

EPISODE 4 – Demanding Justice

Judit Villena Rodó (host)

Maeve O'Rourke

Mary Harney

Voiceover 00:06

Hi, this is *To the Righthouse*. A new podcast series by the Global Campus of Human Rights, from skepticism to hope, from utopia to empathy. We discuss human rights riding waves but also signaling where the light is. This podcast was recorded in Venice, Italy on the island of Lido, at the Global Campus headquarters.

Judit Villena Rodó 00:29

Hello and welcome to *Survivor Movements for Justice*, a podcast series of the Global Campus of Human Rights. My name is Judit Villena Rodó, and I'm your host for this episode entitled demanding justice. Today, I have the pleasure of speaking with Maeve O'Rourke and Mary Harney. Maeve and Mary have worked for many years to seek justice on behalf of Irish women whose rights were violated in church and state-run institutions in Ireland in the 20th century. Maeve is senior lecturer at the Irish Center for Human Rights at the University of Galway, where, among other areas, she works on access to justice and redress for systemic and so called historical institutional gender based and family separation abuses. She has been involved in Justice for Magdalenes research for over a decade. Her research and advocacy concerning Ireland's Magdalene Laundries abuse and the forced separation of unmarried families in Ireland during the 20th century has received international recognition. Maeve is also a barrister and a qualified attorney at law in New York. Mary holds a doctorate from the Irish Center for Human Rights and is an independent human rights expert and lifelong activist for various human rights causes, including LGBTIQ+ rights workers rights and the right to identity. She's one of the subjects of a documentary titled testimony, which focuses on the campaign for social justice for Irish citizens who were incarcerated in Ireland's notorious institutions for unmarried women and their children. Maeve and Mary, thank you both very much for joining us.

Maeve O'Rourke 02:06

Thanks for having us.

Judit Villena Rodó 02:09

So, I had the opportunity to learn about the work that both Maeve and Mary have done to seek justice for survivors of the 20th century Ireland institutions during my time at the Irish Center for Human Rights, where I was doing my PhD. So, Maeve, perhaps we can start with you, and I will ask you if you can start by explaining what these institutions were and how was the Irish state involved.

Maeve O'Rourke 02:36

Sure Judy, so by 1951 statistics show that more than 1% of Ireland's population was incarcerated in some form of institution. That network included as a very small proportion, prisons. And beyond that, there was this whole range of institutions, many of which were run by church organizations, both funded and supported by the state. And those included residential schools, reformatory schools and what were called industrial schools, mother and baby institutions, county homes, Magdalene laundries, psychiatric institutions, and a whole other range of health and social care related organizations that specialized, I suppose, in separating the children of unmarried parents and unmarried mothers from them, so adoption agencies, private nursing homes, maternity hospitals. From the foundation of the Irish state, the Catholic Church in particular was very involved in setting the moral code and was very involved in convincing the government to establish certain legislation that was designed to regulate sexuality and women in particular; it was completely unacceptable for children to be born outside marriage, for there to be any sign of quote unquote promiscuity, which often, of course, was actually sexual violence against girls and young women and the institutionalization of poor children and children of unmarried mothers and the women themselves also involved and forced in commercial labor, arbitrary detention, all manner of psychological and physical punishment, denial of education, denial of identity, denial of opportunity to engage with the outside world. And large numbers of children and women died in these institutions. And still today, we have an ongoing issue of disappearances, in the sense that 1000s of people's burial place remains unknown and they are unaccounted for.

Judit Villena Rodó 05:14

Thank you for that summary, I can imagine it's extremely difficult to summarize in a short period of time, the, you know, years and years of abuse, and we will have the opportunity to talk a little bit more about the work that survivors are doing in demanding justice against the state. I would like to turn to Mary now for a second, and as I introduced earlier, you're one of the subjects of the documentary testimony, and you have been an activist for decades for an array of human rights causes. Can you tell us how you became involved in campaigning for social justice, and perhaps, how can you describe your approach to activism? What work are you doing in this area?

Mary Harney 06:07

I think that I first became an activist without realizing it at the time in the 70s, when I was a member of a Trades Union, and as a representative for that, I was involved in campaigning for equal pay and equal rights for women employees, and So I think that's probably where I started, but where I went on from there was around the issues of people living and dying with HIV/AIDS. There was a slogan at the time that said "*Women don't get AIDS. They just die from it*" because the what we would now call the social media aspect, always referred to it as a gay men's disease. As a matter of fact, that's what it was originally called, gay related immunodeficiency diseases. How grid is how it was first. So, I went to many funerals of friends, and then I began campaigning. And what I campaigned on was education. I'm a firm believer in educating about human rights violations. And there were massive human rights violations, denials of burials, of medical treatment, all sorts. So, from there, then I guess I went into again, seeing young LGBTQI people, you know, just struggling and then creating safe spaces in colleges and schools. So, all of that was steppingstone, in the meantime, I was doing my own advocacy for myself as a former incarcerated person, the state had incarcerated

me. I was born in a mother and baby institution. I was then illegally fostered, and then I was court mandated to an industrial school. So, the first 16 and a half years of my life was incarceration or some form of control by the government. So, what I was looking for was my own identity in relation to who my mother was. So that became more prevalent for me in the 1990s and that's when I got involved with Maeve and the Clannn project and the Justice for Magdalenes research, and that's where I began to work closer with people other survivors, but also with lawyers and academics to try and get justice and redress as laid down by the UN for survivors.

Judit Villena Rodó 09:39

Thank you so much for sharing that, Mary, for sharing your story. It's always really powerful to hear you talk about it. And one of the things that I've heard you say before is that you're a resistor, and I would like to maybe ask you about resisting abuse and through, through education in in many cases. But I would like to ask Maeve, perhaps, to say a little bit about what the Clannn project is. You co lead it, and so what is the work that the Clannn project does, and what are the different techniques that you're using to fight for justice.

Maeve O'Rourke 10:26

Okay, thanks. Milin Judith, so the Clannn project is something that I set up together with Dr Claire McGettrick, born Lorraine Hughes, who is an adopted person in Ireland, but who set up actually several decades previous to the Clannn project, in 2015 she set up Adoption Rights Alliance, a voluntary group to advocate for the identity rights of adopted people. And she also helped to set up Justice for Magdalens, which was and is, we are Justice for Magdalenes's research now an organization, again, a voluntary group of people, researching, providing public education and advocating in relation to justice for women who were incarcerated in Magdalene laundry. So, the Clann project, Justice for Magdalenes's research, adoption Rights Alliance. They all go together. They're all voluntary initiatives led by people directly affected by this array of abuses. We always recognize that even what we are working on is just a small portion of the connected history, and that is something we always have to keep at the absolute forefront of our mind whenever we are advocating for any type of quote unquote solution, that there cannot be these fixed boundaries around it, because with every step forward that is made for truth-telling, any form of justice, it opens a door to then seeking, hearing, allowing, inviting people to come forward with their testimony of other things. And so the psychiatric institutions are one very obvious example of a whole realm that has not been included in so much of the, I suppose advocacy and measures to date. But anyway, to go back to your question about strategies. So I think before I even discuss strategies of what I would call movement lawyering, or, you know, beyond that kind of community building, movement building, it's probably necessary to give you a sense of maybe what milestones there have been, you know, that the state, would argue, have been measures of justice, what the gaps are, and I can tell you then, the various forms of advocacy that we have engaged in and continue to engage in. So, in 1999 following some very excellent investigative journalism, which brought to life for the general public things that, of course, weren't actually hidden. They were hidden in plain sight, and there was a state apology to industrial and reformatory school survivors. And it's estimated there are about 30,000 people who were in the institutions. And Mary mentioned the industrial schools already. There was then a state investigation for 10 years. And at the end of that, in 2009 you know, was the first time

there was this big report that disclosed endemic sexual, physical and emotional abuse and neglect of children in these institutions and from 2002 to 2005 there had been concurrently, quote unquote redress scheme, but that had been experienced as very abusive by people affected, because even though it was an ex Gracia payment, meaning no wrongdoing attached, and the religious orders today would still dispute, you know, the extent of abuse, even that was apologized for by politicians. Even though it was ex Gracia no attachment of wrongdoing, the religious were still allowed to and claimed legal fees for cross examining the survivors who came forward and putting them through horrendous, days of cross examination in many cases then. So that was industrial and reformatory schools, in 2009 that's actually when I got involved in the Justice for Magdalenes campaign, because I just finished my undergraduate law degree, and suddenly on the TV and in the newspapers was all of this discussion of Church State abuse, but it related to these schools, and it didn't take into account the institutions that had been specifically designed for quote unquote, wayward girls and women and Magdalene laundries are places of indefinite arbitrary detention and forced labor and servitude. And there was this small group Justice for Magdalenes's campaigning, that I got involved with and by 2013, we and a movement alongside involving many women, speaking out achieved a state apology to Magdalene laundry survivors. It's estimated there are at least 10,000 but more when you consider institutions that weren't specifically included within various remits, and there then was a scheme of certain payments, pension payments and a promise of extensive health and social care that has not materialized. One of the things that's very important for people who've been institutionalized previously is that they would not be institutionalized again in nursing homes, for example. And so, health and social care was really important, and remains really important, and something that hasn't been properly achieved to date. In 2015 the government then set up a state inquiry into mother and baby institutions. So, this was a partial effort in relation to the forced family separation system. Because, remember, I said earlier that forced adoption and forced family separation, Mary already mentioned fostering, for example, was a huge system that involved but was not limited to mother and baby institutions. They were places run by religious orders and funded by the state. And there was an investigation from 2015 to 2021 and then there was a political apology. The investigation actually was highly problematic, it happened privately in the sense that people affected had no opportunity to see or suggest lines of inquiry or comment on any of the evidence coming forward, they couldn't even get their own records from the Commission, they couldn't even get a transcript of their own evidence. It then transpired that the Commission had given all its draft findings and the underlying evidence to the alleged wrongdoers to comment. The findings are completely at odds with the testimony that everybody has heard affected people give, and the findings actually included that there is no evidence of incarceration, no evidence of injury as a result of what it found were nonconsensual, unlicensed vaccine and milk trials, no evidence that children were taken without the consent of their mothers. I mean, the reports of things like women claimed they didn't give consent, but there is no evidence this was their view at the time, even though. So, their actual testimony is not given evidentiary value, but eight judicial reviews at the high court, including by Mary, culminated in declarations that that commission had denied fair procedures, but nonetheless, that is now the historical record in the Parliamentary Library, and there is a so called redress scheme that provides limited payments to people who are in the institutions, but excludes anyone who is a child born in them, but taken before the age of six months, which is actually most of the people who were born in the institutions, and excludes all the people subjected to forced family separation who

don't fall in this list of particular institutions. And there is now, as of 2022 legislation to give adopted people and people who are in the fostering system access to their identity and early life files. But it's limited in the sense that if a parent registers an objection to you finding out your identity, you have to sit down with social workers and be told about needing to respect people's privacy rights, we would have argued at the time, you know, Irish law is already sufficient to protect people's privacy, to protect against unwanted contact, repeated contact, in general, in life, there's no evidence that adopted people you know occupy this position, and that still really stigmatizes people, and there's also no provision in that law for mothers, and there's still a lot of work to do. The government has promised a national center for research and remembrance, which will include a campus of the National Museum of Ireland, a Campus of the National Archives of Ireland, social housing for older people. These kind of measures are obviously progress, but there's still always the need to remind the government that affected people and survivors need to be fully involved in driving those measures. And Mary and I, today, yesterday, for the past two weeks, have been working together on the fact that, in the very mother and baby home in Cork where Mary was born, planning permission has now been given for a private developer who bought the land from the nuns to build apartments, even though the mother and baby homes, commission of investigation found it very likely that there are burials on that site and more than 850 babies who were associated with Bessborough are still missing. There's no information about their whereabouts and 19 women.

Judit Villena Rodó 19:52

Thank you so much, Maeve, I guess my reaction, to every time that I hear you Mary talk about this is really how striking and really awful it is to hear about how survivor's testimony is not only not given value, but their experiences are being actively erased from historical records and the importance of really unveiling this net of extreme human rights abuses and giving survivors testimony the weight that that they have as a as part of the justice of giving justice to survivors. So I think maybe what I would like to ask before we talk about the strategies and the work that you're doing is, how, how do you resist a state that is still very much against giving testimony their value and really acting as a block for survivors access to justice that is creating exclusion on the quote unquote redress measures. How do we can we resist an impenetrable state? Let's say Mary, perhaps you might want to talk about the importance of education in this sense of explaining to younger generations of Irish children about so called historical abuses.

Mary Harney 21:35

Yes, I think that when I was an activist, I've always been what I refer to as a boots on the ground activist, and that meant that I was involved in lots of protests for justice and making people aware through protest. But in 2018 I attended conference in Boston, and it was a light bulb moment for me, because I realized that protesting brings knowledge, public demonstrations bring knowledge, but what brings legislative change? That was the big question. And then I realized that part of activism for me was missing, and that's when, having interacted with Maeve and people for Justice for Magdalenes, that I decided that that was a piece that I needed to add in order to become more effective in resisting. And my method of resisting is to, I guess it's more than one format, but the biggest one for me has been education. And I took the Maeve's Human Rights Law Clinic, my LLM in human rights, and I learned that there are specific social justice movements and again, Maeve

has mentioned movement lawyering that started uniquely in America by Gerald Lopez. It was called rebellious lawyering at the time. It's morphed into many formats now, but the one at the University of Galway Human Rights Center is the movement lawyering approach, which means that, basically, we ask lawyers, movement lawyering, ask lawyers to come out of their offices and their comfort zone and join the disenfranchised communities that we're hoping to seek justice for, and ask, what would you like us to do to assist you in your move towards Justice? And that's very much the approach that I learned in during my LLM, and that's where I became totally grounded, I guess, in my activism now, is that without the education, without informing younger people about the past, we will repeat it and this, you know, we're seeing already with asylum seekers in Ireland and other injustices, but through education, and it is not like someone going into a school in preaching or telling, just telling the story, because what happens then is that if you if I just told my story, people may weep and feel sorry for me, but that's not what we want. We want them to hear the story. But then what happens after that? That you dry your eyes and you walk out of the room. No, we want everybody to become part of the activism, and we combine with young people through educational and again, plan Justice for Magdalenes played a huge part in education on the institutions of Ireland, never in the history of the Irish teaching system was that included in high school or any school education. We included the Irish famine, Vietnam, slavery, the holocaust, but we did not include the history of our own institutions. And so, by collaborating with human rights lawyers, with constitutional lawyers, with other activists, with professors and academic researchers, with at the core of that the voice of the survivors. So, working together, then, you know, that's what changes legislation, and that's what strengthen the resistance. That's how we resist injustice, and it is not a job where, you know, Maeve talked about leaving out huge numbers of people, you know, the Irish government has never followed the UN's recommendations on reparations. They paid lip service. They've given us driblets and drabs, like Maeve talked about the memorial, but they've excluded people from the redress. And therefore they're creating and again, this is exploiting the vulnerability of people who have suffered. And this exploit, exploitation of vulnerability is so easy to do. You other, you start othering groups, and you start making them separate from and when we do that, we can become emotionally, I'm not sure the word, but we, we create another, a group of other vulnerable people and then when we and I think again, if anybody wants to read Dr O'Rourke's paper on manipulation of vulnerability, that's what happens. We manipulate vulnerability at the risk of bypassing legislation, and when we do that, we are not doing social justice.

Judit Villena Rodó 28:31

All of what you're explaining really reminds me of really the importance of disrupting that power dynamic between the state and survivors and to use creative methods of activism in order to challenge, to resist the state and to persist, because it's also a really long process that has many different steps, and that is continuing. So, the fight for justice always continues. So, it's really great to hear also, Mary about the work that you've done in ensuring, and the success that you had, in ensuring that the history of institutional abuse is included in the curriculum, in order to avoid that it's repeated again. And we know that in contemporary Ireland, as you're saying, there are institutions that resemble very much so the institutions of the 20th century. So, continuing to disrupt this, this power dynamic, I think it's so important and speaks so much about the creativity of the movement and the determination of the movement. So perhaps one last question for both of you, and that is,

how, how do you continue to pursue, what are you continuing to campaign for right now? And perhaps, if there's something in particular that you would like to make sure that that somebody who has never heard of the institutions before know about what? What would that be?

Mary Harney 30:18

Yes, I think for me, education has always been the important component of my form of activism, because if we do not get our young people involved and get them on board, then they will become future citizens who know nothing about what happened, and will be, you know, unable to work towards justice. So, education is a big part of it for me, and the making of documentaries like testimony, what happens there is that gets the word out to a wider public, but it also allows for people to then say, what can we do now? And I think that the core of the justice movement, for instance, last night, outside the Oireachtas, the Houses of Parliament, the Irish parliament, there was a mass demonstration about the governments or the town council in Cork allowing developers to go in and build, and Maeve spoke a little to this, the apartments on the grounds where we do not know where 859 children are buried, and some of the parents of those children are still alive and looking for answers. And without those kinds of demonstrations, and without that approach to justice, we won't be able to move forward. So, it's a combination of different aspects of justice that they all accumulate, involve, survivors, academics, lawyers, the public at large and our representatives. There are times when we go to representatives, one by one by one. There are times when we do mass emails, when we do mass information to our legal to our representatives in the Dole, where we make the movement stronger by getting our politicians involved and then bringing legislation to its ultimate in that we receive justice through legislation.

Judit Villena Rodó 33:08

Mary has explained a little bit about being involved in the Human Rights Clinic, which is a module that you direct in the Irish Center for Human Rights for LLM students that prepares them to contribute to community-based movements and social change and introduces them to different techniques. So, the Clann project has had many different campaigns, and so could you maybe explain a little bit about the strategies that it's used to bring justice to survivors of the institutions.

Maeve O'Rourke 33:43

So I had to think about this, and I would break down the strategies that we have used in the Clann project and Justice for Magdalenes's research into four categories, I think: one is fact finding. Another is legal methods, and I'll explain these. Another is political advocacy, and then the last is public education. So when it comes to fact finding, we have made a huge effort to gather testimony. The state, as I mentioned, set up, well, I don't actually know if I did mention it, but it set up a committee to establish the facts of state involvement with the margins and laundries in 2011 this was not an independent investigation, it was going to be operated by senior civil servants in the government departments that it transpired, were directly involved in the Magdalene's, and they were not providing legal assistance to anyone affected. So, at that point, my colleagues from Justice for Magdalens, started to gather what are now actually preserved and published online as oral histories. The Magdalene oral history. You can find it at jfmresearch.com and it's also preserved in the Irish qualitative data archive, and it contains more than 80 transcripts of interviews. But, that was a case

of, I suppose, combining legal with other disciplinary expertise to work together. I was working with colleagues who were historians, for example, and others who were journalists, and we put together this testimony that was absolutely crucial for, then the legal and the political and the public education purposes that I want to talk about. When the mother and baby homes Commission was established in 2015 we were so tired from all of the advocacy that we did in relation to the Magdalene Laundries that it just wasn't possible to do this on a shoestring again. And Claire and I actually went to Hogan Lovells International law firm, their London office, and they provided more than 60 solicitors who spoke to more than 150 people affected by the forced adoption and mother and baby home system. And they assisted people, 82 people, to submit full witness statements, to the mother and baby homes commission, and most importantly, I think, to keep a copy of what they said, because, as I said earlier, the Commission was not going to give anyone a transcript normally, who just walked into them and spoke to them without that assistance and that copy, much like in oral history, you know, people can keep it then for their records, and they don't actually have to repeat themselves every single time they might need to provide their testimony. And those statements were essential then, for holding the commission, and most importantly, the government, on receipt of the commission's report to account by being able to say, well, actually, what the Commission received was this in terms of facts, and then we would also make legal arguments. So, testimony has been essential, it was absolutely essential, the very first time I ever went to the UN Committee Against Torture in 2011 in relation to Magdalene Laundries, because committee members who are brilliant, learned, independent experts, but who might not necessarily know the facts of what's happening in your particular country, they need to be able to rely on what you're telling them, and those full witness statements, accompanied by other evidence, fully referenced and done in a legal way, which will go to my second point about using legal methods was just extremely persuasive. So alongside testimony, we have gathered a lot of archival material, and it is difficult to gather this because the state and the church have not opened their archives, and as people will probably find in other countries too freedom of information Law does not necessarily extend right back to the historical period we're talking about, and it can, you know, you if you make too big a request, it can be too expensive to be even allowed under the freedom of information legislation. So we've had to be creative on that as well. We have used parliamentary avenues. You can get politicians to ask parliamentary questions, and that then gets civil servants to provide information to them on the parliamentary record. We have, my colleague, Claire has something called the Magdalene names project, where she is attempting to find and then to be able to provide family members who make inquiries the name of every single woman who died in a Magdalene laundry, and she uses gravestones, census records, electoral records and newspapers to try and gather that information. In terms of the second area, legal methods, so court hasn't really been available to people, because we have a very strict statute of limitations in Ireland that is has no general discretion for judges to disapply it in the interest of justice. For example, if you had a lot of archival evidence and could argue that you could, you know that the alleged wrongdoer could be afforded a fair trial. We also have a very strict and scary costs system where, you know, I had thought when I was younger, when I first started learning about the Magdalene Laundries, oh, women must not have known to complain, you know, or to go to solicitors. And when I started interviewing, the very first woman I ever interviewed for one of those oral histories, said that she had gone to a solicitor in London, and the solicitor had told her that she could lose her house if she bought a case, because of the risk if you were to lose a

case, that you would have to pay the other side's costs. This then also influences the legal arguments that your lawyers, even if you could find lawyers who have the time to do it all for no money would make, because every time you make a new argument that's not been tested before, it costs a lot of money for the other side's lawyers to defend it, and that could then ratchet up the potential costs of losing your case. But there have been some cases that have settled, we've worked to help lawyers, to help women find their way to the best lawyers to do that, and we've also helped women find their way to lawyers to judicially review mechanisms that the government has brought in more recently, for example, to judicial review the procedures, albeit retrospectively, of the mother and baby homes, commission of investigation to successfully, judicially review the way that the government organized the Magdalene Laundries redress scheme because it was based on time spent confined in a Magdalene but the government told women to go; often find their own records to contact the nuns, and the nuns might write back and say, well, we don't have any records, but we've interviewed or we've spoken to each other, and here is how long you were there for, or their records might not be correct, and the nuns word was taken at all times, instead of having any mechanism, there was never a mechanism to allow women to swear testimony, for example, to contradict what the nuns were saying. So, we've used judicial review in those circumstances. We are currently participating in the planning process, you know, submitting support for an appeal against the planning permission in best for mother and baby homes. So there are legal mechanisms that you can use and that you need lawyers and others who can help, lawyers, such as other researchers, who can assist lawyers who don't have, you know, so much time to be mounting these very complicated arguments. In terms of then using UN bodies, of course, we have used all the testimony and the other evidence to develop human rights law arguments around servitude, forced labor and forced disappearance in terms of the forced separation of family members, not just unmarked graves, which absolutely falls within that, but also forced adoption and disappearance for life through being institutionalized or otherwise detained breaches of the anti-torture nor and the right to liberty, the right to life, the right to equality before the law, because all of this discrimination was based on marital status, as well as socioeconomic status, as well as areas that have not been examined properly at all, such as racial discrimination, disability based discrimination, and there are obvious ongoing rights to identity, for example, and remedies. So, we have brought human rights law arguments to UN treaty bodies, both through the periodic review process, and I think we've been to pretty much every human rights treaty body at this point between ourselves and other related organizations. We've also brought the arguments to the special procedures, and a group of eight special procedures intervened in 2021 writing a very detailed letter to the Irish government that we continue to use at every possible opportunity. Today, we have used the Irish Human Rights Commission's inquiry procedures, so that is our National Human Rights Commission. We have used Council of Europe mechanisms, and we have engaged with any of the commissions of investigation, truth telling mechanisms that the government has set up. So, I already mentioned that we helped people to provide testimony, but we have made legal arguments, and many pro bono lawyers, be they barristers or solicitors in Ireland, have helped us with this legal analysis. And not only have we argued about past violations and ongoing and ongoing violations, we've also actually proposed new model legislation. We have proposed approaches to redress. We have proposed how, for example, the National Center for Research and remembrance could be designed. We've involved architects, for example, in envisioning these, I hate to say solutions, because nothing we propose is ever actually going to be,

you know, perfect in human rights terms, but we do our best to use the standards that are there. Thirdly, I mentioned political advocacy. So I think this is where the movement lawyering, literature and history comes in so useful, because as lawyers, we can be trained not to really go into the realm of politics or public pressure, so to speak, but actually this human rights language belongs not just in the courtroom, but in the public arena, and being brave enough and supported enough and involved enough with affected people and with others who are longtime advocates, you know, really makes all the difference, and I have found this hugely fulfilling. So, we have brought the testimony and the arguments with affected people like Mary and so many others to parliamentary hearings, to press conferences. We've issued so many press releases. We have organized email and phone campaigns. We have developed great relationships with politicians, giving them parliamentary questions to ask, suggesting debate motions for them, suggesting legislation that they can bring, helping them with their debates on amendments to legislation. And in 2018 we actually organized a gathering of more than 200 Magdalene laundry survivors, an event called Dublin honors Magdalene, which we then invited the president of Ireland and many politicians to host the women at, and one of the days was spent doing a listening exercise where we enabled them to tell us how they wished to be remembered. Now this was something that the government was supposed to do as part of redress, to enable women to meet each other and to talk about memorialization, but when they didn't do it, it was important to do it ourselves. And that brings me, finally, on to public education, which is another place we. Bring all of this information and analysis and try to, and there has been great success, in including this history in the National School curriculum, and we continue to teach it ourselves. We contribute to documentaries, and as Justice for Magdalenes' research on the Clann project, we try to make everything that we do as transparent as possible. So we've written or edited four books in relation to this work, and we have created book archives that provide for anyone who wants to see it, all of the source material in terms of, you know, all of our emails back and forth with government, all of the records of how we did this advocacy and yeah, and how anybody can do the same.

Mary Harney 45:51

Despite all the investigations, none of them have been based through the lens of human rights, and that's a huge omission, because if we don't look at it through that lens, then we don't provide the reparations as mandated by the UN and also, the Irish government has apologized many times for harms done or abuses suffered, but never once have they apologized for violating the human rights of their own citizens. And I think those two things definitely need to happen.

Judit Villena Rodó 46:38

Thank you so much, Mary. I think that's a really a strong point to end this podcast on, really an immense thank you both to you, Mary and Maeve, for sharing your knowledge and experiences with me and with our listeners. It was truly a pleasure talking to you, and best of luck.

Mary Harney 46:59

Thank you!