



# PARTNERS IN AID

APRIL  
NEWSLETTER 2022

## There are many reasons for optimism this year...

Welcome to 2022 and what the United Nations has declared as the International Year of Basic Sciences for Sustainable Development. This is fitting for Partners in Aid because although it may not seem immediately apparent, our partners, their local communities and our donor community are engaged in this practice each day. From better sanitation to helping create sustainable income opportunities, hand in hand with our partners, we help to improve the lives of hundreds of people across our projects. And this is the essence of what the United Nations hopes to achieve in 2022.

There are many reasons to be optimistic this year. For Partners in Aid, much of this optimism can be drawn from the endless enthusiasms and commitment of our partner organisations.

Despite long and successive lockdowns last year, all have continued their programs and work with their communities, albeit in challenging and limited ways. They have successfully helped residents seeking to achieve not just some short-term outcomes but some sustained long-term change. Another reason for optimism is also our performance last year. Despite the impact of COVID-19 on the funding of not-for-profit organisations like us, due to several large donations, our donations actually increased a little during the last financial year by just over \$3,500.

Nonetheless, we ended the financial year with a small deficit of approximately \$1,000, necessitating dipping a little into our reserves. This was due to a donation to the Sinangpad Healthy Village Project to fund PPE needed by frontline health staff, a number of whom are volunteers on the project PIA is funding, and to the initiation of our new project in Sri Lanka with YGro to support the sustainable dairy farming income of war widows and female-headed households. We are proud to say that our administrative costs for the year remained low - slightly less than 6% of the income.

I would also like to share with you some changes to our Board. Dr Roger Hughes, who has been a driving force behind Partners in Aid for decades has stepped down this year. Roger will continue to work on our Project Committee. We also farewelled Dr Chris Gilles, Jessica Gill and Caryl Hertz. I'd like to thank Chris, Jess and Caryl for their contribution and commitment to Partners in Aid. We have welcomed three new Board members. Wilaine Grace Pis-O, Ruby Dubash and Dan Pagoda. In our June edition we will feature more about Wilaine, Ruby and Dan.

Thank you to all of our outgoing, incoming and existing Board members, and thank you to you, our supporter community.

Warmest wishes,  
Dr Cecily Neil &  
the Board

[admin@partnersinaid.org.au](mailto:admin@partnersinaid.org.au)



# 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](mailto: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](mailto: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.](#)



## 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 a look forward to 2022.**

As soon as the pandemic allows, Sinangpad Healthy Village Project will put in place a new proposal that will continue to improve the lives of their partner communities. New activities include:

- Improving the health status of villages across nine communities. This will include in-village training in environmental sanitation, community mobilisation to help residents decide on their priorities, and the provision of small grants to buy the materials needed for residents to realise these priorities by constructing simple infrastructure such as household sanitary toilets, effective drainage, pig pens and solid waste disposal facilities. This will be followed by mentoring and monitoring.
- Achieving total zero open defecation in at least one municipality.
- Carrying out monitoring and evaluation in those villages which have previously participated in the project.

While travel restrictions and work pressures made it impossible to implement all the usual project activities in any village in 2020–2021, Sinangpad was still able to organise the construction of household toilets by families in the Municipality of Pasil (pop. 10,577, 2020 census).

Sinangpad is working closely with government agencies in an effort to eliminate open defecation. The government now issues Zero Open Defecation Certificates to villages – Grade 1 Certificates to villages where all households have a sanitary toilet, or share one with at most 1 or 2 other families, and Grade 2 Certificates where every household has its own toilet.

In this last year, all villages in two municipalities have received Grade 2 Certificates. In one, Pasil, this is largely due to the efforts of the Sinangpad Association; in the other, Balbalan (pop. 12,914 2020 census) Sinangpad Association worked closely with government agencies. Six communities in the Municipality of Rizal have also received certificates, their efforts facilitated by Sinangpad Association.

It has not been possible to do any systematic data collection for the sustainability evaluation, however, some Rural Health Unit staff have been assisting with data collection whenever the opportunity arises.



‘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 Garment Training Project (formerly known as the Technical Training and Information Support) and the Jamuna River Development Project (JRDP).**

## **GARMENT TRAINING PROJECT (FORMERLY TECHNICAL TRAINING AND INFORMATION SUPPORT)**

The present pandemic has at times been extremely bad in Bangladesh, except in very isolated pockets of the country. Government lockdown measures greatly disrupted the classes that could be given on textiles.

The pandemic forced substantial changes in the types of training given in 2021. The training that involved closer contact such as embroidery was abandoned in favour of sewing, which could more easily be explained without the close contact. Surprisingly, the overall project managed to recover despite these disruptions, albeit with the transition from embroidery and dyeing to sewing. In sewing where instead of an initially planned 120 trainees in sewing, 163 were actually trained despite there being extensive periods of no training during periods of lockdown!

Many other activities also had to be delayed or dramatically changed relative to the initial planning calendar but nevertheless managed to reach their targets, e.g. tree planting. As project coordinator for PIA, I am both delighted and surprised that these targets were ultimately effectively met.

There does not appear to have been any increase in shomati membership (otherwise known as membership of 'women's corners') or in the number of meetings held. However, the increased insecurity caused by the pandemic created a strong increase in shomati activities, especially in both collecting savings and making loans. There was a strong increase in purchases of sewing machines and in loans for group business activities. It is very promising for the future that the locals clearly appreciate the security that their savings give them.



**'THE PANDEMIC HAS FORCED SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES IN THE TYPES OF TRAINING GIVEN IN 2021.'**

Dr Roger Hughes



# BANGLADESH: SYMBIOSIS PROJECT

PROJECT DIRECTOR: DR ROGER HUGHES,

## JAMUNA RIVER PROJECT

As with our other project in Bangladesh, this project has been hit badly by the pandemic. Originally it was planned that through the project 750 primary children would receive a full year's schooling in 2021. However, because of the government lockdowns aimed at controlling the pandemic, only a little over two thirds of this commitment was achieved. The achievement was higher on the island.

As far as can be ascertained, the island remained free of the virus, but nevertheless people on the island were required to abide by the government lockdowns.

During these lockdowns, schoolteachers on the island managed to keep tuition going to many students with home visits by the teachers. Off the island, the community was not isolated from the virus and the pandemic spread. Throughout the entire project monitoring by Symbiosis staff (difficult at any time let alone during the pandemic) was curtailed by government restrictions.

The shomati activities and savings groups continued to function during the pandemic. As with the Garment Training Project, surprisingly, additional activities such as child health monitoring, vision screening, and tree planting either made their targets or exceeded them for this project. Also, as with the Garment Training Project, there has been greatly increased activity in the savings and loans activity for the year. It appears that the increased uncertainty of life is increasing the desire to introduce certainty.



'THERE HAS BEEN GREATLY INCREASED ACTIVITY IN THE SAVINGS AND LOANS ACTIVITY FOR THE YEAR. IT APPEARS THAT THE INCREASED UNCERTAINTY OF LIFE IS INCREASING THE DESIRE TO INTRODUCE CERTAINTY.'

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 YGro 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 to enable them to do so profitably.

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. Esther talked about some of the challenges of the pandemic and also some of the achievements including some of the relief work providing small cash grants to dairy farmers impacted by the pandemic.

This project started in June last year, initially as a one-year project.

Later this year we look forward to bringing you an updated one year on. Depending on the progress in 2022, we may develop an ongoing relationship with YGro.





## THANK YOU DR ROGER HUGHES

**Our former Chair and now honorary advisor to Partners in Aid, Ian Pickering pays tribute to Dr Roger Hughes.**

I first met Roger Hughes in early 1992, just 30 years ago. I was a new volunteer, and Roger was the Honorary Chairman of the Board. 1992 was not a good year for charitable organisations. The economic recession put pressure on donations, but Roger kept the Board together and our organisation moved forward.

In late 1992, we received an offer of free office space in Hawthorn, so we moved from a rental office space in Dandenong. It was during the relocation that I came across some paperwork which was very impressive. The quiet, but determined Roger was not just a good bloke. He has a PhD in Mathematics and was an Associate Professor at the University of Melbourne. Roger's focus on the activities of our organisation, Action Aid Australia as it was known at the time, was all consuming.

In late 1995 I had the pleasure of accompanying Roger to Bangladesh on one of his many trips to Bangladesh. Roger's focus on the needs of people living in disadvantaged communities was intense, but he still maintained a sense of humour, and thank goodness for that.

Roger's greatest contribution to the people of Bangladesh was through the Jamuna River project, which provided education for children living in geographical isolation and training programs for women. Having contributed more than 30 years of voluntary service through Partners in Aid, Roger has retired from the Board. However, he is continuing to work on Partners in Aid's Project Committee and is a joint Project Co-ordinator with Jacquie O'Brien on our new Sri Lankan project. He will also remain an honorary advisor to the Board.

Congratulations Roger and thank you sincerely for the opportunities you have provided for thousands of people who were seriously disadvantaged by their time and place of birth.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment and friendship Roger.

**Ian Pickering**



## VALE DR JOHN O'CALLAGHAN

In sad news, long time Partners in Aid supporter, Dr. John O'Callaghan passed away this month.

A Doctor of Medicine, John was a Board member of what was then called Action Aid Australia, now Partners in Aid in the 1980s and early 90s before retiring to the NSW coast where he continued his support for our organisation.

In 2021 John moved to Melbourne to be close to his family. He passed away at the age of 91 and lived a long and good life.

On behalf of all of the Partners in Aid family we would like to extend our sympathies and kindest wishes to his loved ones.



# ACFID



### ACFID CODE OF CONDUCT

#### Complaints Policy

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

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.