

Newsletter

September 2015

Partners in Aid

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It's September!

And that means it's almost Christmas. We have some gift ideas detailed on Page 2 that might help sort out your Christmas shopping list.

It also means it's almost time for the Annual Lunch in Bright. You can read more in the pages to come, but the venue looks like this:



I think you're tempted now, aren't you?

Membership



Annual Membership for 2015/16 is now due.

Membership is only \$25 a year, and goes a long way in our administrative costs ensuring donated funds go to the projects not postage stamps!!

Membership also entitles you to vote at our AGM, or nominate a proxy. And speaking of our AGM, it's almost here!

Annual General Meeting

It's on – November 21. The time and location has not been confirmed as we went to press but it will be in the inner suburbs of Melbourne. Please contact us if you have any questions and want to come along.

Christmas Gifts and Donations

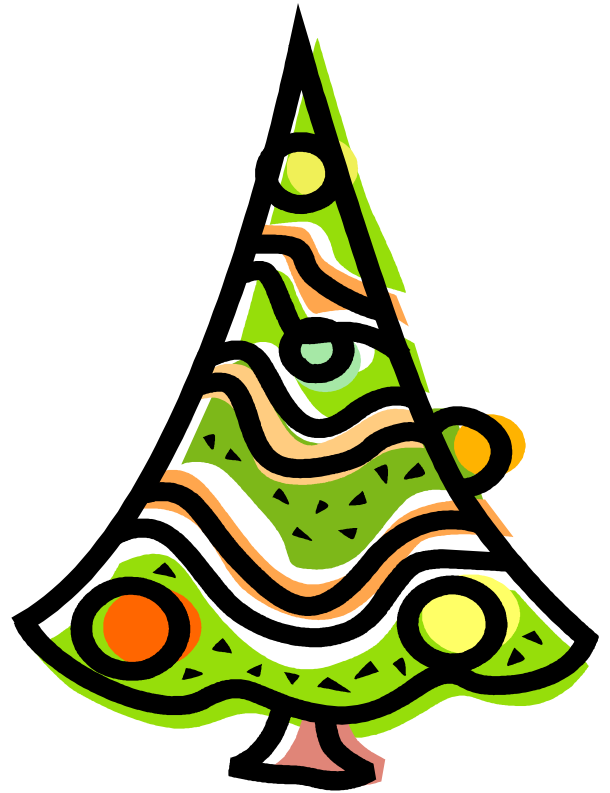
This Christmas why not consider making a donation to one of our projects as an alternative to buying a traditional gift for family or friends? You'll be making a very positive difference to the lives and prospects of disadvantaged and vulnerable people, while avoiding the shopping hustle and bustle and queuing for a parking space too!

You can also make a general project donation if you prefer, or set up a child sponsorship at ABWU or SEDS.

We are happy to provide a gift certificate on request; simply tick the relevant box on the donation form.

Here are some ideas for each of our project areas.

A general donation will be used in supporting any of our projects needing funds at the time of your donation.



ABWU

Any donation towards:

- ❖ The orphans' holiday fund
- ❖ Sewing supplies
- ❖ School text books

Symbiosis, Bangladesh

- ❖ Writing materials and books for school \$15 per set
- ❖ Kitchen garden materials \$50
- ❖ Super Kris Kringle – sponsor a teacher for a year, \$1800, or \$150/month

SEDS

- ❖ Notebooks & stationery for school child \$15
- ❖ School bag per child \$6
- ❖ Child medical & dental check-up \$20



This month I will share with you a story from our Partner, Symbiosis Bangladesh about a family who have been able to start to break the cycle of poverty through hard work and receiving some adult education. Also, it is the monsoon season in Bangladesh. I have found information on the river levels of the Jamuna River, where one of our projects is located. The graphs illustrates the annual uncertainty of living on a sandbar or 'char' in the Jamuna River.

Graham Moore.

Success story of Kakoli Akter

Kakoli Aktar 27, lives in a small village in the district of Sirajgonj. She is married and they have one son who is going to school and reading in class II. The name of her husband is Rahim Miah. They have no land property now they are living in the flood center name Jajira Flood center. Every year this area is affected by flood and destroys crops, birds, cattle and sometimes kill human being. So, Kakoli is living in government rehabilitation center/flood center. Her husband work in agri-labour. It is very difficult to maintain her family with the small income of her husband.

One day Kakoli joined in a Functional Education group organized by Symbiosis with other 20 members. They have completed 8 months FE course and started savings. They named their group "Rose Women Group" They deposit BDT-20 (about 40 cents Australian) every week, at present their

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total group savings is BDT 52,000 (\$935). Kakoli received training on sewing for three months. Just after training she purchased sewing machine borrowing money from her savings group. Kakoli started sewing work at home and also neighboring families also giving order to Kakoli for their children dress making. Now Kakoli earning money and refunding loan money slowly and helping her family. Her income is daily about BDT-200-250 (\$4 to \$5). They are now running their family nicely with the income of both husband and wife.

Kakoli now think she is happy and only one day is she will highly educated her son. Kakoli suggest other group members to do the same. She is very grateful to Symbiosis for their encouragement and cooperation.

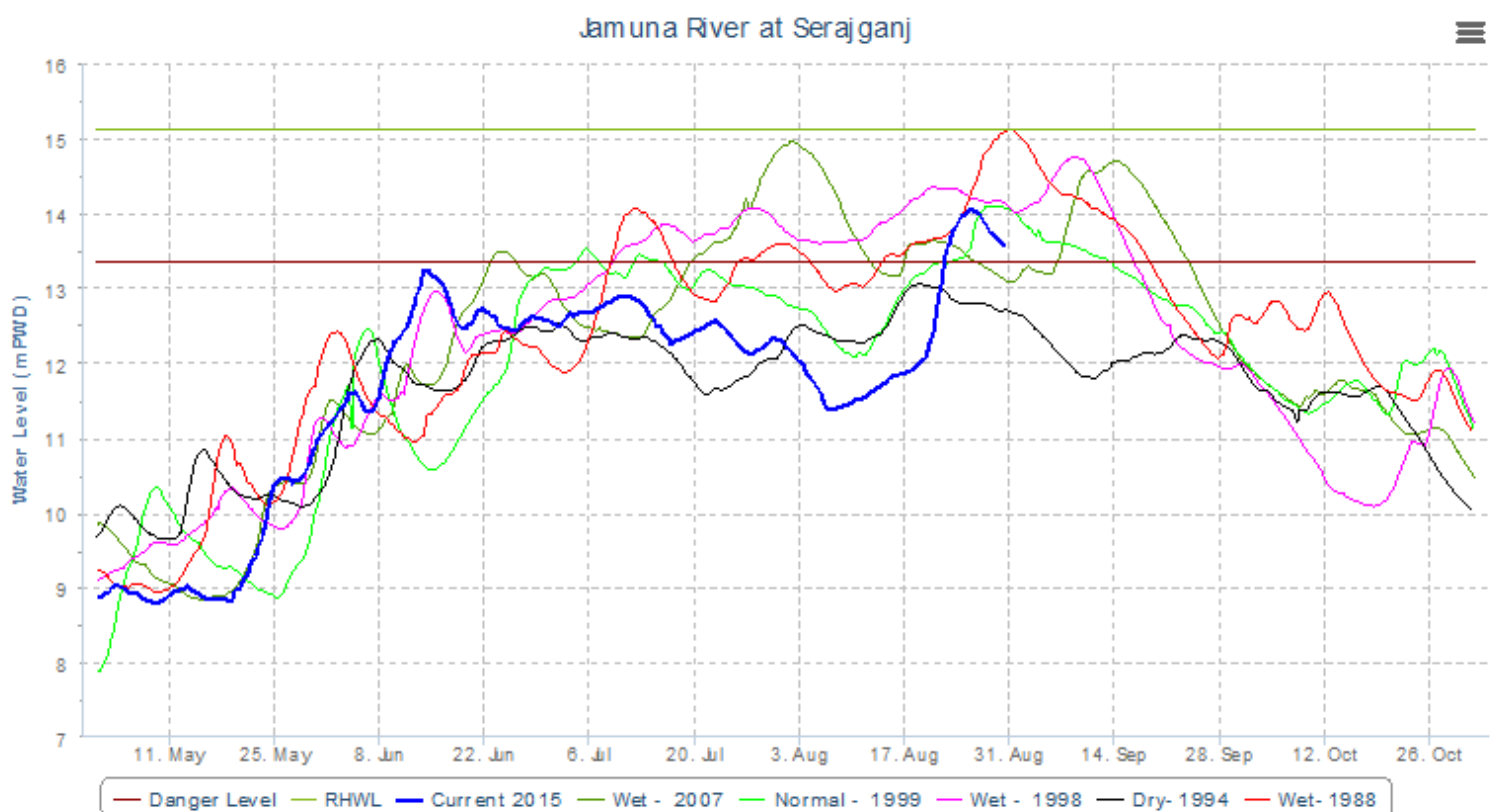


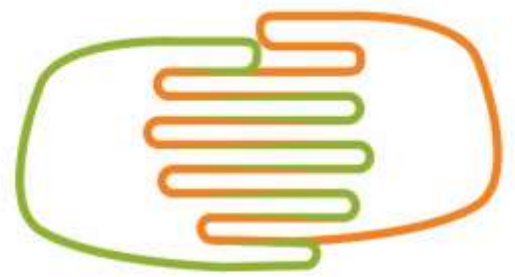
Community workers at the JRDP creating high ground by moving sand one basketful at a time. Photo courtesy Symbiosis Bangladesh.

The Monsoon Flood in Bangladesh

The following data is from <http://www.ffwc.gov.bd/index.php>, the Bangladesh Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre.

The blue line is the Jamuna River Water level this season at Serajganj, a town on the west bank of the Jamuna River near the sandbar where the Jamuna River Development Project A operates. The red horizontal line is the ‘danger level’ On the sandbar, at this level all agricultural land will be flooded and only some roads and houses that have been built on land that has been raised by shifting earth by manual labour, shown in the photo, will be above the water level. At this level, all regular activities, such as school attendance, will cease while the people living on the sandbar cope as best they can. In a country where every year a large proportion of the country suffers floods, there is no flood relief.





Our Chairperson and SEDS project coordinator Amanda Stone has written the following piece about changing times at SEDS.

End of an Era at SEDS

Earlier this year, co-founder of SEDS, Rajen Joshua, retired from the board leaving Manil Jayasena and other board members to continue the excellent work, begun 34 years ago when Manil and Rajen set up a makeshift camp in rural Andhra Pradesh to help the poorest of the poor.

Over those 34 years, Rajen has created a green oasis from barren land at the SEDS compound in Anadapuram village, demonstrating to local villagers how to improve the quality and viability of their land, improving water management and maximising dry land agriculture.

Rajen has been the driving force behind the tank desilting programme which Partners in Aid is proud to fund. This programme has repleted the water table, providing clean water for villagers, improving soil quality for farming, and improving the overall environmental health of the region. The demand for tank desilting is unabated with many villages prepared to provide the co-contribution of funds and labour to improve their own local water supply.

Rajen's vision, shared with Manil, has led to sustained improvement in the livelihoods and capacity of thousands of people from one of the poorest parts of India. His passion and enthusiasm for the project will be missed on the ground by workers and especially visitors from Australia – perhaps his exciting style of

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driving may not! His legacy is enormous and PIA has been very fortunate to have had the opportunity to share his energy and vision over more than 30 years.

Thank you Rajen.



Rajen (right) with Ian Pickering

From Little Things Big Things Grow

From those simple beginnings 34 years ago, when Manil and Rajen began working with 10 villages, SEDS now works with 350 villages in 5 mandals. Manil Joshua describes their journey so far in this reflection:

“It was the methodology of “do and learn” that has brought us here today. Visions and missions realised with a lot of hard work and doggedness to get there.

We are now in the stage of change and self sustainability and to achieve this stage development has to be looked at from a business angle. Most Organisations started with donor funding but today all

NGOs are concentrating on sustainability of the organisation to continue the work. To do this we draw up strategic plans and business models of development.

Most NGOs that started in the 70s and 80s were people who wanted change and change by education with awareness building. Committed 'trail blazers' are what one would call them. SEDS is one of these organisations.

All work taken up in the last 34 years was the need of the hour. It involved charity approach/pragmatic approach/community taking responsibility of their lives/community being made aware of their lives along with their rights to be able to demand basic rights and legal rights from the government. Food and environment was a main focus. Hence all SEDS work aimed at a richer sustainable environment and agriculture.

From this developed tree nurseries, vegetable gardens, homestead plantations, bund plantations, reforestation, community woodlots, tank bed planting, avenue plantations, horticulture plots, and hectares of Hillocks being greened and Watershed management with Tank de-silting thus became the forte of SEDS. With tank desilting fish farming became big income additionality for the communities."

Of course it is the tank desilting, so vital to livelihoods, that Partners in Aid, through our generous donors, has been able to fund.

This year, the tank de-silting occurred in 3 villages, Buchepalli, Seshapuram and Thungodu with a total of 24950 cubic metres of soil being excavated.

A total of 24,950,000 cubic litres of water was conserved this year with the rains having come in time

after 4 years. SEDS hope to seed the tanks with fish this year as soon as the fisheries in Anantapur are ready with the fishlings.



Marking out tank excavation at Buchepalli

Funds donated towards the SEDS general project are directed towards the tank desilting work. With hundreds of tanks to be dug out, many villages ready to participate in the programme, and the capacity to complete only 3-4 each year, there is a high demand for this money and we thank those donors who have contributed to making such a difference to the lives of villagers so far. Further donation are gratefully received (see Donations page at the end of this newsletter.)



The end result - ready for the rain.



BRIGHT LUNCHEON –Joy Handley

This luncheon has been ongoing for 16 years with Patrizia Simone and her family providing the lovely pasta and salad. We have had it in a garden for 5 or 6 years but this is proving too much for Barrie and I.

Patrizia has offered to hold it in their Restaurant now and some other ladies from Alpine women's Group have joined forces to ease the pressure. We are working on a big raffle rather than small things and are hoping to increase our takings. So....

ANNUAL ITALIAN LUNCH ON MONDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2015 AT SIMONE'S OF BRIGHT GAVAN STREET 12 NOON \$25.00 PER HEAD

As always this event is to represent World Food Day with all funds raised going to All Bengal Women's Union, Kolkata to fund their Vocational Projects.

GOODWILL WINE

As we have noted in earlier newsletters, you can now enjoy quality wine and support Partners in Aid projects at the same time.

We have joined Goodwill Wine, who offer high quality wines at excellent prices. For every case of wine sold, a proportion goes directly to Partners in Aid, with no overhead costs.

Goodwill Wine has been established to support charities and not-for-profit organisations.

For further details go to <http://www.goodwillwine.com.au/charities/partners-in-aid>

– you can order wines or buy gift vouchers.

Keep in Touch

 www.partnersinaid.org.au

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We would like to thank the following organisations, who help us keep our administration costs low by kindly providing their services at a reduced rate:

- Computer Initiatives, Berwick, (03) 9707 4850 (Tim Moore)
- Training Resource Solutions, Hallam (03) 9988 6039

Partners in Aid Donation Form



Partners in Aid

Donations

I would like to make a general donation to Partners in Aid

I would like to make a donation to (circle/note where applicable):

ABWU (orphan trip/sewing supplies/books/project support)

SEDS (stationery/school bag/check-up/sewing machines/project support)

Symbiosis Bangladesh (stationery/garden/teacher/project support)

Child Sponsorship

I would like to begin/continue (please circle) to sponsor a child at ABWU/SEDS (Please circle and note in the box number of children you would like to sponsor)

Please tick the appropriate payment box:

3 months = \$60

6 months = \$120

12 months = \$240

Membership

I would like to begin/continue (please circle) to be a member of Partners in Aid

Total amount enclosed

If paying by EFT please email admin@partnersinaid.org.au for bank account details. If paying by cheque, make it out to Partners in Aid and send to PO Box 42, Narre Warren LPO, VIC 3805

Name for receipt: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Phone Number: _____

Email (for internal use and occasional updates): _____

Gifts of \$2.00 and over are tax deductible (receipt will be issued)

Thank you for your support