



PARTNERS IN AID

DECEMBER
NEWSLETTER 2021

A positive look forward after the challenges of 2021

We started this year with a sense of optimism and hope for what 2021 would bring for us and our program partners. While 2021 brought many more challenges related to COVID-19, Partners in Aid has managed to keep close to our projects and the teams who work tirelessly in their countries to deliver them.

As the year draws to a close, it is chance to reflect on what has happened and to look forward with optimism to what we hope to achieve with our partnerships in 2022.

In this Christmas edition, we look at how COVID-19 has impacted our projects, and what our partners are hoping to achieve in the coming year.

Despite the challenges of 2021, we have:

- Supported an additional project in Sri Lanka dedicated to sustainable dairy farming for war widows
- Continued to support our existing projects in the Philippines, Bangladesh and India
- Started on our journey to achieve accreditation with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) which will provide greater funding opportunities.

Our work this year is possible because of you. Your support and enthusiasm for Partners in Aid's projects is what has kept us going during a challenging year.

So thank you from all of the Board and our international partners.

We hope that you will continue your support as we head into 2022.

Our very best wishes to you and your families for a safe and happy festive season and a positive 2021.

Warmest wishes,
Dr Cecily Neil &
the Board

admin@partnersinaid.org.au

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HOW TO GIVE

HOW TO GIVE:

Because Partners in Aid has no paid staff, our overheads are very low. This means nearly all the money donated goes directly to our partner organisations. All donations are tax deductible. There are a number of ways you can support Partners in Aid projects, including making a general donation, making a donation directly to one of our projects, buying items from one of our partners or leaving a gift in your will. You can donate by:

- Leaving a bequest
- Direct Bank Transfer
- Cheque
- Online at [My Cause](#) or [GiveNow](#)
- Purchase from our [Goodwill Wine](#) Partners

BEQUESTS

A gift in your will, no matter what size will make a significant difference to the work of Partners in Aid. You can bequest cash, a percentage of your estate or a residuary gift. All bequests are welcome and there are no fees. We use bequests to assist with the continual development and improvements of all our programs. We recommend that you seek professional advice from your solicitor or financial advisor in planning a bequest. For more information or a confidential conversation please contact Cecily or Lyn on 03 9704 6315 or e-mail admin@partnersinaid.org.au.

BANK TRANSFER OR CHEQUE

Details to donate through bank transfer or cheque can be found on the next page. Please ensure that bank transfers have the details of your name and the direction of your donation.

If forwarding a cheque, fill in the newsletter page or write a note with name and direction of your donation or email admin@partnersinaid.org.au to advise your payment and where you would like it allocated.

ONLINE AT MY CAUSE / GIVENOW

You can make a one off or regular tax-deductible donation through platform My Cause or Give Now (click links below)

- [My Cause](#)
- [Give Now](#)

GOODWILL WINE PARTNERSHIP

You can also enjoy quality wine and support Partners in Aid projects at the same time. For every case of wine sold, a proportion goes directly to Partners in Aid, with no overhead costs. You can order individual bottles or corporate and personal gift packs. Order your wines or buy gift vouchers by [placing your order here and support Partners in Aid.](#)

HOW TO GIVE:

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

\$

I would like to make a specific donation to one of the below projects (please indicate which project)

Bangladesh: Symbiosis Bangladesh

- \$10 could buy school stationary for 1 week
- \$30 could buy tailoring supplies
- \$200 could buy a sewing machine

\$

India: SEDS Sustainable Agriculture Project

- \$10 could buy 1000 Fish fingerlings to stock tanks
- \$50 could employ a SEDS staff member for 1 month
- \$200 could hire a tractor for 1 week

\$

Philippines: Sinangpad Healthy Village Project

- \$35 could buy materials to enable a family to build a household sanitary toilet
- \$50 could buy health training for communities

\$

CHILD SPONSORSHIP

I would like to begin/continue to sponsor a child at SEDS / All Bengal Women's Union
Cost is \$260 per child per year, + optional annual gift \$20

\$

MEMBERSHIP

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

\$ 25

BANK TRANSFER & CHEQUE

Total amount enclosed (donations and child sponsorship):

EFT details: Partners in Aid, BSB/Acct: 033686/162354, with your surname as reference. Please email admin@partnersinaid.org.au to arrange a receipt and confirm where you would like the donation directed. If paying by cheque, please make it out to Partners in Aid, and post 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 or more are tax deductible (a receipt will be issued).

TOTAL

\$



PHILIPPINES: SINANGPAD HEALTHY VILLAGE PROJECT

PROJECT DIRECTOR: DR CECILY NEIL

Dr Cecily Neil, Sinangpad Health Village Project Director and Chairperson of Partners in Aid provides an update on the challenges of 2021.

Kalinga is still suffering from the impact of COVID-19. Rose Alunday, President and one of the most active of the Sinangpad Healthy Village Project members, and her husband, recently became critically ill with COVID. They had to be transferred to a different province for hospitalization as there were insufficient hospital facilities in Kalinga. While Rose is now out of the hospital, it is with great sadness that I share with you the passing of her husband. We have shared our thoughts and deepest condolences from the Partners in Aid community with Rose and her family.

Other members of the Sinangpad program, most of whom are health workers, are busy with vaccinations, and we have provided support to them by providing funds to purchase PPE. There are also still serious restrictions on movement in the province. It is not surprising that little recent progress has been made with the implementation of the Sinangpad Healthy Village Project. However, progress has been made by community members with the construction of household toilets with materials funded by Partners in Aid. One municipality has now been declared by the Provincial Government as zero open defecation free, largely due to the efforts of the Sinangpad Association.

The good news is that Sinangpad has submitted a project proposal for a new phase of our joint project to start when COVID restrictions end. Funding has been approved by the Board and the money will be transferred as soon as it is possible for the project to begin. A new feature of this phase of the project is that it will include training in soap making for two villages. Previous experience has shown that soap can be made and sold in a village for a price lower than that charged in shops and still provide the women making it with a small profit. The scraps of soap left over after making the cake soaps will be donated to the local school.

There is no doubt that once Kalinga returns to normal, the Sinangpad Healthy Village Project will once again start making a difference in the lives of people in remote Kalingan villages.



'WITH US AND ROSE [IN] SINANGPAD WE FIND FULFILMENT AND STRENGTH EVERY TIME WE DO SINANGPAD ACTIVITY (SIC).'

Val Pis-O in a recent message on Facebook



BANGLADESH: SYMBIOSIS PROJECT

PROJECT DIRECTOR: DR ROGER HUGHES,

Dr Roger Hughes provides an update on The Bangladesh Technical Training and Information Support (TTIS) Program and the Jamuna River Development Project (JRDP).

JAMUNA RIVER PROJECT

Because of the pandemic, it has again been impossible to visit Bangladesh. However, we have received a report from Alim-Al-Razy, our contact in Bangladesh. In his most recent communications, he reported that 7 of the 9 capacity-building groups for the shomaties were operating independently of staff, and the remaining 2 require only minimal help. This independence suggests that COVID-19 has forced groups to take more initiative and independence. The savings groups, with very high savings rates, are performing substantially better than predicted at the beginning of the previous financial year.

While five primary schools of the project have about three-quarters enrolment, government restrictions have meant that the schools are temporarily closed. However, teaching continues from home with teachers providing support where they can by visiting student homes. We do not know the effectiveness of these home visits and can only imagine that the situation is very different from the home teaching available here during our lockdown in Victoria where the internet is widely available.

Alim-Al-Razy reported that many important but peripheral aspects of this wholistic project have continued to be maintained, including: children's vision screening; antenatal check-ups and post-natal check-ups; child growth monitoring; spreading of awareness of the virus; and tree planting, all seem to be proceeding well, with little impact from the virus evident in the results.



'COVID-19 HAS FORCED GROUPS TO TAKE MORE INITIATIVE AND INDEPENDENCE!'

Dr Roger Hughes



BANGLADESH: SYMBIOSIS PROJECT

PROJECT DIRECTOR: DR ROGER HUGHES,

TECHNICAL TRAINING AND INFORMATION SUPPORT

This project appears to have bounced back from the very rough time it experienced during the height of the pandemic. It appears to be meeting its training objectives. Interestingly, there has been higher demand, and more rapid circulation of funds, within the somatic groups for the establishment of businesses, and especially in collaborative investments that account for a huge 92% of all recent investments.

Although the training of adults seems to be proceeding again as if there is no virus, we assume that schools are closed for school children, just as they are for primary school children in the JRDP. However, because only adult education is involved in this project, school education is not mentioned in the report.

Other activities are proceeding well and generally meeting targets. Such on-track activities include: child growth monitoring; disability awareness sessions; rehabilitative support; tree planting; and awareness sessions on the virus, health, and other social issues. As expected, surveying work to assess progress and the needs of the community has been stopped.



'THIS PROJECT HAS BOUNCED BACK FROM THE VERY ROUGH TIME IT EXPERIENCED DURING THE HEIGHT OF THE PANDEMIC.'

Dr Roger Hughes



SRI LANKA: SUSTAINABLE DAIRY FARMING PROJECT

PROJECT DIRECTORS: DR ROGER HUGHES & JACQUIE O'BRIEN

This project empowers war widows and female-headed households economically through sustainable dairy farming initiatives, with the long-term goal of contributing to the ending the cycle of poverty in Sri Lanka.

JAFFNA PENINSULA WIDOW'S DAIRY PROJECT

Our project through Y Gro assists the very poor war widows (widowed by the Sri Lankan Civil War) of the Jaffna Peninsula to establish themselves in the dairy industry and to form a collective that enables them to participate in the industry.

Roger Hughes was in Sri Lanka talking to Chandran, the head of YGro early last year when COVID-19 struck. Neither Roger nor the support Director, Jacquie O'Brien have been able to visit since then. Esther John, our contact in Sri Lanka with Y Gro, wrote an update in October to update our Partners in Aid community.

UPDATE FROM THE FIELD, Esther John

Due to COVID and travel restrictions in place a few delays in implementing the project as planned. As this is an ongoing program, we had a few overlapping activities from the earlier donor. However, it was possible for us to complete the requirements and start on with Partners in Aid from July onwards. Since this is an ongoing program in 2 villages in Jaffna, we have been able to provide the nutrients needed for the dairy farms and also purchase and provide one cow for a farmer. The dairy farmers are able to sustain their livelihood despite the economic crisis and COVID-related consequences. Alongside providing the support for the dairy farmers, our staff made visits where possible to monitor their progress and also follow up over the phone and provide advice when needed. The farmers of one village (Koppay) continued to sell the milk to a collection center.

In addition to the dairy activities, we have been able to provide some relief for the dairy farmers as they were affected by the COVID lockdown and loss of daily wage. This was provided as a small cash grant under another project.

This project is a pilot project for us at Partners in Aid. However, despite the pandemic and troubles it has caused, the project looks very promising for attracting our long term support.



'...we have been able to provide some relief for the dairy farmers as they were affected by the COVID lockdown and loss of daily wage.'

Esther John , Y Gro



SRI LANKA: SUSTAINABLE DAIRY FARMING PROJECT

We recently asked Esher John to share with our Partners in Aid community some of the challenges and opportunities the program faces.

IN CONVERSATION WITH ESTHER JOHN

What has been your biggest challenge for the project this year?

This year Sri Lanka was badly affected by COVID and the lockdown. Since May 2021 there have been two peak COVID waves that hit the country. Thus, it slowed down most of the activities. In the midst of this, the economic crisis and inflation rates have affected the project as well.

Where have you drawn hope and inspiration from this year?

Despite the challenging circumstances, the families who benefit from the project have been working hard and doing their best to maintain the dairy farms. Reflecting on the journey of each dairy farmer, where they have come from a place of nothing to something brings hope to us. The field staff of Y Gro have been doing their best in the midst of travel restrictions and at times giving advice and guidance to dairy farmers over the phone when needed. The commitment of the team has contributed towards the project and such commitment gives us hope that the project will go on even during difficult times.

What would you like your project to achieve next year?

We would like to see the dairy farmers improve their economic status from where they are this year to a better state. This would mean an increase in milk production and therefore increased income for the families.

What message would you like to give to Partners in Aid supporters here in Australia?

We are truly grateful for the support given to Y Gro during a global crisis and while all countries are struggling. The contribution given is not just financial support for an organisation but much more than that. Sustaining the livelihood of 25 war-affected women-headed households means, 25 families are able to cover their basic living expenses, children are able to continue their education and the families are able to move out of a poverty trap. Every penny given towards this project counts much more than its numerical value. Thank you for your support!



'Every penny given towards this project counts much more than its numerical value.'

Esther John , Y Gro



INDIA: SEDS CHILD EDUCATION PROGRAM

PROJECT DIRECTOR: LYN PICKERING

The SEDS child education sponsorship program was set up in late 1994. Sponsorship of a child's education covers books, uniforms, shoes, school fees, monthly visits to SEDS for cultural and sporting activities, and health checks. Rasool from SEDS provides Partners in Aid with an update on how the program has run over 2021.

CHILD EDUCATION SPONSORSHIP

Due to COVID-19, the Christmas clothes distribution program was carried out in April this year. Clothes and slippers (shoes) were distributed on the occasion of the Ugadi Festival. The second wave of COVID-19 hit India between April and August, leading to the closure of schools across the country. From September we continued with our Partners in Aid 2nd Saturday Program activities where we took height, weight, and footwear measurements. In October we distributed bags, stationery, uniforms, and slippers to the children.

SCHOOLS UPDATE

The 2020-21 year has been announced as the 'Zero Year' by the Government of Andhra Pradesh. This means that the children are promoted to the next grade. After a reprieve in the pandemic, schools started back in February 2021. However COVID-19's second wave of hit India in April, and again schools were closed up to 15th August. Schools started again this year from 16 August onwards.



PROJECT IMPACT

Since 1995, your support has helped more than 650 students to go to school.





A CHRISTMAS CARD WITH A DIFFERENCE

We are excited to let you know that Partners in Aid will again have a Christmas card available.

For each \$10 (tax-deductible) donated to our Special Christmas Appeal, you will receive one of these cards. We can provide as many cards as you like. Printing and postage costs have been donated, so every \$10 donated will go in full to supporting to one of our programs.

Payment can be made by:

Direct Bank Transfer: EFT Partners in Aid

BSB: 033 686 Account: 162354,

Please include your surname as a reference.

Please email us to arrange a receipt and confirm it is a donation to our Special Christmas Appeal and send it to cecily_neil@yahoo.com to ensure speedy dispatch of the card/s.

Cheques can be made out to Partners in Aid, and posted to PO Box 42, Narre Warren LPO, Vic 3805. Please enclose your full name and address and confirm it is for our Special Christmas appeal.

JOY TO THE WORLD



SEASON'S GREETINGS



PARTNERS IN AID MEMBERSHIP

Membership of Partners in Aid has never been compulsory, but support is welcome. The cost per person is \$25 and runs from 1 July to 30 June each year.

Thank you to those who are members, your support is appreciated.

Membership helps us cover:

- Administration costs - minimal as the office is free of cost
- Office supplies
- Membership of ACFID
- Insurance

Apart from assisting with costs, members are able to attend the AGM and have voting rights.

THANK YOU

Partners in Aid would like to thank a very special support. Each edition of the newsletter, and many of our printed materials are provided for free by Phillip McMillan of Culinary Solutions. Phillip's support is absolutely critical to Partners in Aid and we would like to thank him for being such a great supporter.

ACFID



ACFID
CODE

Complaints Policy

All complaints should be addressed to the Board Chair and will be treated seriously, acknowledged promptly and resolved within two months.

ACFID CODE OF CONDUCT

The ACFID Code of Conduct is a voluntary, self-regulatory sector code of good practice that aims to improve international development outcomes and increase stakeholder trust by enhancing transparency and accountability of signatory organisations. Partners in Aid is committed to the Code, of which we are a signatory and have been for many years. If you feel Partners in Aid has breached the ACFID Code of conduct you can visit <http://www.acfid.asn.au/code-of-conduct/complaints> to make a complaint directly to ACFID.

WHO IS ACFID?

The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) unites Australia's non-government aid and international development organisations to strengthen their collective impact against poverty. Their vision is of a world where gross inequality within societies and between nations is reversed and extreme poverty is eradicated. Partners in Aid is proud to be associated with such an organization, the peak body for the not-for-profit aid and development sector in Australia.

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