



July Newsletter

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Group from Diocese of Linz, Vienna, Austria.

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Dear Partners, Supporters, Family and Friends,

In July I spent a couple of weeks in Ireland for a break and to catch up with family and supporters. I was delighted to meet Mary B. Killeen, a former volunteer who visited us three times over the years along with her husband and some of her family members, Dara and Beatriz and their beautiful children, in Meelich. They showed me great kindness and hospitality and Mary took me to see my cousin another Mary B. Killeen, who is in a nursing home. Mary then delivered me to Carlow where I was hosted by Catherine and John Nolan and met the generous group of friends who support Catherine in her work for the boys in the Rehabilitation Centre. I also met Vera Smith there who joins Catherine and others supporting the boys.

I was fortunate to meet with John and Ciara McCarrick and their children Con and Saidhbh, and Gerard and Helen Kelly who were the core group fundraising for the splendid new Songa Mbele na Masomo Children's Centre building. I also met John O'Shea who passed the plot on to us when he was the Director of Goal and has the satisfaction of seeing it used for the development of children with disabilities from Mukuru slums.



It was sad for me to visit Calary Church and miss John Medlycott, who had died shortly before. I was delighted to meet Elinor, Lucy, Tom and other members of the Medlycott family. What a loss for them and with little preparation, as he was active until shortly before he died. I was informed by many of the great regard people from all walks of life had for John. Claire Chambers hosted me and took me around the area. I appreciated attending the service with the congregation and Reverend Ross Styles. They have prayed for and supported us in Mukuru for many years.

I managed to visit Paula Cullen and her family. I'm looking forward to hosting Paula and her group soon in Mukuru. It was also great to catch up with former volunteers from Derry. I had the pleasure of meeting Moira and John Burns as well. On top of that, I got to see my sister Katherine Killeen, who lives in Vancouver, after a long time. She appeared to be doing very well after a cancer scare. It was a joy to reconnect with my other siblings, though unfortunately, Patricia's husband is currently unwell. Lastly, I had the chance to meet many of my beloved cousins in Limerick and Tipperary.

It was great to meet again Sisters of Mercy, who worked with me in Kenya and those I have known over the years in Ireland. They looked after me very well in Mater Convent. It was a proud moment to witness the graduation of Stellah Mathe, our Sponsorship Officer and now a graduate Fellow of the Mercy Emerging Leaders program (MELF) in Dublin. Thank you to the Mercy International Association (MIA) which supports the Mercy Global Action (MGA) program under the directorship of Sr Angela Reed. The program provides the opportunity for women to experience networking across the Mercy World, to stimulate creative and critical thinking, and promote collaborative leadership as well as personal reflection leading to a compassionate and communal response to current concerns of our world.

I found Cora Allen, a former volunteer waiting for me in the airport in Nairobi on the night of my return. Cora spent two weeks in Kenya with her two children Chrissie and Joni and her niece. What a lot of memories we had of life over 20 years ago and remembrance of other volunteers like John and Moira Burns, Uve, Tony Newman, Paul and Daniela among others.

Soon after my return one of our pupils sadly burned in a fire in Kayaaba village. I was back to some of the realities of life in the informal sector and the numbers of residents looking for employment, who have no income if they have no work. I also had good news from Sr Deirdre Mullen and her group, sponsoring a number of girls with secondary education. That heartened me in the midst of sorrow. The many visitors and all of you who support us in one way or another help us along the journey of working with the marginalized.

Best wishes,

Sr Mary Killeen Director

Social and Health Services

Social Services

In the month of July, the Department was very busy with various activities taking place. One of the major

activities was providing nutritional support to hungry and needy students and families in the community. Other activities included mentorship sessions, psychosocial support, home assessments, safeguarding follow-ups, medical referrals, and home visits. The social offices of the MPC attended to clients in different capacities. The delivery of services was made possible by the immeasurable support from donors and partners who give tirelessly to ensure the people of Mukuru are well taken care of.



St Catherine Pupils Mentorship Session

Both the Amaranth and the malnourished babies' programs have been ongoing throughout July who need nutritional supplements. The neediest clients who need food and clothing aid have also been supported through the offices. With most of the families being unable to afford meals due to the huge hike in food prices and double-digit rates of unemployment, MPC continues to support families not only through basic needs support but also through empowerment programs for the sustainability of their livelihoods.



Clients from the community and students in our institutions of learning can receive psycho-social support from the Child Protection Office. In the current economic times, many people struggle to provide for their families and adjust, leading to child abuse. The Child Protection Office prioritizes child safety and provides counseling services, while schools offer mentorship programs to guide students in managing life issues. Students receive support and menstrual hygiene materials, and assessments and home visits are conducted to support the neediest students.

Social Workers Meeting

The Clinic recorded an increase in patients from MPC schools in July. Many complained of stomach infections and fever, likely due to the cholera outbreak. Our students' less hygienic environment leaves them exposed to the infections. The clinic's social worker follows up with patients in referral hospitals to ensure they get the necessary treatment and support, particularly those with terminal illnesses like cancer.



Home Follow-up



The month of July saw the registration of 1675 patients, 545 of which were new cases and 1,130 revisits. Female patients continue to outnumber their male counterparts at 62% and 38% respectively. The total number of under five years children seen at the facility is 493, with females at 56% compared to males at 44%, with new cases 145 and 348 revisits. Respiratory tract infections continue to dominate mostly due to the cold weather. Other ailments such as septicemia, urinary tract infections, gastritis, gastroenteritis and tonsilitis have also been rampant.

Economic hardships have led to an increase in the number of needy people in the slums. More waivers have therefore been witnessed this month at 327 which is approximately 20% of the total registration compared to the month of June at 272. Just under 45% of the Clinics' figures dealt with nutritional issues for babies.

Summary Statistics for July 2023										
Categories	0-5 Years	6-12 Years	13-17 Years	18-35 Years	36-49 Years	50-64 Years	Above 64 Years	Total		
Registrations	493	194	148	484	229	103	23	1,674		
Diseases Treated	361	187	141	438	219	95	22	1,463		
Clinics	210		5	90	1			306		
Laboratory Tests	82	85	93	292	131	42	14	740		



Dr Dominikah

The Clinic greatly appreciates well-wishers and volunteers. Dr Dominikah just concluded her 6-month placement from the University of St Elizabeth, Slovakia and donated some medical supplies as a farewell gift.

Dr Nina has volunteered her services twice a week for many years. Her contribution to patient care is well regarded.



Dr Patel, Sr Mary and Dr Nina



Dr Patel, Dr Sonal Patel and children from Florida donated surgical, laboratory and general-use items such as blood pressure monitors, surgical tapes, woven gauze, antibacterial flexible fabric, alcohol pads, pulse oximeter and disposable tourniquets.

Dr Patel and his family

Welfare Services

Rehabilitation Centre

The Centre receives many visitors in a month. Having local and international visitors helps the boys with their communication skills. On the academic side, most of the boys have continued to do well in their studies in July however, there are a few whose drop in performance has cause for concern. The Centre is working collaboratively with the teachers in the different schools to assist them with their homework and revision in the evening.



Year One class at the Centre



Diocese of Linz Group

One group from the Diocese of Linz visited the Centre and spent the time learning from the boys how to make arts and crafts items and painting. We are very grateful to Samuel the art instructor who coordinates the program. The group purchased a few carpentry items.



With confidence, the boys demonstrated their other skills. Mr Otto Koeglberger spent his time in the carpentry class and made a stool for himself.



Year One Class and Year Two Class with the Linz Group



Charles assists Mr. Otto in the carpentry workshop.



Safaricom Human Resource Department.

After a few false starts due to the political demonstrations in Nairobi, Safaricom's Human Resources Department managed to visit the Centre. They interacted well with the boys and would like to assist the Centre as part of their corporate social responsibility program.



The Economic Empowerment Project aims to empower the boy's parents to ensure a high probability of reintegration had the last two places completed. The program is sponsored by Trocaire and despite the difficult economic times the parent's businesses are doing well.



Risper Auma sells cool drinks

Catherine Atieno sells bread

The Centre is very grateful to individuals and groups such as Team Pankaj, Paula Cullen and Friends, Team Kaburu, Peter and Rebecca, Safaricom PLC, Pembe Millers, Mr Singh, and Bakers Corner, who remember the marginalised of Mukuru slum and assist in their well-being. Thank You.







Sponsorship Office

The Sponsorship Office is providing support to 444 sponsored students, with the majority being enrolled in secondary schools, followed by vocational training and primary. St. Michael's Secondary School has received sponsorship for 20 boys, which accounts for 43% of the school's enrolments. The program's steady income ensures security for the staff and good planning for the students.

A former Rehabilitation boy, Elisha Ochieng, who is sponsored by Clare Chambers needed shoes and revision books. Feeling part of a new school is important and the new books and school shoes will help boost Elisha's confidence and academic performance.



Elisha with his new items

It was a heartwarming moment when Felix Ouma, a former Rehabilitation boy, received a camera from his donor Catherine Nolan. It was truly a generous gift that will enable Felix to pursue his dream career in



photography and film. Knowing that he completed his sponsored film production course successfully, we are thrilled to see him use his camera to create amazing films and stories. We wish Felix all the best in his future endeavours and look forward to seeing more of his work and hearing about his continued success.

Sr Mary and Felix

Three women, Michelle Mwende, Jacinta Mbaika, and Beryl Atieno, who underwent counseling sessions after being released from prison, were given a small business package that included capital, equipment, and rent to start their own businesses. They started a salon, tailoring, and food kiosk, respectively, and have made impressive progress in their respective ventures with great determination.



Michelle Mwende receives salon equipment



Former Inmates Information Session

Noreen Walsh and friend Michael have taken up a noble initiative to help former inmates make positive choices and avoid returning to prison. When ex-prisoners are released they face numerous challenges while reintegrating into society. One of the biggest hurdles is finding gainful employment. To address this issue, MPC organized an information session where interested candidates could share their experiences, challenges, and aspirations. MPC is glad to be part of the initiative to ensure that everyone gets the help they need.

Songa Mbele na Masomo Children's Centre

It is heartening to see progress being made in all the Units last month. We're thrilled to share that Godsent Bwire in the Daycare has been able to reach for objects, say a few words and carry out his ADLS activities. We're also pleased to report that three other children who had difficulties communicating verbally are now making strides in their development. We applaud James Ombango, Silvester Mutuku and Eliud Ongaga and their parents for their unwavering dedication and hard work.



Godsent Bwire



Sylvester Mutuko



Eliud Oganga



James.



Pharell Ochieng



Fidel Otieno



Isaac in the Sensory Room doing sensory integration activities.

In Unit 3, Pharrell and Fidel made progress in their academics, language skills, and life skills. All children at the Centre have access to various therapies, with at least 55% attending 8 or more physiotherapy sessions and 62% attending 5 or more speech therapy sessions in July.

The Centre provides sensory integration activities to help improve concentration, eye-hand coordination, joint range, and relaxation, while also offering guidance and counselling sessions on Tuesdays for parents of children with disabilities. Additionally, the Centre referred 12 children to the MPC Clinic for medical treatment.

The Centre has been fortunate enough to receive generous donations of food provisions, hygiene materials, toys, and stationery from various kind-hearted well-wishers and donors. The harsh reality of the skyrocketing cost of living in Kenya has made survival a challenge, forcing many to make difficult decisions on what to spend their limited income on. We understand how tough this can be, and that's why we are grateful for the donations of maize flour, goat meat, milk, vegetables, bread, beans, and clothes. These donations will go a long way in providing much-needed relief to those struggling to make ends meet.



Some of the July donations

In July, Songa Mbele welcomed interns from the United States International University, Kenya University, and RAFA for their community placements. The interns provided exceptional service and ensured that the children received proper care. They assisted with daily classroom activities, outdoor games, and the feeding program. The team's dedication helped create a positive learning environment for the children.

The visitors were many and came from as far away as New Zealand, America and Austria. The visitors experienced elements of Kenya's culture and interacted with children. The local visitors were as near as St Veronica's Primary School, just up the road, to spend some time playing with the children.





Jolene and Baramowski from New Zealand

St. Veronica Primary School

Dr Patel and Family, USA

The social worker for Songa attended a training session for the upcoming Ring-a-Bell campaign, which promotes inclusivity for all children in schools. In addition, another training session from Aflatoun was held in July by the Cheshire Disability Service to educate children with disabilities on their rights and financial savings, empowering them with skills and knowledge. The Group from Linz also managed to spend some time at Songa Mbele as part of their overall visit to MPC.



Parishioners from Diocese of Linz, Austria group

Education Primary Schools

July has been a sad month as MPC primary schools have lost several pupils, one boy in a fire the other two to sickle cell anaemia and one girl from diabetes. Those are the underlying causes. Hunger, stress and pollution are the aggravating causes. We pray for their souls to rest in peace.

The level of hunger is reaching high proportions. The Child Welfare Society provided emergency food assistance. So far, the initiative has reached over 14 schools within Nairobi Metropolitan's informal settlement. Over 15,200 pupils in the schools within Nairobi have benefitted from the drive within the capital city. The Education Cabinet Secretary (Minister) met with Headteachers and pledged to secure additional partnerships and resources so that the children can access meals and stay in school. Without food, many children in food-insecure regions would be unable to attend or remain in school.







St. Elizabeth, Sancta Maria and St. Catherine's Primary Schools receive food from the Child Welfare Society

The County Government has been keen to increase pupil retention by conducting a pilot project "Dishi na County" that provides meals to school children. A few years ago, a similar pilot project was launched but did not last long. St Bakhita Primary School received 2 deliveries, one on Friday afternoon after school and the other on the weekend. MPC welcomes the County initiative however, charging families, monitoring fee



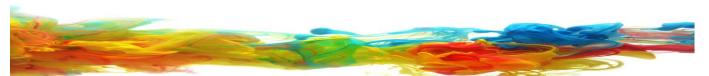
Pupils at St Elizabeth

collections, project duration and transportation creates more issues for MPC. Consistency must be a non-negotiable when there are over 6,000 children to feed each week. Team Pankaj has consistently provided good nutritional lunches to students at the MPC learning institutions which are

subsidized by MPC donors. We are grateful to donors who support the feeding program that does not penalise the families who can't afford to pay.



Dishi na County Food Barrels



The regional Primary School's Music Festival competition took place and St Catherine and St. Bakhita Primary Schools participated. However, they did not make it through to the national level but achieved second and third places. Another event was the Sub-County ball games. St. Bakhita boys and girls football teams managed to secure first position and proceeded to the regional level. One boy from the school football team was selected to represent the National team in the County and will be proceeding to Busia for 4 days for the Primary schools' National tournament.



Boys and girls football teams during the regional competitions

During July the Education Office hosted an Inter-congregational Safeguarding delegation to explore the partnership possibilities to create safer environments with the MPC primary schools in collaboration with BICE. The delegation visited Sancta Maria Primary School.



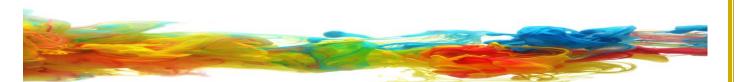
Delegation Team at Sancta Maria Primary School

The Kenyan Government has continuously made sure that competency-based curriculum (CBC) is fully



Grade 5 pupils' science practical (washing plastic containers)

implemented in schools. The pupils in Grades 3-6 must complete the mandatory practical assessments each term and teachers are to upload the results into the KNEC portal. For many of the parents in the slum, this is an extra heavy burden as the Government expects them to pay for all the materials. The Grade 7 pupils recently had a challenge as their practical assessment required the work to be completed using a computer but it failed because there was no computer laboratory that they could use. The lack of computer laboratories also affected the science projects in 3 MPC schools. Teachers had taken the pupils to another nearby school for the assessment.



The Catholic Archdiocese of Nairobi has for many years been organizing Catholic Education Day which brings together all Catholic-sponsored schools within the Archdiocese. Each year there is a theme that guides education activities, and this year's theme was "Catholic Education: formation of a united family, strong in faith, journeying together in spirit and truth". Five pupils in all MPC schools went to St. Joseph Githunguri School which hosted the event. St. Elizabeth and Sancta Maria Primary Schools received a trophy each, for having collected the most funds in the schools of their kind, towards sponsoring education for needy students. It certainly stirs the conscience of how people living in dire poverty can think that others might be worse off than them.

The demand for educational institutions is very high in Mukuru. The gap between supply and demand is on the rise. The Early Childhood Centres (ECDE) cannot meet the demand even though the County Government has requested that all pupils enrol. There has been a suggestion to stagger the enrolments but the infrastructure is simply not there.

The Junior Secondary School (JSS) enrolments have been minimized and school principals have enrolled all the students in the system awaiting Government verification of the new registrations. The extra JSS teachers have not yet been posted to the schools and still create the teacher/student ratio imbalances. The Headteachers are still lobbying the Government for more JSS and primary section teachers. Currently, MPC schools require another 16 teachers for JSS.

Junior Secondary School Enrolments								
Primary Schools	No. of students	No. of streams	No. of TSC Teachers	Deficit teachers				
St. Bakhita	157	3	3	4				
St. Catherine	174	3	4	4				
St. Elizabeth	366	5	4	4				
Sancta Maria Kayaaba	216	3	3	4				
Total	913			16				

The catechists from Our Lady Queen of Peace (OLQP), South B parish continue to provide catechism lessons to the schools. The program follows a holiday catechesis program (April, August & and December) and helps the candidates with more instructions. The celebration of Masses in MPC schools has been well supported by OLQP and St. Mary's Kwa Njenga parishes. We are grateful to all the priests and catechists of both parishes for supporting the faith formation needs of the schools.

St Michael's Secondary School

Traditionally, the second term is known as the business term of the academic year for students. With other distractions out of the way, students give extra focus to their studies and prepare for the mock examinations that will contribute to their overall grades and give a good indication of where they are at and what needs to improve. The mentorship program is a great help for students to maintain their academic attention and receive the necessary guidance. The overall secondary mid-term examination result averages were:

The best performance subjects were:

Form 1 - History and Government
Form 3 - Computer Studies
Form 4 - English and Geography.

It is clear to see that the humanities subjects are doing much better than the hard sciences. It is an issue that unfortunately impacts the student's overall grade. While there are individual students who are doing well, St Michael's is trying to inspire all the students to understand the importance of science subjects.

Life Skills Promoters (LISP) partnered with Child Fund Kenya and Child Line Kenya to implement the initiative funded by End Violence Against Children (EVAC) to provide professional development for teachers in schools. Teachers attended the 'Guidance and Counselling' workshop that focused on the growing concern about victimization and online abuse of children. The teachers learnt that there is a need for early intervention to prevent victimization by offering support and recovery.

St Michael's senior students visited the Catholic University of East Africa (CUEA) accompanied by Mr Tanui and Mr Musa. The students received a taste of what university life would be like when they toured the different schools such as Business, Education and Medicine. CUEA's Career Counsellor, Ms Mukami Chege, spoke on the different courses offered and the requirements for successful enrolment among other issues of interest.



Form 4 Students at CUEA



Velma's Burial

Being the first Thursday of the month, St Michael's celebrated Mass presided by Father Musiligwa from Tanzania. Father encouraged the students to be a blessing to others and to respect them. The homily carried poignancy as St Michael's lost a Form One student, Velma Achieng who died from diabetes. The burial was held in Bumula, Busia County and 5 students and 2 teachers represented St Michael's.

The Sisters of Mercy Education Office sponsored the Effective Communication Sessions by Kisii University lecturer, Magdelyne Njenga. The students had the opportunity through presentations and discussions to unpack the impact of good behavioural change, issues that affect students' academic performances. The students committed to show their appreciation through improved results.



St Michael's Secondary Students



The other event sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy Education Office was the Prayer Day held at the Resurrection Gardens, Karen. Teachers were led through sessions that highlighted God's giftedness to all. The day was facilitated by Br Martin and Br Bernard from the Divine Word Congregation. The day concluded with Mass and afternoon tea.

Brenda Stanley, Sr. Nancy and Immaculate Akinyi represented St. Michael's

The prevalence of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) appears to be on the increase and it is important to raise the students' awareness. During the month medical personnel from the Mater Misericordiae, Coptic, and St Catherine's hospitals collaborated with the County Government Officers and held a sensitization forum on domestic and sexual violence, human trafficking, forced marriages and the psychological trauma that results therefrom.



Coptic Hospital Presenter

An MPC Board member and St Michael's School mentor, Bob Paterson organized a donation team to reach out to the companies in the Industrial Area requesting various donations, corporate social responsibility events and internship opportunities. There was a great response by some businesses. By the end of the month St Michael's had received textbooks from Nova Industries and funds from Addison Industries and Ideal Industries. We are grateful to these companies and issue the challenge to other businesses in the area. Our students could be your future employees.



Nova Directors present their donated books.

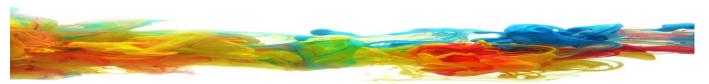


Students show some of the donated textbooks.

One of the biggest activities for July was the County Government's Sakaja Feeding Program. An initiative of Nairobi Governor, Johnson Sakaja the schools received donated cooked meals. There were logistical issues trying to distribute thousands of meals on a Friday afternoon. Students were given the food to take home to their families for the weekend. While it is a great initiative of the County Government, families are expected to contribute to the costs which makes it very difficult to monitor.



The personal development mentorship program continued in July with sessions on peer pressure and sex education. The social worker reported 3 teenage pregnancies in July at St Michael's. The Child Protection Officer and social worker carried out the necessary follow-up with authorities and the family.



Our Lady of Mercy Vocational Training Centre

The 254 students continued with their vocational training in July and interacted with overseas visitors. The Centre took possession of the new hairdressing, beauty and catering equipment sponsored by the Fidel Goetz Foundation.







Styling seats

Massage table

HydraFacial machine



Catering Equipment



Hairdressing equipment

The Centre hosted the Linz team for a day. The Team toured all the classes in action and saw first-hand their achievements and interacted with the students. The visitors were moved to hear the personal stories of some of the students and their struggles just to attend classes. They expressed how they felt empowered by and appreciated everything that MPC through the vocational training centre is doing for them. The sharing was reciprocated and both experienced the different cuisines, Austrian and Kenyan. Of course dessert was the favourite dish!



Linz Team with Special Needs Class



Linz Team with Front Office Class



Linz Team with Dressmaking Class



The MPC Art Gallery is a must-see when at the Centre. Visitors can see the wonderfully completed works of the students and if tempted, purchase some items to take home for presents. Mr Luggi Frauenberger who has been to Kenya many times was impressed with the art gallery.

Group Coordinator, Mr Luggi Frauenberger at the MPC Art Gallery

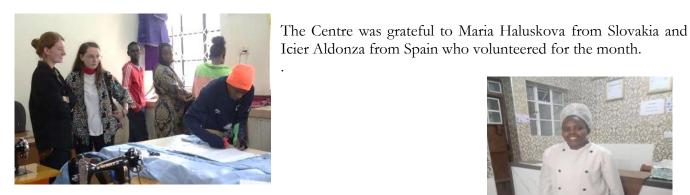
For greater well-being and a sense of fun, the Centre has established sports days. It is always good to keep fit while learning.







Students getting physical during sports day



A successful Catering graduate begins her work placement at the Limpopo Hotel in Nairobi. We wish Belinda the very best in her future.



Belinda Chemutai (Class of 2022)



There are many activities that continue throughout the month that are not reported but are very necessary to maintain the outreach services of MPC.

- MPC facilitated the mattresses donated by Mater Misericordiae Hospital to fire victims who had lost their belongings during the month.
- Representatives from the Inter-congregational Child Safeguarding Group Kenya (ICSGK), Br. Diego Munoz from The International Catholic Child Bureau (BICE), the Catholic Alliance from Italy visited MPC to better gauge its safeguarding policies and its successful applications.



Representatives from ICSGK and BICE

Nairobi daily newspapers are reporting extraordinary levels of corruption for people seeking services such as passports, identity cards, certificates of good conduct, marriage and birth certificates which are all guaranteed by the Constitution. One person applied for a driving license in January and still does not have one. A father applied for his son's passport earlier in the year to register for the International school's (IGCSE) exams. The passport never arrived and his son had to forgo the exams. Many businesses are closing each day. People are sharing beds in hospitals and schools are overcrowded and underfunded. One person asked, "When do our lives matter?" Life has become an arduous ordeal for citizens. For those living in the slums it's a hundred times worse.

MPC's Christmas Cards project, featuring the artwork of talented art students, was a success a few years ago. This year, we are thrilled to announce that we will be bringing it back to support the art program. To purchase a packet of unique cards, please email your order to Skills Coordinator, Loice at loiceao@mercymukuru.co.ke. The artwork will showcase the Christmas scenes through heritage, landscape, culture, and people. A packet will contain a mix of 10 prints and envelopes for €15. Each card will have a simple yet heartfelt Christmas verse inside. We look forward to your support for this wonderful cause.









Mukuru Promotion Centre

Empowerment Step By Step
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