's Story

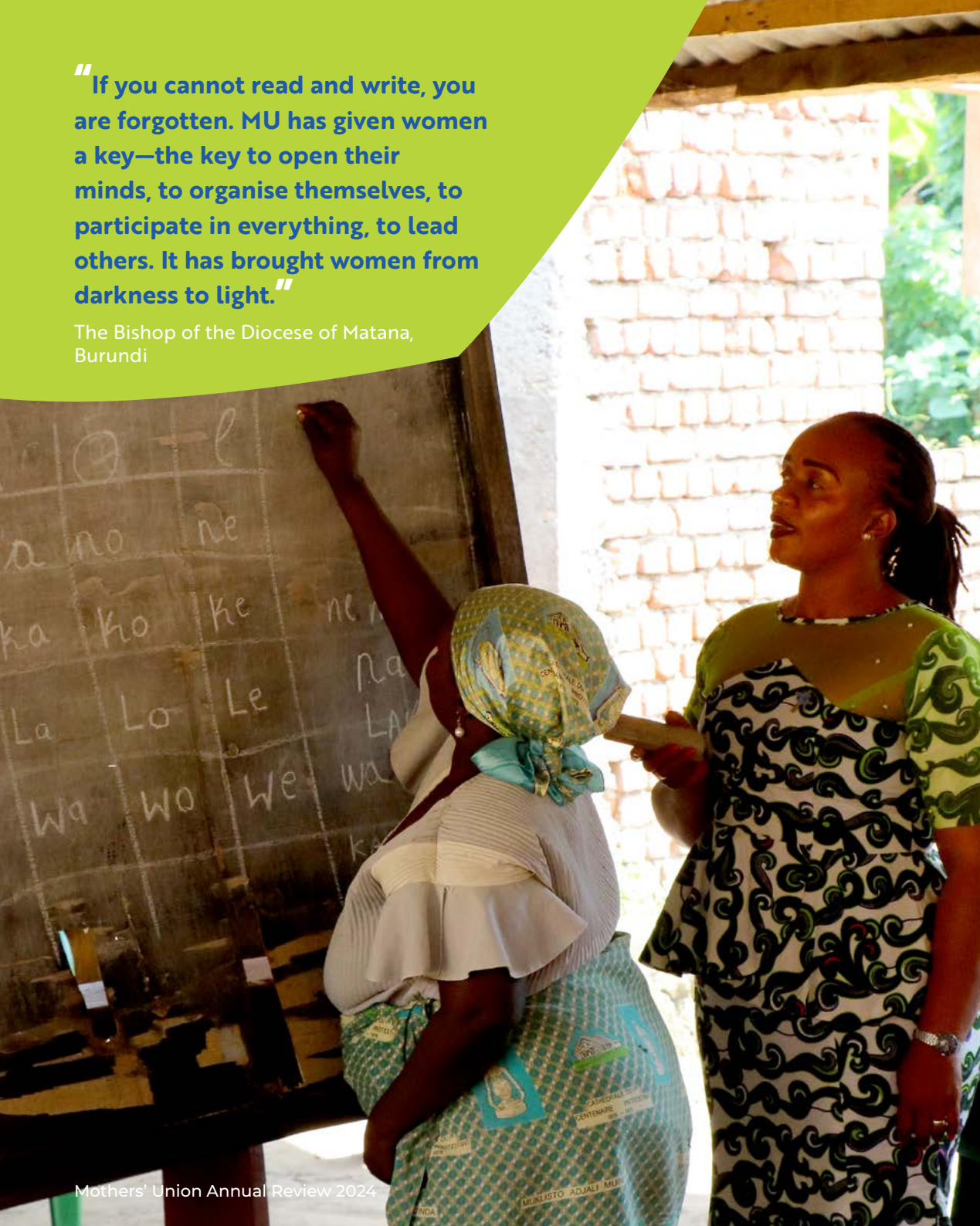
"Many children in Mwogo parish don't get enough food and are malnourished. To help, we've started a kitchen demonstration programme to teach moms how to make healthy meals with the food they have. Many women don't know what a healthy meal is and think it's just meat, fish, and eggs, which can be expensive. We're showing them that eating vegetables is important. Often overlooked, vegetables are crucial for their children's growth and their health. We've had sessions where we cook meals and feed the children. We hope that by the end of the programme, women will understand why balanced meals are important and will be able to make them for their families. Once everyone knows how to eat well, malnutrition won't be a problem anymore, and all the children will be healthy."

(Kitchen demo facilitator, Mwogo Parish, Diocese of Kigali, Rwanda)



"If you cannot read and write, you are forgotten. MU has given women a key—the key to open their minds, to organise themselves, to participate in everything, to lead others. It has brought women from darkness to light."

The Bishop of the Diocese of Matana,
Burundi



Campaigning

Empower Her Literacy Campaign

On International Literacy Day (8 September), Mothers' Union launched the Empower Her Literacy campaign to raise awareness of the critical issue of female illiteracy, which affects 480 million women worldwide. This initiative calls on global leaders, including the UK government, to prioritise women's education alongside girls' education in their international strategies.

While the UK government's International Women and Girls Strategy emphasised girls' education, it overlooked the needs of adult women who missed out on vital schooling because of financial constraints, conflict or societal barriers. Mothers' Union is campaigning for women's education to be placed firmly on the global agenda, ensuring that no woman is left behind, regardless of age.

Through this campaign, Mothers' Union called on global leaders to prioritise women's education as a key development issue. Supporters were invited to sign the campaign at www.mothersunion.org/empowerher, adding their voices to a growing movement demanding change.

New campaign materials, including a video and promotional assets, were distributed to MU members through our magazine Connected, alongside posters and resources to support local engagement. To strengthen our advocacy, Mothers' Union joined Bond, the UK's network for international development organisations. This positioned MU within a wider policy community, allowing us to adapt our strategy accordingly and lobby senior politicians ahead of the UK general election.

Throughout the year, we continued to strengthen our global policy framework around women's literacy, developing our communications messaging and building the evidence base to support long-term advocacy.

Women's literacy breaks the cycle of poverty, reduces child mortality, and empowers women to become leaders in their communities. Mothers' Union remains committed to advocating for women's education as a powerful tool for social change.



International Women's Day, every day

At Mothers' Union, International Women's Day is more than a date – it reflects our ongoing, year-round commitment to empowering women. As a global, women-led movement, we champion positive change in homes, churches and communities worldwide.

Since 1876, we've supported women to drive meaningful change. As shown in this report, our literacy programme has transformed women's lives. Beyond reading and writing, participants can now afford health insurance, women report increased income, and over 90% of participants have reported improved self-esteem.

In Britain and Ireland, we run RISE UP, our campaign against domestic abuse. From protest marches in York to cathedral exhibitions like The Souls of Our Shoes, members stand in solidarity with survivors, raising awareness and inspiring action (see next page for more information).

Across the globe, we also continue vital grassroots work, from menstrual health support in refugee camps to microfinance in Rwanda and hospital visits in rural communities.

Together, we work daily toward a world where gender equality is realised, women's rights are protected, and no woman or child is left behind.



RISE UP

2024 saw the second year of our RISE UP Against Domestic Abuse – our campaign to raise awareness about domestic abuse across churches and communities in Britain and Ireland. The letters of RISE UP stand for Respond, Inform, Support, Empower, Unite and Pray.

In 2024, we provided additional resources to support members taking part in the campaign. We have bronze, silver and gold awards for branches and churches that are involved and complete various actions, as we work together to raise critical awareness and take action against domestic abuse, in every form.

In February 2024, we held a fringe event at the Church of England General Synod to engage with all levels of leadership on this key issue and to show how we can unite to raise awareness and reduce incidents of domestic abuse in our communities. Mothers' Union then Worldwide President, Sheran Harper, welcomed guests and explained why this initiative is so essential.

The goal of the campaign is that Mothers' Union members and churches work together to be a part of the change.

A Bold Response to a Hidden Crisis

Mothers' Union in the Diocese of Liverpool held a remarkable and creative event that combined compassion, awareness, and community action - all in support of the RISE UP campaign

The event, affectionally nicknamed 'Knicker Night', responded to an urgent request from Wigan Women's Aid for new underwear for women arriving at refuges with no personal belongings. In just one evening, attendees donated 238 pairs of knickers and 17 handbags filled with toiletries, with ongoing donations of clothing, bedding, and essentials continuing from MU members and churches.

The event welcomed 26 MU members and 11 guests, with two new members joining as a result. It featured prayers for survivors, a domestic abuse awareness quiz, and guest speakers, including the CEO of DIAS Domestic Abuse Centre and local councillor Jenny Bullen.

This event is a powerful example of MU's grassroots response to complex issues - blending prayer, practical support, and public awareness to make a lasting impact in the community.



UNCSW

Global delegates from Mothers' Union, including CEO Canon Bev Jullien, attended the UN Commission on the Status of Women (UN CSW) in March in New York, where we worked closely with the Anglican Communion delegation. Our advocacy focus was on adults in female literacy programmes, as being rooted in local communities, and able to facilitate change at grassroots level (and the importance of engagement with faith-based organisations). Our delegates also built relationships with key UK civil servants. Mathilde Nkwirikiye, former Provincial President of Burundi and Sarah Pidgeon, Provincial President of New Zealand/Aotearoa, were speakers at side events.

In 2024 we also submitted our quadrennial report, which showed everything MU had been involved in influencing over the last 4 years, to retain our consultative status at the UN –something that continues to give us a great sense of pride.



16 Days of Activism

From 25 November to 10 December 2024, Mothers' Union once again took part in the global 16 Days of Activism campaign, joining over 6,000 organisations across 185 countries to call for an end to gender-based violence.

The 2024 Global Day of Action on Saturday 30 November, focused attention on the urgent need to bring abuse - often hidden behind closed doors - into the open. MU members responded with compassion and action, delivering grassroots support across Britain and Ireland.

Highlights included:

- Supplying toiletries and essentials to local refuges
- Hosting awareness workshops in schools and prisons
- Offering 'Away From It All' holidays to help survivors' families heal
- Partnering with churches and domestic abuse services to promote community education

Mothers' Union's involvement in the 2024 campaign demonstrates the strength of faith-led activism, offering hope, support, and real change in the face of one of the world's most persistent human rights challenges



Membership in Britain and Ireland

Reaching out to Diaspora Communities



2024 saw the launch of an engagement project to connect and engage diaspora communities across Britain & Ireland, encouraging their involvement in MU as part of a pilot project.

These diaspora communities include those with roots in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, and other regions, residing in Britain & Ireland. We started this project with the Ghanaian Community, with the support of Wilhelmina Graves, the National Vice President of Mothers' Union (MU) in the Province of Ghana.

This engagement marks the beginning of a pilot programme aimed at increasing MU membership among the diaspora communities in the UK. If successful, this model could potentially be expanded to other diaspora communities with strong ties to the Mothers' Union movement. Excitingly, in 2024, we obtained 22 leads with five new members successfully signing up, four as central members and one at the branch level.

Safeguarding



Mothers' Union is committed to ensuring the wellbeing of all children, families and adults with whom we work. It's also imperative that we keep ourselves safe. We have a robust policy and procedure, which provides a framework and guidance to enable a safe and secure working environment. We want everyone to thrive and benefit from our programmes and activities.

We work with some of the most vulnerable children and adults in Britain, and we take our responsibility seriously. Therefore, in 2024, we moved from accessing support from an external expert to employing a Safeguarding Manager to oversee this essential aspect. Core Safeguarding training continued to be rolled out across the organisation to members and staff. We have also delivered tailored training for specific programmes in which Mothers' Union is engaged, including AFIA.

This approach to safeguarding is also applied to our work globally, where we partner with an external consultant and liaise closely with the Church in each country to develop and implement contextually appropriate policies and procedures in our work.

Responding to Local Need



Mothers' Union in the Diocese of Chelmsford identified a growing need in the local community: many women, particularly those from refugee and migrant backgrounds, were facing daily barriers due to limited English language skills. Isolation, lack of confidence, and challenges navigating everyday life were common experiences.

In response, they launched English for Women – a project designed to offer practical support in a safe, welcoming, and culturally sensitive environment. The initiative began with just three Afghan women attending the first session, led by MU member Heike Prentice, then an Ordinand at Chelmsford Cathedral. From these humble beginnings, the project has grown into a dynamic, community-embedded programme making a real and lasting difference.

English for Women offers free, volunteer-led sessions where women with little or no English can improve their language skills at their own pace. The sessions are topic-based, allowing flexible attendance, and are held in a supportive, non-judgmental environment.

Importantly, the sessions also serve as a place for social connection, helping women to make friends, learn about British culture, and build confidence to participate more fully in community life. A play area is provided for pre-school children, ensuring the sessions are accessible to mothers and carers.

Recognising that language barriers also affect men in the community, MU Chelmsford recently launched English for All as a pilot project. This new strand of the programme welcomes both men and women and is supported by a team of male and female volunteers. It builds on the same principles of hospitality, inclusivity, and empowerment that define English for Women.



AFIA – Away from it All holidays in Britain and Ireland

AFIA continues to be a much-loved scheme, primarily funded by our members, to give the opportunity of a break to those who may be experiencing stress or difficulties in their family life.

On average, we help 2,500 people to have a holiday or a break each year. Families can spend time together away from their stressful situations at home, engage in activities together and have fun. They often experience healing in their relationships by spending quality time together.



Fundraising



Appeals

We continue to run three annual appeals.



Our flagship Make a Mother's Day appeal focuses on ethical gifts supporting a range of MU projects across the globe. This continues to gain support outside of our membership.



Our Summer of Hope campaign primarily calls on MU members to run bake sales, jumble sales and sponsored physical challenges, alongside donations. The 2024 summer appeal focused on literacy and numeracy work in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).



Lastly, our 2024 Christmas appeal focused on Burundi. Once again, we were grateful to have had donations doubled through the Big Give Christmas Challenge.



We want to thank our members and supporters for their generous gifts. You have helped these projects yield amazing fruits for the communities and the churches with whom we partner.

Meet our amazing member, Pam

In a powerful act of dedication and storytelling, Pam Brooks marked her 90th birthday by walking 90 miles over 12 days along the Sussex coastline to raise funds for Mothers' Union's Literacy and Financial Education programme in Burundi. Pam's deep connection to Burundi spans decades, having lived and worked there from 1957 to 1979 and returning annually until 2014.

Her inspiring journey garnered wide attention, with BBC Southeast covering the story and helping us reach over 100,000 people online. Pam walked in memory of her friend, Pelagie Simbinuba, a respected and long serving Mothers' Union Coordinator in Burundi. Her efforts raised over £16,000 – funds to help transform lives through literacy and education. Her story is a standout example of how meaningful supporter-led action and strategic digital storytelling can work together to deepen engagement and impact.



Finances

2024 saw another set of broadly positive financial outcomes achieved in the face of a highly challenging operational environment for the charity sector.

Total Income in the period grew to £3.12 million (2023: £3.03m). At the same time total expenditure increased to £2.88M (2023: £2.79M). This resulted in a consolidated operational surplus of £237k and overall surplus inclusive of investment gains of £301k, with the surplus arising wholly in restricted funds and a deficit arising on unrestricted funds.

Growth in income and expenditure are now becoming clear trends visible over multiple periods, however, both remain below pre-covid norms.

The budget for 2024 had assumed an overall deficit across both restricted and unrestricted funds. Several factors influenced the actual outcome in 2024 but most prominent amongst these was the need to delay planned restricted fund expenditure on a number of projects owing to local challenges.

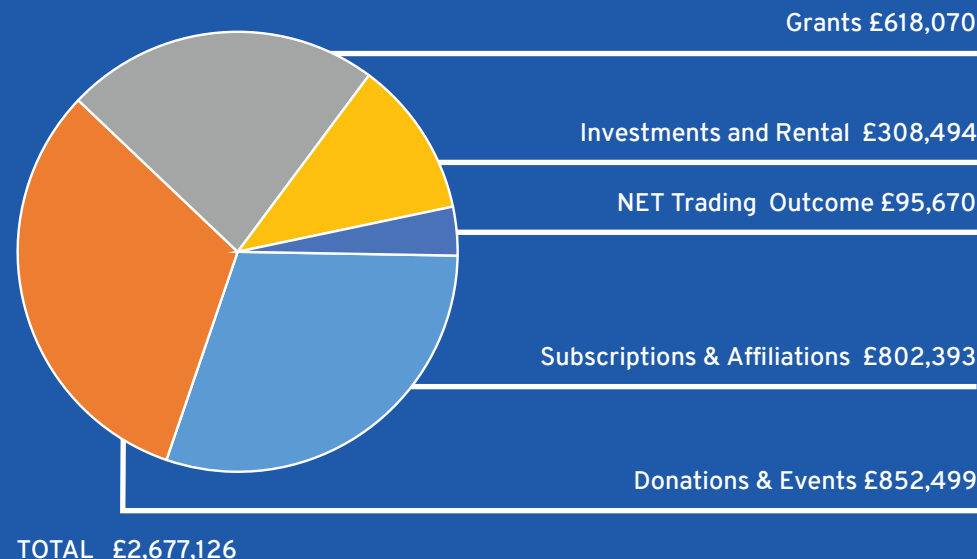
Income from the period failed to meet budgeted expectations, reflecting sector wide challenges in the main. Expenditure plans were amended slightly to reflect the income reality but most expenditure was able to proceed as budgeted, with restricted fund project expenditure, and general staff costs being the main exceptions.

The analysis of expenditure in the accounts has been updated to better reflect the strategic plan put in place by the Board and membership. This is replicated in the figures presented in this review and will be the new norm going forward.

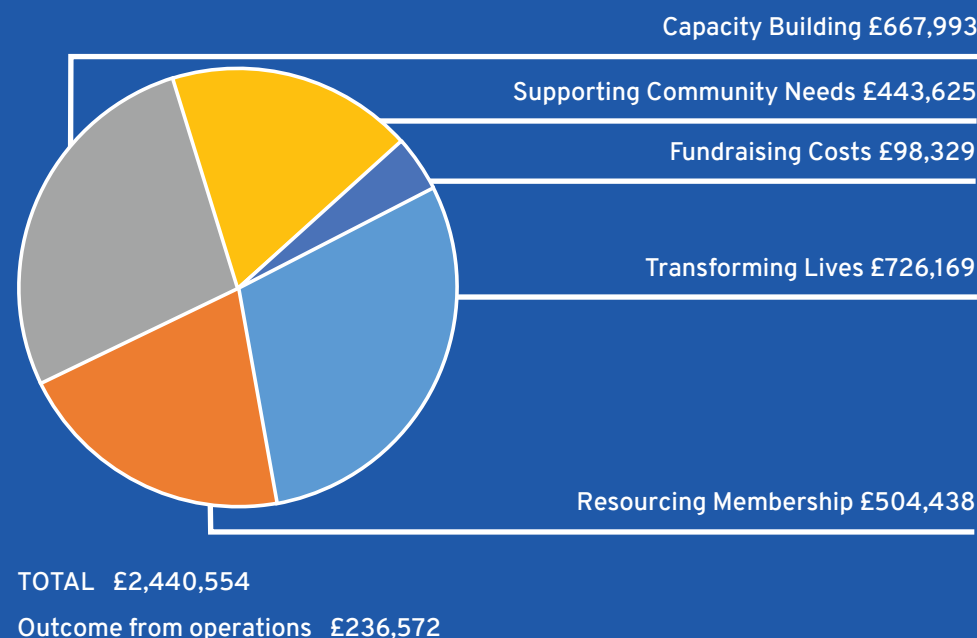
Despite income shortfalls this period, and significant operational challenges faced, we were able to successfully move towards delivery a new CRM solution for the movement by early 2025, whilst growing general operations, all whilst maintaining financial stability.

Achieving these ends has resulted in free reserves falling slightly below their target level at 31 December 2024, and further declines can be expected in 2025 as investments in fundraising and software have continued and preparations for exciting events and initiatives to mark the 150th anniversary have begun. The ongoing support of the membership therefore remains absolutely key, particularly as we press through this period of significant operational and infrastructure investments, which are ultimately intended to help drive long run sustainability and secure an exciting future for the Movement.

INCOME



EXPENDITURE



A photograph of a smiling woman with short dark hair, wearing a green and white patterned top, carrying a baby in a white cloth sling. The background is blurred.

Literacy programme

"I was an orphan, so I don't know my age. My parents died when I was little. Before the literacy programme, I was in darkness. Now I'm in [the] light. I didn't know how to write even 0. Now I know how to write numbers. I used to have to get someone to show me my name. Now I can find my own name. Being literate, I'm feeling better, and now I'm able to help push forward. My vision is to be a leader in the church and to join the MU savings group. I want to go far."

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