



PARTNERS IN AID

NEWSLETTER
DECEMBER 2022

Welcome to our final newsletter for 2022.

This is a bumper edition where we put the spotlight on our SEDS child sponsorship program where project director Lyn Pickering provides an in-depth update.

All images in this quarter's update are actual images of the valuable work Partners in Aid is able to undertake as a direct result of your generous and ongoing support.

A child sponsorship program was established with SEDS in late 1994, when visiting board members recognised that the majority of the children did not attend school at all. Sponsorship of a child covers expenses including books, uniforms, shoes, school fees, monthly visits to SEDS for cultural and sporting activities and health checks.

Partners in Aid's major project of watershed management has been undertaken in the villages where children were selected to become part of the sponsorship program.

We have also been able to support school development projects including clean water, toilets and trees through special donations by sponsors and other donors.

Many disadvantaged students obtaining a Year 10 pass certificate are now financially supported to complete their education. Observing these young people coming home to their villages by bus from college is a new experience.

The festive season

We are entering the festive season here in Australia with the celebration of Christmas for many. While Australia is becoming an increasingly multicultural society, results from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' 2021 Census show that 43.9% of Australians identify as Christians. Those who do not identify as belonging to any religion is a significant 38.9%. Next and much further down the list is Islam at 3.2%.

Beyond Australia, of course, Christmas may not be observed at all, depending on the country

and its dominant religion. For those in India, where the SEDS project is located, a study from the Pew Research Centre in the United States found 81% identify as Hindu. At a very distant second are Muslims at 12.9%. In India, Christians make up just 2.9% of the population. Christmas is therefore a much different experience there than what we are familiar with here in Australia.

It's a far different story in the Philippines, of course, where our Sinangpad Healthy Living project operates. The country remains predominantly Christian with the overwhelming majority of Filipinos – some 90% according to a Harvard University study – identifying as Catholics.

Despite differences in religion, Christmas in Australia, India and the Philippines is a time of togetherness with friends and family. However you spend December 25th, Partners in Aid wishes you and your loved ones a safe and happy festive season.

Dr Cecily Neil
Chair



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.

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 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)
- [GiveNow](#)
(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

- \$50 could buy materials to enable a family to build a household sanitary toilet.

\$

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 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

\$

INDIA: SEDS CHILD SPONSORSHIP

PROJECT 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 2021-2022 school year in India was interrupted at times by covid. However, a number of students managed to obtain some excellent results. It is not expected that every student will achieve great results. The aim is to give a student the opportunity to attend school. With more emphasis on education now being encouraged by the Government, parents and grandparents (many of whom still remain illiterate) have begun to see the benefits for their children and grandchildren.

In this newsletter, I have included some of those results and hope you will enjoy sharing those successes. For the small number who did not do as well, they will continue on. Three students were allocated a position at a Government hostel where full board and education are provided. This is seen as a good outcome for those families. Year 10s who may have passed five of six subjects, may re-sit an exam if they choose to gain their pass certificate.

Four students who have continued on in the program beyond Year 10 with support from their sponsors have all obtained passes. Year 10 is the cut off point for the majority of our sponsorship support for students.

Anji passed all 11 subjects in his first year of a Bachelor of Technology Degree. His area of study is Computer Science and Engineering.

Anil passed all six subjects in his second year of Engineering Trades – Electrician.

Both Anji and Anil have called SEDS home since they were very young boys. These results reflect the support from Manil Joshua and the SEDS team.



INDIA: SEDS CHILD SPONSORSHIP

PROJECT DIRECTOR:
LYN PICKERING

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Twins Abu and Umar. Abu did very well in his first year of Mechanical Engineering, passing all nine subjects and Umar passed his nine subjects in his Bachelor of Technology including physics, linear algebra and calculus, fundamentals of electrical circuits lab and engineering drawing.

Four year 10 girls received a first division pass and one girl, Ramya, received a second division pass. Ganganasree, Geethavani, Jayanthi and Deepika attended the same school where educational standards have noticeably improved over recent years. The four girls came on to the program in Year 7 after I visited the school in 2018. The principal asked if we would consider supporting them. Apart from their academic studies, the girls were involved in sport and dance. As the girls and their families all met our criteria for sponsorship, this was a very easy decision.

Over the past 10 years or so, this rural area has seen an influx of higher trained teachers from further afield. It is not unusual for some teachers to travel more than one hour to the rural schools by bus or motorbike. Improved educational standards in the secondary schools particularly has certainly been a great benefit for all students. The improved condition of the roads in the areas of SEDS work has helped in the teachers' decision making.

Years 6-9 results (high school commences in Year 6 and runs through to Year 10 while Year 11 and 12 are considered college).

Year 6, Mahendra and Arun scored in the high 90s. Rashitha received 4 x 100% passes and 2 x 99% passes. Akshitha received high 90s in all six subjects, with Madihar also doing very well





INDIA: SEDS CHILD SPONSORSHIP

PROJECT DIRECTOR: LYN PICKERING

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Year 7, Madhu passed all seven subjects with scores in the high 80s, and Charan, Deepika and Pavithra also received very good results.

Year 8 - Navya, Aishwarya and Hindu Sree all received very good results.

Year 9 - Sneha had excellent results, as did Bhagya and Akshaya.

LKG to Year 5 (LKG and UKG are the kindergarten-type classes which equate to kindergarten and prep in Australia).

In the lower classes, students will have many play-like activities and perhaps have one or two exams. Kalpanna in Year 2 received excellent results for her six exams, with very good results from Sowmya in 3rd and Ananya in 4th.

Monthly activities at the SEDS campus - On our many trips to India, we have always made a point of being at SEDS for the monthly activities at the campus. The following information came from the annual report from SEDS. It details the monthly activities by the students which occur at SEDS throughout the year.

- Measurements taken for school clothes and yearly presentation of new clothes for each child. Sponsors pay an extra \$20 to cover the present each year. The team at the vocational program setup and run at SEDS by Rashna Joshua make the majority of clothes (i.e. school clothes and the present), thus giving local women and girls employment and opportunities. A number of young women and girls choose to remain in their villages and not relocate to the city. SEDS/Rashna and Bhashr have trained them all, with some remaining to work at the Training Centre, a number setting up their own small business, with a sewing machine, in their local village community hall or in their own homes.

- Distribution of school clothes, bags, books, shoes and school fees.
- Sports activities - Kabaddi (a tag team sport), a very quick game of ball within a boundary area the size of a basketball court with two teams vying for points. Boys and girls play separately, and it is a tough game for all.
- Sports activities - Kho Kho is the second most popular tag team game. Cricket is always popular at SEDS and elsewhere, and students play on the playground equipment (i.e. climbing frame and seesaws).
- Art and Craft activities. All the students enjoy this. Christmas cards are made by the students during one of the art and craft activities with the student's sponsor receiving them.

The students attend SEDS one Saturday a month. On arrival, the attendance roll is marked and they collect their name badges. The well-organised program sees height and weight measurements taken between the planned activities.

Lunch consisting of rice, chicken, dal, sambar and rasam is served when all activity is completed.

The students who use a bus to attend the SEDS campus receive their bus fare before they leave to return home. Younger children are either accompanied by older children on the program from the same village, or a parent or grandparent.

The 2021-22 school year was a good one for the students who were all pleased to be able to return to their schools and their activities. The SEDS child education program has benefitted around 700 students since its inception in late 2004. Being able to report on some of those achievements for students over that time via the quarterly newsletter and separately to the sponsors has at times been hard work, but the returns are ten-fold. I am pleased I have had that opportunity.

INDIA: SEDS CHILD SPONSORSHIP

PROJECT DIRECTOR: LYN PICKERING

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THE PHILIPPINES: SINANGPAD HEALTHY LIVING PROJECT

PROJECT DIRECTOR: DR CECILY NEIL

Sinangpad Association members are back in action again. After a slowdown in activity due to COVID, visits to communities, training and community mobilization are taking place once again. Not everything stopped during COVID – funding had already been approved for the construction of a number of toilets before the pandemic struck, with the result that more than 130 toilets were actually constructed during 2021-22. In 2022, two of the six municipalities in Kalinga were declared by the Government to have Zero Open Defecation Status, Level 1 (every household has their own toilet, or shares with no more than one other household). In the 2020 census, these two municipalities together had a population of 23,491 people – none of whom now have to find somewhere to go on the hectare of land previously set aside for this purpose or put up with the smell that previously pervaded the community. Sinangpad Association has made a major contribution to this achievement through funding of materials and advocacy. Sinangpad and local residents are now working towards achieving this status in a third municipality.

To ensure that construction has been done well and that there were no leakages that could contaminate water piped to tap stands or houses from spring development, if any pipes had leaks, several Sinangpad members, together with a PIA representative, recently visited the municipalities to assess the status of the toilets built since Sinangpad started working in the area. Water testing carried out annually by the Rural Health Unit showed contamination at only one spring development. However, in this case, the testing took place immediately after the recent typhoon, and the contamination was attributed to water rushing down from the adjacent mountain, where watershed management is poor (Sinangpad is now currently looking into this and how they might be able to help). There is no evidence of any

leakage. We were informed that no septic tanks had yet become full, or showing sign of overflowing. When they do, the plan is for the households to build a second tank next to the first, and, by the time this is full, the original one will have dried out and can be emptied and re-used. Having experienced the enhanced quality of life that comes with having a household toilet, residents are determined that they will not be without this facility in the future.

There is a problem with the construction plan for a second septic tank in a small number of cases where there is inadequate space, or where the land occupant is not the owner. These issues are currently being addressed. Unfortunately, the cost of construction has now gone up to around \$50 per toilet, due to increases in the cost of construction materials and the inability of the Rural Health Unit to continue supplying pans.

Now that COVID restrictions have been lifted, Sinangpad has started to resume the range of activities it normally used to undertake to help enable communities to improve their own health status and to effectively network with government and other agencies over the community's needs. These activities include Community Health Development training, community mobilisation, helping communities decide on what they consider to be their local priorities for improving health (pig pens, toilets, waste disposal, drainage etc.) and applying to Sinangpad for materials to build simple infrastructure to remove health risks, training of community volunteer sanitary inspectors, and mentoring and monitoring. In addition, Sinangpad representatives participate in local government body meetings with the long-term goal of institutionalising the Sinangpad strategy into government policy.

IN THE MEANTIME, HAVE YOU THOUGHT OF GIVING \$50 FOR THE CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL OF A TOILET AS THE PERFECT GIFT FOR THE PERSON WHO HAS EVERYTHING?



SRI LANKA: YGRO

PROJECT DIRECTOR: JACQUI O'BRIEN

Empowering war widows and women-headed families economically through sustainable dairy farming initiatives.

The goal of this project is to contribute to ultimately ending the cycle of poverty that is currently afflicting war widows and women-headed households in two communities in the Jaffna District of Sri Lanka.

Some of these women are dairy farmers. In the one-year proposal funded by Partners in Aid, the intention of the implementing NGO, Y Gro, was to assist selected women dairy farmers to earn a decent income by providing them with crossbreed cows, cow nutrition, training and mentoring, and assisting in the construction of sheds. The dairy farmers under the program were also to be connected with government veterinary and animal production health entities to obtain veterinary and other relevant services for their dairy farms.

However, Sri Lanka is now going through the most difficult period of its economic and political crisis. It has been months of struggle. The fuel shortage worsened leading to a rapidly increasing inflation rate. With two years of COVID having already slowed down the programs of Y Gro, the current situation has been an additional hit. The impact of inflation on the families of the dairy farmers has also meant that the priority of taking care of their household needs has led to some neglect in their dairy farms.

Nonetheless, in the midst of these challenges, Y Gro has been able to work around available resources and carry on the dairy project with a few delays and alterations. At the same time, they have also provided a short-term relief grant for families who have been highly impacted and given them home gardening packages to start vegetable cultivation.

Across the two communities, seven farmers have been provided with a cow and three cattle sheds constructed. One vet clinic was conducted during the project.

Due to the fuel crisis, another scheduled vet clinic was not conducted and no artificial insemination could be done as the vet doctors could not get about.

Depending on the need, more clinics will be facilitated shortly. In one village at least, the dairy farmers have been connected with the government vet clinics and now they independently access the vet clinics without the involvement of Y Gro. However, due to the current crisis, the involvement of the government vet surgeons is less than planned and it has been a challenge to facilitate training. Fortunately, one member of the Y Gro staff who is well experienced in dairy farming is taking a lead role in conducting the training instead of depending on veterinary surgeons.

With the fuel crisis and high transport cost, Y Gro has decided to identify a small number of dairy farmers who have had a good track record as potential trainers and provide them with certification by the NGO, endorsed by an authorised government officer, as 'Community Level Trainers of Dairy Farmers'. By acknowledging them as potential model farmers, they will play a leadership role in training the other dairy farmers in the village through sharing. Depending on the location of the other farmers, they will be grouped and assigned to one of these model farmers as their 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 experience and knowledge. This will be a benefit in sharing excess resources with each other as well. Y Gro has also helped facilitate the marketing of milk.

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 Y Gro 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 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

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.