

Newsletter

September 2019

Partners in Aid

Enduring, Capable Communities

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Happy Independence Day India!

Independence Day in India is celebrated on 15 August, to commemorate the nation's independence from the United Kingdom on 15 August 1947. On this day, the first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru raised the Indian national flag above the Lahori Gate of the Red Fort in Delhi. On each subsequent Independence Day, the incumbent Prime Minister customarily raises the flag and gives an address to the nation.

The holiday is observed throughout India with flag-hoisting ceremonies, parades and cultural events. This is a national holiday.



Thank you to SendScraps.com and Freepik.com for these images



Millet, the “Climate Smart” Crop – a new program for SEDS!

Amanda Stone – Project Director

I am writing this update from SEDS after two days of light but steady rain, which has been very welcome.



Welcome rain lay in puddles for several days – a rare sight. Photo: Amanda Stone

Rainfall in the SEDS area of work has become unpredictable, scarce and therefore unreliable.

The predictable monsoons of the past are no longer; rain can be expected at any time or not at all.

This disrupted rainfall pattern upset the regular Tank Desilting program last year. When villages had been selected, funds raised and everyone was ready, it rained lightly, making the wet sticky soil impossible for the machinery to work in. These tanks were eventually desilted in December, many months later.

It's affecting farming too. Most crops require rain just before planting, and follow-up rain to ensure the crop's success. Farmers, who have been relying on cash crops of groundnuts and rice, have faced repeated crop failure over the past 4 years. Many take out loans to keep their



farms running, only to be faced with another crop failure. It can be devastating.

The 500 farmers involved in the Partners in Aid funded Low Carbon Farming program have also been affected by changed rainfall patterns. Whilst their sustainably grown crops provide better yields and their soils have improved through this program, crops still need rain.

SEDS, always at the forefront of solving problems, has consulted with farmers and developed a pilot program of millet growing.

Millet is an indigenous crop to Andhra Pradesh and requires very little rainfall to seed. In fact, it requires just 300ml water to produce 1kg of millet, where a kilo of rice requires 3-5000 litres.

Described as a “climate smart crop” it's been abandoned in recent decades for other short-term crops like ground nuts which have been encouraged by successive government policies, but which are now failing with a changing climate.

Millet is hardy, has probiotic properties and is highly nutritious. With malnutrition still of concern in southern India, this “nutri-cereal” has numerous benefits.

There is a lot of interest from local farmers in growing millet and markets for this product are growing too. SEDS will need to train farmers to respond to opportunities to plant when rain occurs rather than persist with seasonal planting as usual and expecting rain. They will need to train lead farmers to develop

business acumen, to negotiate good prices for millet on behalf of their farmer groups, and to develop a business plan to make the most of opportunities to value add and market their millet.

SEDS and Partners in Aid have been working together to prepare an application for a federal government Friendship Grant to help get this programme off the ground. I've been able to meet with farmers this week – men and women – and hear directly about the challenges they are facing but their commitment to the Low Carbon Farming Program and to working in their farmer groups to develop opportunities as a collective.

It has been a privilege this week to observe the dedication of long term SEDS field workers Nagamani and Imran and Basha, and their commitment to

improving the livelihoods of some of the poorest in India.

As always, I have been asked by villagers about more funding for tank desilting work, such a high demand activity with enormous benefits to the communities in the SEDS area of work. Donations to this project are welcomed at any time and will be guaranteed to make a difference.



Farmer's Group at Seshapuram. Photo: Amanda Stone

SEDS – Child Sponsorship

Lyn Pickering – SEDS Sponsorship Director

School reports are being processed and letters prepared to send out to sponsors. A number have been completed and posted.

Twenty students have successfully completed their Year 10 studies this past year with one fail. The majority of these students will choose to continue onto College (Year 11 and 12) and they will do this with family or Government support. All other students have progressed to the next level. Five students who had the opportunity to continue to College or University have also been successful.

Some photos are also available to sponsors of students receiving their new set of clothes or wearing them. These photos were taken during January this year. The giving of a present was instigated after a number of sponsors indicated they wished to recognise their student's birthday or other significant celebrations. It was not realistic to do this except by having one day each year for ALL students to receive a present. A new set of new clothes is an acceptable gift to the families and has been appreciated. The sponsoring of a child as many are aware also allows the students to receive new school uniforms, bags, shoes, and to receive their schoolbooks and have any school fee paid. All the students attend a monthly activity at the SEDS campus.

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS – In the past month I have been invited to speak to two groups. One night I was requested to speak specifically about the sponsorship program, as the group sponsored two girls. However I also included the work of watershed management and low carbon farming which brought some excellent questions. The second night was



speaking more broadly about connections with Partners in Aid, SEDS, and Rotary. Ian and I have been able to very successfully make the connections between all three, with the outcomes for the sponsored children being very beneficial, but there have also been benefits in the other areas of work.

We appreciate the opportunity to speak to groups around Melbourne but would be happy to consider other towns or cities as well. We plan to make a trip to Tasmania to speak to a group in the near future.

Letter from a Sponsor

Dear Lyn,

Many thanks for your letter, the photos of our sponsored child, and her report card. It is so encouraging to read your letter and see the steady improvement of students over the years and the numbers going on to higher education. It is also good to see that younger teachers are travelling into the rural areas to teach.

I wonder how our last young lady is going with her studies. I hope she can continue as she showed so much promise.

Regards

H.

Sinangpad Healthy Village Project

Dr Cecily Neil - Project Director

The Sinangpad Healthy Village Project concentrates on helping the residents of poor, remote communities in the Philippines to recognize local environmental risks to health, and, with the help of funding where necessary, to purchase construction materials to enable affected villagers to themselves build infrastructure to minimize these risks. Villagers set their own priorities with respect to removing the local health risks, and in setting these priorities, they have usually given priority to the construction of sanitary toilets by households who have no option other than open defecation.

A recent appeal resulted in a great donation which has made it possible for Sinangpad to provide construction materials in one of the project municipalities for all those households which still lack a sanitary toilet – some 459 – to enable them to construct one. The construction by household members will be supervised by the Municipal Engineer to ensure that septic tanks are leak proof, and that there will be no other threat to the environment, or, especially, the local water supply.

We now look forward to the Municipality of Pasil becoming open defecation free – and a healthier environment for all its residents, especially children.



Keep in Touch



www.partnersinaid.org.au



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[Partners in Aid](https://www.facebook.com/PartnersinAid)



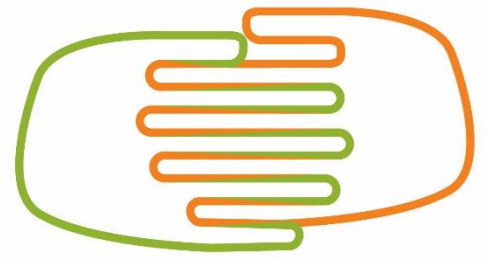
admin@partnersinaid.org.au

A note on photos used in our newsletter

Partners in Aid have policies in place to protect those we help – such as our Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct. As such, we do not publish images of children under the age of 18 without parental consent, nor do we publish a child's name. Our policies are regularly endorsed by ACFID.

Unless otherwise noted, photos are taken by Partners in Aid Directors and Project Coordinators. Where an image is sourced from the Internet, we will reference it as such.

If you have any questions on our policies, please contact us via email admin@partnersinaid.org.au or by phone on 03 9704 6315.



Partners in Aid

This Year's Floods in Bangladesh

Roger Hughes - Project Director

We received news at the end of July that this year the monsoonal floods:

- impacted classes at five of our project primary schools and our two kindergartens - forcing them to temporarily close;
- badly affected all 94 savings groups on Kazipur Sandbar areas, with those affected taking refuge

in the closed schools, and in relative's homes.

All this comes after one of the schools needed moving last year because of water erosion with help from some of you. As readers already know, life is a continual battle for the poor living by the major rivers and on the sandbar islands.

The Changing Story of Rubana Hossain

Rubana Hossain (Riya) is 16 years old and in class six. She is a deaf. Her father is a collage teacher and her mother is a housewife. Her brother is also a deaf. Rubana heard of some training being taught at the school and actively sort out information to commence learning how to sew. She completed



Rubana sewing a dress. Photo: Symbiosis International

successfully the course early 2019. Rubana started to make dresses during the course using designs she sourced online. She is now making dresses for herself, and other family members. Rubana's dream is to start a tailoring shop in Tangail Town and employ other disabled people.

The Success story of Chamali Begum

Chamali Begum is 42 years old and lives with her husband. They have two sons and one daughter. Their daughter reads in class seven. Her two sons have successfully passed the eight class, and work in a garment factory in Dhaka.

Her husband is a farmer. They have a small piece of land which inherited from his father and also works as a share farmer. In years where e.g. flood destroys their crops, they will go for some days without food.

Chamali was trying to find out a way to increase her family's resilience and with the JRDP for functional education. After completing an 8-month FE course, she formed a savings group. The course comprised orientation trainings, awareness sessions and IGA

training. During the savings group's weekly meetings, the group discuss and share their problem, and try to find ways to overcome it. Chamali took a substantial loan from her savings group to purchase one ox (bull). They sold it for some profit after 1 year. Chamali repaid all of her loan. She has repeated the process and again made a sizeable profit so continues the business.

Chamali Begum and her husband are now very happy as they have found a way to change their lifestyle. Her husband started small bamboo business. Chamali also earns a daily wage from sewing, a skill she also learned from Symbiosis-run training programmes.



Chamali and her husband with their livestock. Photo: Symbiosis International

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.

ANOTHER SUCCESS FOR ABWU



Joy Handley

Joy Handley - Project Director

Many of you will have read about Mita Das at various times over many years as we highlighted her many achievements.

Barrie and I, along with 2 friends sponsored Mita from the age of 7 seeing her through her Primary, Secondary and University of Fine Arts education where she gained her Masters.

All this is achievable for some girls but Mita is an exception as she is totally blind. Born with this serious sight condition, she was found wandering the streets of Kolkata by police and through courts luckily ended up at ABWU. She was a live-in resident at a Blind Institution during school terms and went “home” to ABWU in the holidays. She has no idea who her parents or siblings are.

Mita is a very independent young lady... always has been... she never uses a white stick and gets herself from A to B unassisted on all sorts of public transport.

Just over 2 years ago she married “the love of her life”, Abhijit, who is a schoolteacher. In March this year she gave birth to a beautiful baby boy. Suffice to say they are both over the moon and refer to him as Prince!!

It makes us very happy to see her in such a happy place after what was a horrendous start to her young life. We are forever grateful to the authorities in Kolkata and especially ABWU who nurtured her and cared for her, making sure she had every opportunity in life.

We have been able to communicate with them which was really lovely... I felt like a Grandma with a new grandson!



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.



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.

Membership is due on June 1st of each year. Please contact us if you're interested in taking on a membership.

You can make a donation to Partners in Aid through PayPal. You can select a specific item, such as fish fingerlings for tanks in India, or a general donation. Making a general donation gives the Board of Partners in Aid the greatest flexibility in using your contribution. Please use the comment field in the Paypal form if you would like your general donation to go to a project or item not listed on our donation page, at this link:

<http://partnersinaid.org.au/how-to-help/>



As we have noted in earlier newsletters, you can 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.

For further detail, go to:

<http://www.goodwillwine.com.au/charities/partners-in-aid>

You can order wines or buy gift vouchers.



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

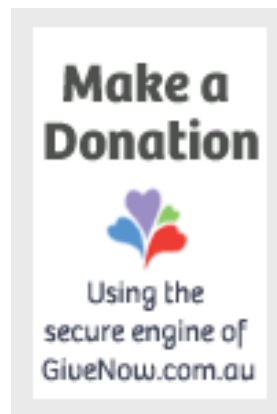
ACFID Code of Conduct

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.

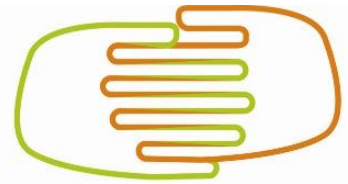


GiveNow is an initiative of the Our Community Foundation, a not-for-profit program established through the financial support of www.ourcommunity.com.au and Westpac. Their manifesto is:

“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>



Partners in Aid Donation Form

Partners in Aid

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

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

SEDS (Sustainable Agriculture)

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

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

SEDS Low Carbon Farming Committed Donor

I wish to pledge \$200 /\$500 /\$1000 per year for 1/2/3/4/5 years

Child Sponsorship

I would like to begin/continue to sponsor a child at ABWU/SEDS (Cost is \$260 per child per year, + optional annual gift \$20) x =

Membership

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

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)

***Thank you for your support!
Your contributions really help make a
change in the lives of others.***