



**Partners in Aid**

AUSTRALIA

## **ALL BENGAL WOMEN'S UNION CHILDREN'S AND AFTER CARE HOMES ANNUAL REPORT, 2022**

### **Introduction**

All Bengal Women's Union (ABWU) is an Indian NGO which provides broad ranging support for women and girls. It has been operating for over 70 years. Partners in Aid has been supporting the ABWU for more than 40 years, with individual girls being sponsored by Partners in Aid donors.

In the very early years, the Partners in Aid sponsorship program was needed to assist with basic food, clothing, and accommodation needs. As ABWU has become increasingly well established and respected, there is increasing support from the local community and the growing middle class. As a result, sponsorship is now used to assist with less basic needs. This can only be regarded as a very positive outcome from our program.

### **Local Context**

Our partnership assists girls in the Children's Home (CWH) and the After Care Home (ACH - those aged eighteen and over), most of whom are from abusive and/or extremely destitute backgrounds. They are brought to the home by court order or by government /non-government help agencies. Many have had no form of education and also need extensive emotional support. Our support is primarily through sponsorship.

### **Goals**

The goal of sponsorship is to improve the future wellbeing and independence of the girls through education, counselling, and life skills training. ABWU aims to empower the residents and build resilience.

Although ABWU has a very broad scope, PIA support is limited to resident girls and sponsorship subsidises the relatively small amount received from the Indian Government and ABWU's own fundraising. It assists ABWU with the provision of such things as counselling, remedial education, vocational support, and support for tertiary education.

### **Expenditure**

In the Financial Year 2021-22, PIA sent AUD10,140 comprising sponsorship for forty girls with additional donations from several sponsors totalling AUD260.

### **Intended and Achieved Actions**

Due to an increased focus on development - building local capacity and empowering communities, there has been a reduction in support for sponsorship programs and the number of sponsorships has

reduced accordingly. At present, of the 40 sponsored girls, 30 are in the CWH and 10 in the ACH. This represents less than half the numbers of ten years ago.

Eighteen girls left ABWU during the pandemic. Three completed nursing degrees, one a BCom, one beautician and two call centre training. These girls are fully employed. By government order, girls were sent home during the pandemic where possible and a large number of these didn't return. The sponsored girls now include a large proportion of new residents, and the emphasis has been on managing this.

### **Risks and Management Action**

Risks usually associated with NGOs are somewhat mitigated by ABWU's long history and its well-established protocols and audit procedures. Our sponsorship numbers are declining, and the program is maintained through sponsorship by committed, long-term donors. Numbers will ultimately diminish until there are too few sponsors to make the program worth continuing.

The pandemic has resulted in a great deal of disruption at ABWU. Communication has been sometimes sporadic. The Project Coordinator will be visiting ABWU in early December enabling her to provide an update to sponsors and the PIA Board.

Anne-Marie Maltby  
Project Coordinator

30 December 2022