

Chair Report to Annual General Meeting
Annual General Meeting Reports
25th November 2021

Chairperson's Report

I would like to begin by acknowledging the contributions throughout 2020-2021 of our Partners in Aid donors, some of whom have been contributing to particular projects over many years. However, we know this year has been particularly difficult for some of our donors. A number of regular donors have been forced to stop or reduce donations due to lay-offs or the need to help sons or daughters who have been laid-off. To all of those linked to PIA who have been affected this way, we would like to wish you a much brighter 2022 and to thank you for all that you have contributed in the past.

Despite the impact of COVID on the funding of Not for Profit organizations, due to several large donations, PIA's income from donations actually increased a little this financial year, by just over \$3,500. Nonetheless, we ended the financial year with a deficit of approximately one thousand dollars, 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 SHVP, and to the initiation of a new project in Sri Lanka – both of which will be discussed in more detail in the project reports to come. We are proud to say that our administrative costs for the year remained low - slightly less than 6% of the income.

COVID-19 lockdowns made 2021 another difficult year for Partner Organizations trying to implement projects. Some have been able to struggle through with project activities, others have been forced by lockdowns or travel restrictions to suspend most of their project operations. These impacts will be discussed further in the individual project reports to be presented shortly. COVID-19 has not only exacerbated the problems faced by project beneficiaries, but in some cases created potential hardships or risks for Partner Organizer staff and volunteers. Tragically, the President of the Sinangpad Association in the Philippines recently lost her husband to COVID.

Notwithstanding, none of our Partner Organizations have given up. All have continued to implement at least some of those activities which have a significant impact on the quality of life of people in the vulnerable communities in which they work. The close involvement of the Partner Organizations with their local communities has meant that despite lockdowns and restrictions on movement, our partners have struggled to continue to support project beneficiaries, successfully helping residents seeking to achieve not just some short-term outcomes but some sustained long-term change.

For some time, we have been talking how we can expand our operations and establish new partnerships with overseas not-for-profit organizations that share our values. The Sri Lankan Project which Roger will discuss shortly has potential to lead to a new partnership with the implementing NGO, Y Gro. Last year, a donation was made to fund a one-off activity involving the construction a pre-school toilet in Kiribati and promoting good hygiene and sanitation practices among the children. Unfortunately, the design provided for the toilet did not provide an effective sanitary means of disposal of human waste and communications from the I-Kiribati NGO ceased after our attempts to negotiate design changes. As a consequence, this potential project has been abandoned. With the agreement of the donor, we are now looking for a new short-term project to fund.

However, any serious attempt establishing new partnerships with overseas not-for-profit organizations will not be possible until we can increase our funding capacity. With this in mind, earlier this year we started on working on meeting the necessary requirements to submit an

application for DFAT accreditation. If this is successful, it would open the gate to the funding of several new projects providing they meet DFAT approval.

This year has will also bring some changes with respect to Board membership. Dr Chris Gilies and Jessica Gill have both decided to resign. Jess has been a great asset, not only acting as secretary, but also redesigning our newsletter format and helping to prepare each edition, which Phillip McMahon still kindly prints free of charge. Jess also liaised with a company that offered, *pro bono*, to modernise our logo – you will see the new logo on this meeting's agenda. She has also been working on updating our website. Chris, in addition to handling external compliance reporting, put a lot of work into the development of our new ongoing strategic plan. He has also been an active member of the Marketing, Communications and Fundraising Committee. We are indebted to both Jess and Chris for the enduring work that they have done. Their resignations leave two vacant positions on the Board. We already have expressions of interest from people with respect to joining the Board and will be looking to fill these vacancies early in 2022.

I would like also to acknowledge the contributions made by our other directors and committee members throughout the year:

- Jacquie O'Brien worked with Chris to revitalise the Marketing, Communications and Fundraising Committee which sought to increase awareness of Partners in Aid and its activities through the social media. This work was very ably assisted by three volunteers, Kiril Dimovski, Manet Jagers and James PhillipotSchneider.
- Bob Baldassa has worked on our risk management procedures to bring them into line with Australian Standards and has now been joined by Jacquie on a new Risk Management Committee.
- Nick Foster has continued very effectively in the role of treasurer and dropbox manager.
- Caryl Hertz has accepted responsibility for ensuring that all the regulatory requirements associated with being a director on the Board are fulfilled and fully documented on the dropbox.
- Lyn and Ian Pickering have continued to provide and maintain our registered office at their home and handle the incoming phone queries. Lyn has also continued with the very demanding task of directing the SEDS Child Education Sponsorship Program, including undertaking the reams of paperwork this requires.
- Roger Hughes, Anne-Marie Maltby and Amanda Stone all have continued to liaise with the projects for which they are project co-ordinators and have continued to make a significant contribution to the Projects Subcommittee.
- Last, but not least, we must acknowledge Andrea Pickering, our former treasurer who resigned a couple of years ago but has continued to assume responsibility for much of the financial work, despite working full-time, helping run a farm, and bringing up four very active young children.

Finally, I would like to end by saying thank you once again to all our donors and supporters and wishing you all the best for the coming year. Our partners and us could not assist communities, and their thousands of residents each year without your generous support.

Cecily Neil
2021