

**trócaire**

# **YOUR LOVE IN ACTION**

News on how Trócaire supporters like you are conquering fear worldwide

Spring 2019

## **The Woman Who Spoke Truth to Power**

Remembering Sally O'Neill  
(RIP, pictured with Digna in 2011)  
through the good work you helped  
her make possible, page 2.

Photo: David Stephenson/Trócaire

**Voices from the Migrant Caravan, page 2**  
**Bringing Hope to A Forgotten Place, page 5**



**PLUS: Thank You for  
Lenten Welcomes!, page 6**  
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# FAREWELL SALLY O'NEILL (RIP): THE WOMAN WHO SPOKE TRUTH TO POWER

*On 7th April 2019, one of Ireland and Central America's foremost champions of human rights and social justice was lost, Sally O'Neill. Many of the names in the heartfelt tribute below will be familiar to you, for your support and Sally's work are forever intertwined. Over 37 years she embodied all it means to be part of Trócaire, making the most of your generosity to give voice to people pushed to society's edges, and to help them improve their lives...*

**T**he loss of Sally O'Neill in a road crash in Guatemala came days before what would have been her 69th birthday. She was, alongside incredible supporters like you and dedicated staff worldwide, the heartbeat of Trócaire. With a passion for justice that meant she often put herself at risk in defence of others, Sally was never afraid to speak truth to power. Although she retired from Trócaire in 2015, she still volunteered in her adopted home of Honduras to help people in need there.

## 1970s: The early days

She came from Dungannon in Co. Tyrone, and came on board in 1978, just five years after Trócaire formed. Within weeks bitter civil wars broke out in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. Her work during some of the most significant global humanitarian crises had begun, and she led delegations of politicians and bishops to Central America so they could see the suffering. Sally translated for then Archbishop Oscar Romero just six weeks before his murder.



*Never an ivory tower: Together with Irish Fiction Laureate Anne Enright, Sally shows Digna – the little girl on your 2011 Trócaire Box – and her family all about Trócaire and how supporters come to hear their stories, and help.  
Photo: David Stephenson/Trócaire*

## 80s and 90s: Working worldwide

In 1982, Sally and Michael D Higgins (then a TD) visited El Salvador to investigate reports of a massacre in the village of El Mozote. It was there they uncovered the tragic evidence, and their subsequent report was picked up by international media including

# VOICES FROM THE MIGRANT CARAVAN: "WE ARE FIGHTING FOR OUR FAMILIES"

*Fleeing countries plagued by instability, corruption, gangs, inequality, and some of the world's highest murder rates, thousands of families in Central America are making a gruelling journey on foot hoping to reach the USA. At the Guatemala-Mexico border they explain why they flee, and find relief in the aid you're providing through a Trócaire partner...*

**W**elcome to Central America's migrant caravans, with faces that number in the thousands. Taking only essential belongings, they have banded together for a punishing journey that could span over two thousand kilometres. "The situation in Honduras is difficult," explains Cintia. "We are almost running from where we left, with our children."

## World's deadliest cities

Behind them are cities rife with poverty and inequality where thanks to your support the late Sally O'Neill carried out so much of her fearless work to help the victims of human rights abuses (story, above). Tragically these areas also claim some of the world's highest murder rates. Gang shootouts see mothers and







*More than faces in a newscast: Always ready to help Trócaire hit the ground running, Sally assesses damage and need after Hurricane Mitch in 1998, the second deadliest Atlantic hurricane which caused over 7,000 fatalities in Honduras alone. Photo: Trócaire*



*Going where help is needed most: Sally and Sister Anna Finnegan, of the Medical Missionaries of Mary, walk through a camp on a hill above Port-au-Prince, Haiti, for people who lost their homes in the catastrophic 2010 earthquakes there. Photo: Trócaire.*



*Speaking to President Higgins, Sally and Sister Anna Finnegan, of the Medical Missionaries of Mary, walk through a camp on a hill above Port-au-Prince, Haiti, for people who lost their homes in the catastrophic 2010 earthquakes there. Photo: Trócaire.*

the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*. That work came full circle in 2013, when Sally and President Higgins returned to El Salvador to visit a memorial to the civilians who died, names from a massacre that had at last been confirmed an act of genocide.

Trócaire supporters also helped Sally touch lives in Ethiopia and Somalia during the famines there

in the 80s and 90s, including establishing the Somalian programme in Gedo which because of your generosity operates to this day. Returning to Central America, Sally oversaw humanitarian aid to over two million displaced people, including after the wrath of 1998's Hurricane Mitch and in Haiti after the earthquake.

### A lifetime of service

She received many honours: appointed by the President of Ireland as a member of the High Level Panel for the Presidential Distinguished Service Award for the Irish Abroad, awarded the Hugh O'Flaherty Humanitarian Award, and conferred with an honorary Doctor of Law degree by the University of Ulster – a distinction of which she was especially proud.



**Omar**

daughters kidnapped and killed with impunity: in Honduras, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has reported that 90% of these gruesome crimes against women go unpunished. Maritza (38), mustered a smile, then told how she joined the caravan with her two daughters to escape the corruption and violence.

"There are too many deaths. It's too dangerous."

Omar also travels in this thread of people weaving northward. In Honduras he said there was "Lots of delinquency, a lot of crime. There are many gangs." As afternoon shadows grew long, his

deep brown eyes filled with emotion. "We can't live there anymore!"

### The waystation before the wall

Getting into the US will be a long shot. Donald Trump continues to label people

in these migrant caravans – *these faces before us* – as criminals and terrorists. It's part of his push for a wall between the US and Mexico. Yet even with a thousand kilometres ahead of them, Maritza and the others remain undeterred. "We believe our dreams can still come true, that we will be able to help our families." Cintia agrees. "We are going



**Maritza**



**Danilo**





*Truth to power: Sally and Michael D Higgins come on a visit to El Salvador's all remembering the victims of the genocide, first exposed by their watershed report decades earlier. Wells/Trócaire*



*Even in the quietest moments: To Sally, "making life better for people was [about] helping improve their life circumstances, having enough to eat and so on," said Sally's sister Kate, to the Belfast Telegraph. "That allowed them to lift their eyes to higher things like education and taking part in society." Photo: Jeannie O'Brien/Trócaire*

### The woman we'll miss

Sally was bright, fearless, warm, and inspiring. If she knew three of her colleagues also perished in the road crash that claimed her life, her first thought would be for their families – and it is to them, to the O'Neill-Sanchez families, to her husband Roger and children Xio, Rhona, and

Roger that all of us at Trócaire send our thoughts and prayers.

Her courageous and often audacious spirit will remain with us always. And it is because of you, our Trócaire family, that Sally's legacy as a defender of truth and justice in Central America and around the world will carry on. **Go with God, Sally. Descanse en paz. We'll never forget you.** ♥



It's hard to believe Digna is the same child from your 2011 Trócaire Box (and the same little girl you see with the late Sally O'Neill on the cover of this newsletter). Because you cared, Digna is growing up with a good education and bright future. Thank you. Photo: Guilia Vuillermoz/Trócaire.

forward...looking for jobs, fighting for our families."

In the meantime your kind support waits for Danilo and all the others here at the Guatemala-Mexico border, providing food, shelter, legal advice, medical assistance, and dignity kits through a Trócaire partner called The Migrant House – a waystation of hope and relief on their search for a safer, more just life. Thank you. ♥



**Cintia**

▶ **WATCH** Cintia and others in the migrant caravan as they share their stories, on <https://www.trocaire.org/voices-migrant-caravan>

## RELIEF FOR 4,000 WHO FLEE: YOUR SUPPORT AT WORK

Through Trócaire partner The Migrant House, your kind support is bringing aid and relief at the Guatemala-Mexico border to weary people from the migrant caravans in their search for asylum and a better life. Thank you...



**FOOD**



**SHELTER**



**MEDICAL ASSISTANCE**



**DIGNITY KITS**



**LEGAL ADVICE**

**THANK YOU FOR HELP FOR 4,000 AND COUNTING**



# BRINGING HOPE TO A FORGOTTEN PLACE

SOUTHEAST  
ASIA



*After seven long years, over one hundred thousand people are still stuck in camps in northern Myanmar's Kachin State, home to one of the world's longest running and most forgotten civil conflicts. And their faces show the strain. But through Trócaire partner KMSS your support remains, a ray of hope that keeps their resilience alive...*



Laphai Zau Tu

## MOST GRATEFUL FOR:

**Food assistance from (Trócaire partner) KMSS**

"They are the ones who assist us to survive, and we really appreciate their kind support for us." — Laphai Zau Tu



Marip Htu Bu

## BIGGEST WORRY:

**That the education of displaced children will suffer**

"If the children still have to live in the camps, they will not be able to learn like other children." — Marip Htu Bu



Nhprang Kai Htang

## MOST GRATEFUL FOR:

**The food and cash assistance they receive**

"If there is no assistance for people in this camp, I think we would not be able to survive." — Nhprang Kai Htang (67)



Pau Sa Kaw Shawng

## BIGGEST WORRY:

**That she and her family will not be able to return home**

"We live peacefully here but we just want to return to our village. I have a photo of my two cattle, a mother and child. I look at the photo whenever I miss them." — Pau Sa Kaw Shawng (70)



Marip Kai Htang

## MOST GRATEFUL FOR:

**The training she's received around human rights and equality**

"I have a good understanding of gender based violence and I am providing human rights trainings and family counselling. I am proud of myself for being able to work here." — Marip Kai Htang

**THANK YOU FOR  
SHOWING THE DISPLACED  
PEOPLE OF MYANMAR'S  
KACHIN STATE THAT  
THEY WILL NEVER BE  
FORGOTTEN. THANK YOU  
FOR STAYING UNTIL LOVE  
CONQUERS FEAR. ♥**

🌐 **LEARN** more about life in Myanmar and how your support is working on <https://www.trocaire.org/whatwedo/wherewework/myanmar>



## LENT 2019: THANK YOU FOR THE WARM WELCOMES!

Lent and Easter have only just gone by. But we wanted to take a moment to say a heartfelt thank you to YOU. For welcoming us into your parishes, schools, and communities... for opening your hearts to the stories of families who've had their one patch of good earth, and their homes, forcibly taken... for giving what you could, to bring them a better tomorrow.



Thank you for being a part of the Trócaire family, through Lent and always. You are the strength in our steps.



Ciara (8), Aoibhinn (9), and Danni (10), with Garda Zara stood together in solidarity with you this past Lent to help families in need worldwide. Thank you! Photo: Mark Stedman/Trócaire

## "I WAS AT A LOW POINT AND NOW I HAVE A VISION"

Across three communities in Kenya, you are helping fund pilot programmes that are getting girls back to school *and* keeping them

enrolled. **So far with your help the DREAMS project has supported 878 young women and girls to re-enter education** and includes



local Bridge Centres, an online platform and education materials, radio programmes around girls' rights, education, and gender-based violence, and work with communities to challenge negative norms.

Before age 23, Jackeline was forced to drop out of school, became pregnant, suffered the death of her baby, ended an abusive relationship, and endured her mother's severe illness. At a DREAMS Bridge Centre, she received counselling and is now back in school. "If I finish this Form Four I would like to be a counsellor, because it really affected my life. I was at a low point and now I have a vision." Development works, and we thank you for supporting second chance students like Jackeline as they strive towards new horizons and a better world. ♥



Hear Jackeline's amazing story and see how you are helping her through the Kenya DREAMS project on <https://vimeo.com/288718105>.

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Photo: Meabh Smith/Trócaire

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Thank you!

Trócaire is the overseas development agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland. We work with partners in over 20 countries in the developing world to empower communities to improve their lives, meet their basic needs and ensure their human dignity. In Ireland, we raise awareness about the root causes of poverty and injustice, and advocate for change. ROI Charity Regulatory Authority No. 20009601 CHY5883 | NI Charity Commission No: NIC 103321 | Revenue Number (HMRC) XR10341 | Company Number NI021482