

MWA Home and Overseas Paper – September 2024

Health worldwide

Many women around our world face health issues and so many of our projects relate to health; over the coming months I will aim to offer some details about each project. Here I am starting with an overview of health and the support we are giving to women from poorer countries to attend the 5th Unity Women's Desk Consultation in June next year. I am sure our donation will enable some influential women to travel to the USA and to play a vital role in this conference.

The purpose of the Unity Women's Desk is to positively impact the lives of women and girls worldwide by coordinating the spiritual, financial, educational, and material resources that exist throughout the Moravian Unity. Their website explains their focus on health:

“Women around the world are beset by a myriad of illnesses. Some of these are genetically inherited, some are communicable diseases, and still others are caused by environmental effects. Many of the diseases are affected by nutrition.

In our Women's Consultations, the HIV-AIDS epidemic is of utmost concern to our women, especially in Africa and the Caribbean regions, including both Western and Southern Africa and the Caribbean Islands as well as Central and South America.”

As this shows, across the world there are still so many issues specific to women's health. Some harsh facts are that:

- largely in sub-Saharan Africa, every day over 800 women die in pregnancy and childbirth;
- gender-based violence creates challenges for women's mental and physical health;
- poverty tends to place a greater burden on women because of their role in feeding children and the use of unsafe cooking fuels that cause COPD.

In this country many women and children suffer with respiratory diseases, including COPD, and generally females have asthma worse than men. The female director of research and innovation at Asthma and Lung UK suggests that we can each play our part by:

- encouraging young girls to consider careers in medical research;
- supporting research specifically into women's health;
- challenging poor air quality that makes so many lung conditions worse.

I hope you have all had a good summer and that lovely weather has blessed all our outdoor events.

Sr Mary Holmes