



# PARTNERS IN AID

NEWSLETTER  
SEPTEMBER 2022

Cecily is taking a well-deserved holiday and so I have the pleasure of providing a brief introduction to this quarter's newsletter.

In this edition, Dr Roger Hughes provides our final report on the Symbiosis project in Bangladesh as we conclude our engagement in the country. In India, Lyn Pickering notes that the school reports for the 2021-2022 school year are in for the SEDS Child Sponsorship project and will be sent to donors soon. Our SED Sustainable Agriculture project continues to be successful with Amanda Stone noting recruitment for 6 more groups of farmers is planned for this month. Anne-Marie Maltby's update on the All Bengal Women's Union project looks at the challenges the team is facing with record number of dengue fever while Jacqui O'Brien's report on our YGro project in Sri Lanka includes a detailed update from our in-country project coordinator.

Since our last newsletter, federal parliament has resumed following the May election. The Albanese government's first order of business was debate on its climate change bills, the key tenets of which were emissions reduction targets of 43% by 2030 based on 2005 levels and net zero by 2050. On 8 September,

those bills passed, enshrining the targets in legislation and sending a message to the world that Australia is prepared to shoulder its share of the global burden in tackling the challenges climate change presents.

In the context of Partners in Aid, we sponsor projects in some of Asia's poorest countries where efforts to address climate change are understandably far from central to governments' priorities. For many years, discussion around greenhouse emissions and how they must fall if we're to prevent environmental catastrophe has included debate on whether the global north has more to answer for than the global south.

Generally speaking, for example, European countries have contributed more to climate change than those in Asia. In doing so, they have also reaped outsized benefits, particularly from heavy carbon-emitting industries that often proved the backbones of burgeoning economies. Australia, of course, is no exception.

Meanwhile, less developed countries are now under pressure to do their part in reducing emissions, efforts at which would almost certainly stifle their growth

and ability to put food on the tables of tens of millions of people.

Questions of fairness arise. If the developed countries are the ones that have prospered at the expense of the environment, shouldn't they be the ones to do more? Why should developing countries, many of which struggle with lower standards of living and marked inequality, be compelled to carry an equal share of the load? There are no easy answers but given Partners in Aid has long worked in some of these developing countries - Bangladesh and the Philippines being but 2 examples - they are questions that are worth pondering.

## *The Board*

We are looking to expand the number of members of our Board. If you or someone you know is interested in joining Partners in Aid as a Board Director and has an interest and/or experience in international development and aid, please be in touch with Cecily. We are open to suitable candidates around Australia.

Relatedly, we will advise of the date of our 2022 AGM very soon.

Yours with gratitude  
DAN PAGODA  
Board Director



# 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, 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 [Mycause](#) or [GiveNow](#)
- Purchase from our [Goodwill Wine](#) partners

We're also working to make it easier for you to donate directly to a specific project. This month, we're excited to give the option to make a donation to the Sinangpad project in the Philippines (see the link at the bottom of the project page in this newsletter). Over the coming months we hope to roll-out similar functionality for our projects.

## 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 adviser in planning a bequest. For more information or a confidential conversation, please contact Cecily or Lyn on 03 9704 6315 or email [admin@partnersinaid.org.au](mailto:admin@partnersinaid.org.au).

## BANK TRANSFER OR CHEQUE

Details of how to donate through bank transfer or cheque can be found on the following page. Please ensure that bank transfers have the details of your name and the direction (i.e. the name of the project) of your donation, if any.

If forwarding a cheque, please complete the short form in this newsletter page or write a note with your name and project of your donation. You can also email [admin@partnersinaid.org.au](mailto:admin@partnersinaid.org.au) to advise your payment and where you would like it allocated.

## ONLINE AT MYCAUSE OR GIVENOW

You can make a one-off or regular tax-deductible donation through the secure platforms Mycause or Give Now. Just click on the link or type the address into your internet browser.

- [Mycause](#)  
([www.mycause.com.au/charity/25612/PartnersinAidLtd](http://www.mycause.com.au/charity/25612/PartnersinAidLtd))
- [GiveNow](#)  
([www.givenow.com.au/partnersinaid](http://www.givenow.com.au/partnersinaid))

## 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.

# HOW TO GIVE

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

\$

I would like to make a specific donation to one of the below projects (please indicate which project).

## India: SEDS Child Education Program

- Medical fund. Items like reading glasses, eye drops, creams for rashes, toothbrushes and toothpaste.

\$

## India: SEDS Sustainable Agriculture Project

- \$10 could buy 1000 Fish fingerlings to stock tanks.
- \$50 could employ a SEDS staff member for 1 month.
- \$200 could hire a tractor for 1 week.

\$

## Philippines: Sinangpad Healthy Village Project

- \$35 could buy materials to enable a family to build a household sanitary toilet.
- \$50 could buy health training for communities.

\$

## CHILD SPONSORSHIP

I would like to begin/continue to sponsor a child at SEDS/All Bengal Women's Union.

The cost is \$260 per child per year, plus and optional annual gift of \$20

\$

## MEMBERSHIP

I would like to begin a membership or continue a membership (please circle) of Partners in Aid.

\$ 25

## BANK TRANSFER AND CHEQUE

EFT details: Account name, Partners in Aid; BSB, 033686; account number, 162354. Please include your surname as reference and then email [admin@partnersinaid.org.au](mailto:admin@partnersinaid.org.au) to arrange a receipt and confirm where you would like the donation directed. If paying by cheque, please make it payable to Partners in Aid and post to PO Box 42, Narre Warren LPO, Vic 3805.

Name for receipt: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email (to receive our newsletter): \_\_\_\_\_

Gifts of \$2 or more are tax deductible (a receipt will be issued).

TOTAL

\$



# BANGLADESH: SYMBIOSIS – OUR FINAL REPORT

PROGRAM DIRECTOR: DR ROGER HUGHES

Partners in Aid has received the final report from Symbiosis Bangladesh, bringing to an end our work in Bangladesh.

As supporters know, our involvement with projects in Bangladesh – from our beginning 60 years ago until now – has seen huge changes in that beautiful country. Bangladesh still has much to do to lower poverty and raise educational standards, but it has come such a long way. Truly gone are the days of the 1960s, when my father visited Bengal and was shocked to see boys pounce upon a discarded banana skin.

Our contribution to Bangladesh has been comprehensive. We worked extensively by ourselves but more recently with partners MEDEDI, ActionAid Bangladesh and finally Symbiosis Bangladesh. We started our projects on Bhopal Island with the self-sustaining orphanage with its small farm and the 'Tin School' for boys. We ran our own projects in Tangail and its surrounding areas and in the Rashadid area over on the banks of the Padma River before working with island life on the Jamuna. We provided technical training and schools, established libraries, provided toilets and new tubewells, while also restoring old defunct ones. We provided a framework for self-help (shomati) groups and savings groups, as well as self-help industries for the homeless in silk production through planting mulberry plantations along roadsides creating shade. The list of Partners in Aid's projects and achievements is way too long to fully detail here.

Not all projects have been successful. Much of the time, especially early on, we were operating on a shoestring to achieve maximum efficiency, although one has to expect some projects to sour with such a strategy. Nevertheless, despite the failures, it was the most successful way of achieving results, even if not always acceptable in recent times. A notable project that went amiss was when we had a child sponsorship scheme that initially worked very well but which collapsed in its final year because due to developing laziness of local staff, resulting staff conflict. Floods, droughts and epidemics have added to the challenges. However, overall it has been a huge success run on a tight budget (tight because of the breadth of the needs of the communities that we have served).

Now we move our activity from Bangladesh to other areas, notably Sri Lanka with its emerging challenges following the civil war and most recently with the economic and pandemic responses.

I – and I write on behalf of the Board and Project Committee – am grateful to all of those involved for your help with our projects in Bangladesh (or East Pakistan as it was when we started all those years ago).

Thank you.







## INDIA: SEDS CHILD SPONSORSHIP

PROGRAM DIRECTOR:  
LYN PICKERING

**SEDS was founded in 1980 by Rajen Joshua and Manil Jayasena as a grassroots development NGO, motivated by the desire to help the poorest of the poor in the drought-prone area of Ananthapur District in Andhra Pradesh.**

The school reports for the 2021-2022 school year have arrived. I am processing them at present and plan to have letters and reports out to donors in the near future.

The new school year commenced on 5 July in Andhra Pradesh and the first formative assessment exams will be conducted shortly.

A new mandate has been issued by the local government that all schools must now purchase the academic year books from a district education officer. It has been decreed that after the impact of COVID-19, schools were to continue with the hygiene system, which is the continued use of masks and sanitisers.

I have just received the annual report for the sponsorship education program which runs to 16 pages and is in full colour. This details the monthly activities at the SEDS campus which our students are expected to attend and has a lot of photos demonstrating the various activities undertaken. Exemption for some attendances is given to senior students who may be expected to attend their school on Saturdays. I will make a report using some of this material for the December newsletter.

In closing, my apologies to anyone who has been trying to contact me, either about the SEDS project or PIA generally. Technical issues with my internet and landline phone have continued for a month. Since 1996, the PIA registered office has been at our address. If you are not already aware, our home private phone number (also used since 1996) is no longer the contact for PIA. To reach the organisation now, phone 0477 743 053.

Thank you as always to our wonderful donors for your ongoing support for child education.







# INDIA: SEDS SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

PROGRAM DIRECTOR: AMANDA STONE

COVID lockdowns during 2020 and 2021 delayed some of the training for the SEDS Sustainable Agriculture program, but essential tank desilting was completed and farmers were largely able to continue their work on their own land.

The training SEDS provides for farmers in sustainable agriculture is essential in order to understand soil management, crop rotation and the use of natural pesticides and fertilisers. SEDS has continued its ongoing meetings with farmer groups and training on sustainable agriculture practices in 25 villages. Adoption of best crop management practices improves crop productivity and can contribute to greater yields with improved quality. Crop management is the set of agricultural practices performed to improve the growth, development and yield of crops. It begins with seedbed preparation, sowing of seeds and crop maintenance and ends with crop harvest, storage and marketing. The timing and sequence of agricultural practices depend upon several

factors such as winter or spring crops; harvested products such as grain, sowing methods broadcast and row-crops; and plant age, soil, climate and weather conditions. For marginal farmers on small lots of land, maximising yield using safe and sustainable methods is critical. It is also more economic.

The most recent crop was sown in Kharif season. Kharif crops are usually sown in the beginning of the first rains in June, during the south-west monsoon season. This year, the rains have been early and good.

Tank desilting for this year was completed in May in Anandapuram village, where 33 farmers and their families benefitted. This was just in time for the rains which began in June.

SEDS continues to recruit and train new farmers for the Sustainable Agriculture program with 6 more groups planned for this month.





## INDIA: ALL BENGAL WOMEN'S UNION (ABWU)

PROJECT DIRECTOR: ANNE-MARIE MALTBY

**The All Bengal Women's Union (ABWU) home in Calcutta has been operating for over 70 years and has been supported by Partners in Aid for more than 40 years. It is an NGO run entirely by volunteer women to rescue abused, at risk, destitute, abandoned and orphaned girls.**

We have little news from ABWU, except to say that life is very slowly settling down and the staff continue to care for the girls to the best of their ability.

COVID-19 figures are very low (much less than in Victoria, for example). Unfortunately, however, West Bengal is experiencing record numbers of dengue fever which, like malaria, is a mosquito-borne disease. ABWU is in a high dengue area of Kolkata. It is a major health concern for the staff and they are vigilant in maintaining their mosquito control measures. PIA has helped with this in the past with assistance with drainage works to reduce mosquito breeding areas and also raising girls' beds to improve airflow underneath.

Dengue fever can be quite mild and most people who have it recover in about a week. Unfortunately, severe dengue (also known as dengue haemorrhagic fever) is a possible complication and may be fatal. As the severe form mainly affects children, ABWU is very aware of the need to monitor the girls to ensure that any symptoms are picked up quickly and treatment provided early.

I will be visiting ABWU at the end of the year and look forward to providing a comprehensive report after my visit.







## SRI LANKA: YGRO

PROJECT DIRECTOR: JACQUI O'BRIEN

Sri Lanka has been going through unprecedented economic and civil challenges. Fuel is scarce, inflation has rapidly increased and this is on top of the last 2 years of COVID impacts.

Despite the hardships, our project partner YGro has continued its important work helping communities with dairy farming.

Many communities have struggled to adequately care for their cows in the midst of significant economic hardship. YGro has worked with the most impacted communities installing azolla tanks and plants for nutrients and providing home gardening packs for families to grow their own vegetables as well as providing hardship grants.

Project Coordinator for YGro, Esther John, recently provided the following update to Partners in Aid about the next stage of the project:



"An exposure visit was on the agenda before the Koppay farmers exit the project.

With the fuel crisis and high transport cost, YGro has decided to facilitate an exposure visit within the same village. Dairy farmers who have had a good track record will be identified as potential trainers and certification will be provided by Y Gro as 'Community level trainers in dairy farming'. After that, according to the location of the farmers, they will be grouped and assigned to a potential trainer. The farmers within the group will visit the assigned trainer's dairy farm as an exposure visit and the group will continue to support each other in sharing experiences and knowledge.

This will be a benefit in sharing excess resources with each other as well.

YGro has also successfully established connections between dairy farmers and government vet clinics. Interventions for the Neerveli village will continue accordingly and lessons learned from Koppay will be used in tackling the challenges ahead with the economic crisis. Planning for a new phase in a new village is also in progress and by the end of September, it will be possible to exit the Neerveli.

Amidst the most challenging time, it has been possible to observe the strengths of the field staff and they have stepped in beyond their work role to ensure that the project continues. The resilience of the dairy farmers and the YGro field staff is noteworthy at this given point in time."





## A NOTE ABOUT OUR IMAGES

Wherever possible, we include images of our projects that are taken by our Board members on their self-funded visits to sites or photos taken by our partners themselves. However, we are particularly conscious of the need to respect the privacy of others, especially children. Accordingly, several images in this newsletter have been sourced from free online photo sharing website Unsplash.

## DO YOU NEED TO UPDATE YOUR DETAILS?

If your postal address has changed, please email [admin@partnersinaid.org.au](mailto:admin@partnersinaid.org.au) or call 0477 743 053 and we'll update our records. Similarly, if you'd instead like to receive our newsletter by email, please get in touch. Receiving the newsletter electronically allows us to save on the cost of postage. We are, of course, very happy to continue mailing the newsletter to you in the traditional way and are grateful to our printer for the continued donation of his time and resources. And if you'd like to discontinue receiving our updates, please get in touch by phone or email and we'll remove your details from our database.

## 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. Its 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.