

June 2019

Partners in Aid

Enduring, Capable Communities

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End of Financial Year

The end of financial year is a time when giving might be at the forefront of people's minds, as you seek to secure a tax break by donating before June 30.

Donors to Partners in Aid can claim tax deductions in their income tax - we are endorsed as a deductible gift recipient (DGR).

If you are in a position to make a general donation, our bank account as follows:

Partners in Aid Ltd – Overseas account

BSB: 033686 Acc: 162354.

Please also email admin@partnersinaid.org.au with your name, address and donation details so we can issue a receipt.



Taking SEDS to the World

Amanda Stone – Project Co-ordinator

At Partners in Aid, we've always known that the work done by Manil and Rajen at SEDS was pioneering. From creating a green oasis in the dry rocky Deccan plateau in Andhra Pradesh, to establishing Women's Self Help groups, a model now supported and funded by the state government, their enormously successful tank desilting programme, and the ground breaking UN-endorsed carbon reduction programmes, SEDS have set a benchmark for sustainable communities in India. In April this year, this amazing journey was shared with young people in Antwerp, Belgium, when CEO Manil Jayasena Joshua was invited to give a series of lectures about the work of SEDS.

Here is her report.

In early February I was invited by The Thomas More University in Antwerp Belgium to give three lectures of one hour each. Two lectures for first year Psychology students and one for the faculty.

The main focus on the lectures was to talk about the work SEDS has done in the past 4



decades and the link between Sociology and Psychology.

In the lectures I gave I spoke about the diversity of India in regard to language, ethnic groups, cultures and religion and how, in spite of this, it was united in its diversity. It being the largest democracy on earth, it has a free press and independent judiciary system, and although the country is united, about how deep divisions persist still.

Synopsis of the lectures:

In all the work we did in the last 40 years we had to deal with people.

We had to deal with human behaviour, emotions and projections. In order to make a meaningful sustainable change we were confronted with changing the norms and

culture of a society. We had to break the rigid patterns that kept people down and submissive. The knowledge of these socialisation processes depend upon psychology. In order to change the lives of people we also had to change their minds. So an understanding of human behaviour is essential for the profession of social work in order to deal with socio-economic or psychosomatic problems faced by people. We must understand behavioural patterns at individual, group or community level in order to help them.

We had to understand them.

We had to analyse or diagnose the situation which is an on-going process till today. We do this through cooperation, open dialogues and casual conversation, village meetings, participatory rural appraisal, assistance, coordination, but overall an interest and willingness to resolve their most pressing problems.

Social work and psychology are two different disciplines. They are not the same but similar. Both are a profession that aims to improve the lives of people. While psychology focuses more on human

behaviour and examines how the human mind functions, social work tends to deal more with delivering social, mental and welfare services. The two disciplines deal with components of human personality, human nature and needs, human abilities, behaviour and problems. Both have their own ways of tackling human problems, whether in physical, mental or social way. It is extremely relevant to understand the interdisciplinary relationship of these two disciplines.

I then spoke briefly of how SEDS conducted its activities, how we operated within the communities and how all the activities were vital for changing behaviour and ultimately improving the livelihood conditions of the people. Development is surely a dynamic process and our interventions have been focusing on these issues for the past 4 decades. We are glad that our initiatives have been not only in addressing the immediate needs of the community but has also in building the capacities of the community so as to move towards becoming a more sustainable and self-reliant society.



At any given moment an individual is the product of countless interactions between his genetic endowment and physical and socio-cultural environment. Genetically we can't change much but as social workers we can offer an alternative for the physical and socio-cultural environment.

Each of our programs from food for work programs, self-help groups, tuition classes, environment and now the biogas project fosters certain values, beliefs and approved behaviour patterns. This led people to question the status-quo and society in which they grew up. They saw and learned and it

made them realise what could be done and aspire for other things.

Learning, in its various forms, especially conditioning, imitation and training, or learning under the guidance and direction of another, fostered new knowledge. This plays a prime role in the development of person's personality.

This leads them to define new roles and status. The village health worker for example, has the privilege of practicing some simple medicine which holds her in high regard by other members of the community. Gradually, a new self-concept developed for the individual as well as a new identity for the community.

As a result I feel these changes have created mental confidence in the villages. In all honesty we never looked deep into this as we never had the means neither the know-how to research this properly and we had more important things to do than look at all the outcomes of our work. Surely new problems are there such as study pressure or looking for a stable income. But overall by eradicating the worst practices of an archaic society while at the same time create new

roles and responsibilities for the most vulnerable members of the society I think we provided opportunities for prevention of depression and anxiety disorders.

In conclusion:

The response from the lectures was astounding. Halls were full, pin drop silence and the questions and applause after made me proud of the work SEDS had done.

The highlight to the trip was that I was able to meet about 30 of the Belgium volunteers who have come to SEDS to teach in the school and do other things over the last 25years.

Manil Jayasena Joshua, CEO

Social and Education Development Society

SEDS – some reflections

Lyn Pickering – Child Education Sponsorship Coordinator

In the December edition of our newsletter I updated our readers about the child sponsorship program which has been in operation since early 1995. The changes continue to impress, but it is the goals now being achieved by students who are so keen to do more with their lives. School reports for the students are still to arrive and I would hope to bring further news in September.

I decided to bring some of my observations over my last 27 year involvement with Partners in Aid and then SEDS, and involvement and passion shared also by Ian.

Watershed management and sustainable agricultural practices remain the major focus at SEDS with other areas included as necessary. During my visit in November, the watershed program was slower to start due to showers of rain which made it difficult for the JCB (tractor) to get in. If machines get bogged in the tanks, it is a costly and time consuming exercise to get them out. The villages have been selected for this work. This year the program has been quite different. For many years the



work began early February ahead of the anticipated monsoon rains of June and July onwards.

Working with Manil and the team remains a positive experience. Due to a motor bike accident four years ago, Rajen who was the visionary for SEDS 35 years ago is no longer taking part in any activities. These past years have been difficult for Manil, Rohith, Rashna and the SEDS team, but the work continues because Manil worked so closely with Rajen to bring that vision to fruition and it is Manil who now continues the work with those around her.

Ian and I often reflect on the times we spent weeks on end out in the field each day with Rajen, looking at recent project work and planning ahead for the project to follow. There were no air conditioned vehicles when our first visits commenced. After twenty visits for an average of three weeks

each time, it is easy to build a good rapport and working relationship with people who do share that passion of improving the lives of those around us.

When speaking with local groups in Australia, it is not unusual to be asked if we do anything in our local community at home. The simple answer is YES we do. Through Rotary we assist with Council programs and school programs which bring families and schools together, we support one of our local groups who assist homeless people with food, showers, washing and also supply everyday food items to needy families in our local area, supporting a Casey Newstart program which engages students in Year 9 who might otherwise leave school too early. Our Club caters for a full breakfast for 200+ people for the Dawn service on ANZAC day, and we have not missed one in 33 years.

Back to INDIA - Sustainable agricultural practices continue with a noticeable improvement in those villages where the Farmers come together to learn and to share their experiences to bring about improved soils, a more sustainable approach to their lands, higher crop yields and better prices at

the markets. A visit to a community who welcome the changes was for me a welcome change from my visits to many schools, and one which both Ian and I have enjoyed over the past 25 years.

The Bio Gas program which supported 5000 homes in the SEDS area of developmental in recent years is continues, with ongoing training of families to maintain the equipment and to remember at times that the pits require fresh manure from the cows to make the gas. This project was supported by another NGO and compliments the work carried out by SEDS and Partners in Aid in this dry landscape. The use of a small gas stove in the homes has given the women who cook the family meals and also their families a much cleaner and healthier place to eat and sleep.

Our concerns in Australia seem so minor compared to what people face there on a daily basis. If power goes out for a short time, or the washing machine or computer breakdown, we expect an immediate fix. The Indian people are very resilient and are accepting of new practices, even if it appears slow to us at time

A most noticeable change from my perspective over the past 25 years that the child sponsorship program has been in operation, is the willingness of many illiterate parents to educate their children beyond Year 10. When sitting with Rasool and a family who bring their child to SEDS for an interview, the parents are more engaged in education opportunities which were denied them. I do see some parents coming forward who have remained at school to complete Year 10, but they are in the minority,

My visit this time also saw me visiting a very large town through my Rotary connections. The members of the YOURS Foundation meet weekly for a breakfast meeting and carry out many projects on a regular basis, some of which include, weekly food prep and serving to 250 at the local Government hospital for the patients and families visiting, school support via uniforms, books, bags and plates and cups for free school lunches. The rubella vaccination program ran for three years with support from my Rotary Club and all 200 SEDS sponsored children received their



Left: early 80s. Right: same checkdam in late 90s

Image from <https://sedsngo.org/about/>, showing the difference at just one site.

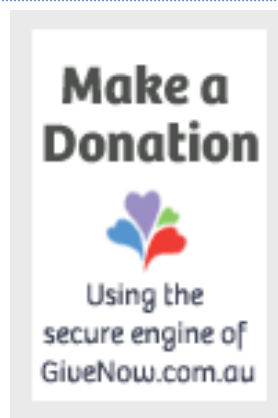
vaccinations along with another 1,600 students and some young married teachers who requested it. The surgical procedure of removing the gifted eyes from a person who has passed on has been increasing over recent months with families recognizing the benefits from one person's eye which can sometimes help 8 other people. Small 500 litre plastic tanks and their installation have helped more than 120 schools, kindergartens, and hospitals to have fresh clean water available. All of this is done through the personal generosity of the team from YOURS and their supporters.

To do good in the world is a good thing

To do good in the world with true commitment and a shared passion with those we meet and work with is a wonderful thing.

Ian and I have given a lot over the past 25 years and beyond to SEDS, the work of Partners in Aid and Rotary, but the rewards have been tenfold.

Our journey continues.



GiveNow is an initiative of the Our Community Foundation, a not-for-profit program established through the financial support of www.ourcommunity.com.au and Westpac. Their manifesto is:

“You have the power to make a difference, to build a better community, to shape our country, our world.”

Partners in Aid is registered with them, which means you can make a donation using their secure, online portal at this link:

<https://www.givenow.com.au/partnersinaid>

Project Report

Roger Hughes - Director

In the previous newsletter Graham Moore described how one of our schools in Bangladesh was in fear of falling into the Jamuna River (the largest 'tributary' of the Brahmaputra). Thank you to those of you who contributed (or even considered contributing) financially towards moving the school. Your support, together with support from the Baptist Church through Symbiosis Australia, this portable school has now been relocated to a safe (for the time being) place.

This move is only the latest of a handful of school moves that have needed to be made on this island. We knew from the very beginning when we established the first of the schools, under our banner through Symbiosis Bangladesh, that it would need moving ever five or so years. The alternative at the time was to do as some organisations now do, and run floating schools on boats. Such floating schools would have overcome the problem of school relocation but at the expense higher maintenance costs and decreased facilities in the wet season.

Initially, we had one school, which we moved down the island as the island moved. Subsequently, we increased the number of schools with the plan of frog leaping them down the island as the island moved. However, since we started providing primary education (and preschool education) other organisations have stepped in to provide primary



education and the government of Bangladesh has established a large secondary school. Thus, these days our schools move in a less orderly manner to where they fill in the geographical gaps of other schools.

Within the Symbiosis framework and with your support, we have also taken over provision for schools on the river banks (the 'mainland') oppose the island, so that our total number of supported schools is approximately a dozen (but variable). Fortunately, the schools on the mainland are not as prone to erosion!

There is a strong relationship between Symbiosis Bangladesh and Partners in Aid concerning these schools. Just this last month Symbiosis Australia brought to Australia two members of the Bangladeshi coordinating team and four members of our organisation were able to have a working (and social) lunch with them here in Melbourne. Your contributions are making a big difference to about two and a half thousand (that is ~12 times 200+) students from the poorest of the poor who move to these islands because of the availability of land in such a precarious location. Thank you.

Complaints Policy

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

Please help us spread the word about Partners in Aid by passing this newsletter on to family, friends and colleagues once you have read it.

Thank you.



ABWU

Anne-Marie Maltby - Project Director

Joy is busy collating and sending out reports for sponsored girls. ABWU send them in dribs and drabs and it can be quite difficult to keep track of it all. She hasn't received reports on every girl; often that is because they are studying or training externally and reports aren't available. Sometimes girls also go home for holidays and don't return. In these cases ABWU sometimes have to spend a lot of time tracking down what has happened and if it is possible for the girl to remain safely with the family or if they need to return. They don't usually tell us about this until they can give a confirmed outcome.

We have had a report from the teacher involved in the 'Education for All' project showing that it continues to be successful in integrating children into regular school classes. There is a real need for this education for children who have never been to school before and often come from families where no-one has ever been to school. Not only do they children need to learn some basics such as numbers and the alphabet, they also need to learn how to sit in a classroom and pay attention to a teacher. The story telling, drawing and rhymes are popular.

We started funding 'Education for All' in 2015 and the initial intake was 11 children. All 11 did well

and now go to regular classes. Some children need two years teaching before they are ready to go to school. Last year the teacher had 22 students at different levels including some that are in regular school classes but are struggling to cope. It must be pretty hard work for one teacher!

Most of our funding goes towards the teacher's salary which is less than \$1,000 per annum. It is amazing that we can make such a difference with a relatively small amount and the teacher, Mrs Addya, has asked us to express her particular thanks to the donors that have made it possible.



Partners in Aid is proud to be registered with the ACNC, a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct, and registered with Consumer Affairs Victoria. Whilst compliance is an onerous task for a volunteer organisation, we are committed to maintaining transparency, in which you can be confident your funds are going to where they are needed most – to those in India, Bangladesh and the Philippines.

We often get letters from our supporters thanking our staff for the great job they are doing. As many are already aware, Partners in Aid is run almost totally by unpaid volunteers. The only exception that comes to mind is we pay for the services of an auditor to audit our annual financial returns. The organisation runs through the input of the voluntary members of Board and project committees. So whether it be operating our financial system and transactions, keeping our many sponsors informed, or trawling through government red tape to keep us compliant with laws of the land, there are some dedicated volunteers at work making it happen.

If you want to help, the very best thing you could do is convince another person or group who is not currently a donor, to become a donor to Partners in Aid. This is something everyone can do. We could slash our administrative costs if we had a pro-bono financial auditor to oversee our annual returns, so if you know such a person, put them in touch with us.



ACFID
CODE

ACFID Code of Conduct

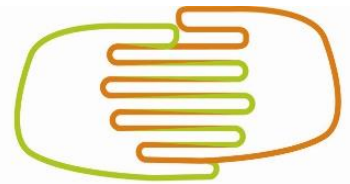
The ACFID Code of Conduct is a voluntary, self-regulatory sector code of good practice that aims to improve international development outcomes and increase stakeholder trust by enhancing transparency and accountability of signatory organisations. Partners in Aid is committed to the Code, of which we 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.

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 (books/self-defense training support)

SEDS (Low Carbon Farming)

Symbiosis Bangladesh (stationery/garden/sewing machine/women's group support)

Sinangpad Healthy Village Project (toilets, vegetable patches, community health)

Child Sponsorship

I would like to begin/continue (please circle) to sponsor a child at ABWU/SEDS (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

Total amount enclosed (donations and child sponsorship)

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 newsletters and occasional updates): _____

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

Thank you for your support

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Thank you.