



# PARTNERS IN AID

NEWSLETTER  
SEPTEMBER 2023

On 8 August, the Australian Government released its new development policy, "Australia's International Development Policy: For a peaceful, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific."

In a media release, the Australian Council for International Development, of which Partners in Aid is a member, said the following:

"The policy sets the stage for Australia's development cooperation agenda and priorities for the years to come, and is the first substantive development policy setting for a decade.

ACFID warmly welcomes the release of the new development policy. In particular, the policy is noteworthy for its repeated focus on climate as a major driver of instability and a challenge for our times. The development sector welcomes the new policy's explicit references to poverty alleviation, as it believes human development must remain the overarching priority of

Australia's development program."

As ACFID's CEO, Mike Purcell, said: "We know for a fact that when people have adequate food, healthcare, access to education and livelihoods and live in a system that is equitable and just, there will be peace and stability. Conversely, when those fundamental building blocks are neglected, then this leads to instability."

We are so very grateful for your support that allows Partners in Aid to contribute towards these very worthwhile goals.

## SEDS Project Coordinator change

After more than 15 years of hard work, Amanda Stone has stepped down as SEDS Project Coordinator. Amanda initially joined the Partners in Aid Board after visiting SEDS independently and being very impressed by the work the team did. She subsequently took over as SEDS Project Coordinator and later became Chairman of

our organisation.

Amanda has always had a passion for the environment and sustainable agriculture and this underpinned her work with both Partners in Aid and SEDS in particular. Her knowledge and commitment have been invaluable. As Chair, Amanda also implemented changes to keep our organisation compliant with increasingly complex and onerous statutory requirements. Her work has been very much appreciated by both everyone at Partners in Aid and SEDS and we sincerely thank her for her contribution.

Michael Oates is taking over as Project Coordinator and has written a short report for this newsletter.

Dr Cecily Neil  
Chair



# INDIA: SEDS CHILD SPONSORSHIP

PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR: LYN PICKERING

School reports for the 2022/23 school year have finally arrived. The summer holidays for India have finished and the students are back at school for their new school year.

I have spent some time looking at each student's results with a pattern emerging. The reports overall were very good, with a number of students in the secondary levels from Years 6-10 receiving some excellent results and two of the secondary schools in particular standing out. It was exciting to see that standards in these two schools had improved significantly for the sponsored students.

Two other high schools which have shown very good and consistent results for some years showed a decline this past year with the SEDS/PIA students which is disappointing, but there may be a reason for this. These two schools in particular had a number of excellent teachers and principals who were very aware of the tank desilting and sustainable agricultural work carried out by SEDS in their community. Some of these staff have since transferred to other schools. SEDS staff have now visited the schools to update them on the SEDS/PIA child education program and the work that SEDS

does in these communities and this has proved to be a positive move. Covid unfortunately put an end to my visits, but I am hopeful of being able to visit in the not too distant future.

Two primary schools had very good results for their students. Teachers do transfer from school to school, seeking promotion or being sent by the education system. It was noticeable a number of years ago that the standard in teaching at some schools had improved markedly as the SEDS area of developmental work increased. Better roads and access have brought more teachers to the rural communities which has been a benefit for all the students.

An email in from Rasool, after I raised a few questions, indicates that a new and improved approach to education from government may be the reason for the improvements noted. An added bonus is that mothers of students now receive financial support for their children who must attend school for at least 60% of the year. This is very welcome for many families who fall well below the poverty line. Parents want the best outcomes for their children.



Photo by [Rajesh Rajput](#) on [Unsplash](#).



# INDIA: SEDS AGRICULTURE PROJECT

PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR: MICHAEL OATES

**My name is Michael Oates and I would like to introduce myself as the new Project Coordinator for the SEDS Sustainable Agriculture Project. I would also like to add my thanks to Amanda Stone for her many years of hard work managing this project.**

**My partner, Anne-Marie Maltby, has a long involvement with Partners in Aid and is the Project Coordinator for the ABWU project. We visited SEDS for several days in December 2017 and were given a comprehensive overview of their work. We have maintained contact with them since then and so when the opportunity arose to take over as Project Coordinator, I was very happy to do so.**

**I have recently received a progress report on first year of the current project and things have been going well.**

Village	No. of farmers	No. of loads	No. of cubic metres (pit size)	Water Storage capacity (in litres)
Khajapuram	19	750	2700	27,00,000
Edulabalapuram	18	748	2600	26,00,000

## Tank desilting

Desilting was undertaken in April and May for two tanks – the Khajapuram Tank and the Edulabalapuram Tank (see above table). The desilting was much later than in previous years due to unseasonal heavy rain.

SEDS continues its ongoing village Farmer Group meetings and training on sustainable agriculture practices and the topics were as follows:

## *September 2022*

How to make enriched farmyard manure which is a nutrient-rich organic fertiliser made from cow dung and cow urine.

## *October 2022*

Preparation of neem extract and chilli and garlic extract for use as economical, safe and eco-friendly alternatives to conventional pesticides and other chemicals.

## *November 2022*

The use of mixed cropping increase yield, reduce risk, enhance soil fertility, and manage pests and diseases. Preparation of three leaves extract as a natural pesticide, antifungal agent and nematicide, controlling pests and diseases.

## *December 2022*

Enemy insects and environmentally friendly controlling (slide show). Paddy crop: The process of growing paddy (rice) crop from nursery to harvesting.

## *January 2022*

Preparation of Vavilaku (Nirgundi) extract as a pest deterrent. Preparation of *ghana jeevamrutham* which is an organic fertiliser made from fermented cow dung, cow urine, jaggery, pulse flour and water.





# INDIA: SEDS AGRICULTURE PROJECT

PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR: MICHAEL OATES

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*February 2023*

The five principles of sustainable agriculture.

*March 2023*

Soil system interactions. Soil testing. The 16 basic nutrients that plants need to stay healthy.

*April 2023*

Group discussions on sustainable agriculture practices.

*May 2023*

The use of azolla, a small aquatic fern that floats

on the surface of freshwater bodies and forms a symbiotic relationship with a nitrogen-fixing cyanobacterium, making it a valuable natural fertilizer and improving water quality. A general discussion regarding sustainable pest control.

*June 2023*

Preparation of five leaves extract for multiple purposes. Preparation of sour buttermilk and coconut water (for plant growth).

*July 2023*

Preparation of pongamia seeds extract.



Photo provided by the SEDS Agriculture Project.



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

PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR: ANNE-MARIE MALTBY

All of Kolkata is sweltering at the moment which is normal for this time of year [early August at the time of writing]. Daily temperatures are in the 30s but, because of the humidity, it feels much hotter. Thunderstorms and heavy rain are common and the nights rarely get much below the high 20's so there's not much relief. Tip for visitors: If you are thinking of going to Kolkata, wait until their winter at the end of the year!

Although the weather is unpleasant, ABWU residents take it in their stride. In past years, Partners in Aid has helped with such measures as raising beds to increase air circulation and improving drainage to reduce mosquitos and malaria/dengue fever risk.

ABWU has recently celebrated Van Mahotsav Day or the Forest Day. India has many festivals to celebrate the forests and trees and one of these is this festive day which was started with the aim of motivating people and making them more aware about forest conservation and planting trees. Several trees were planted in the ABWU grounds and the children made posters and dressed up with various environmental themes.

The after care home (for girls aged 18 and over) has sent a report that there are nine girls attending. Five are doing nursing (one has deferred due to ill health) and the other four are still in secondary school.

The children's home reports have not yet arrived and I will update sponsors as soon as I receive them.





# THE PHILIPPINES: SINANGPAD HEALTHY LIVING PROJECT

## PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR: DR CECILY NEIL

Working with local government authorities as well as community members, and constant review of progress and lessons learnt, have been integral to the Sinangpad Healthy Village Project. Accordingly, in late June, Sinangpad members, in conjunction with the Provincial Health Office, organised a workshop to review progress with respect to project implementation in the Municipality of Pasil.

Attendees included representatives from: the Provincial Health Office; the Municipal Health Officer and Sanitary Inspector of Pasil; midwives and other health workers deployed in the different barangays of Pasil; and representatives from Balaban and Tinglayan, two of the eight Kalingan municipalities in which Sinangpad has been working. The goals of the workshop were to:

- Address the health gaps and needs pertaining to the social burden of sanitation and improvement of health in Pasil.
- Share the different best practices of the recipients of the Sinangpad Healthy Village Project from 3 of the 8 municipalities in which the project has been working.
- Empower health workers in community engagement by encouraging communication and teamwork; improving morale and engagement; fostering innovation and creativity; strengthening existing relationships and cohesiveness; and building trust and team bonds of Pasil health workers.

All three municipalities reported an increase in the percentage of households with a sanitary toilet over the last five years. The provision of toilet construction materials by the Sinangpad Association, along with technical assistance from local government units and supply of plastic toilet bowls purchased by Municipal Local Government Units, have all aided this improvement. In 2022 in the Municipality of Pasil, for example, one of the most successful municipalities so far as project implementation is concerned, of

its 2552 households, 91% now have sanitary toilets, compared to 76% five years ago, despite a 11% increase in the number of households over the same period of time. This represents an increase of 551 new toilets, 275 of which Sinangpad has provided the toilet construction materials. Since the Sinangpad Healthy Village Project began, no open-pit defecation is being recorded in any of the three municipalities.

However, while over the last five years, significant progress has been made towards the realisation of Sinangpad's goal of zero open defecation in Kalinga, there is still quite some way to go. In his closing speech, the Pasil Municipal Health Officer commented on the difficulties of the municipality funding programs, given the inadequate government budget allotment. Costs of toilet construction materials, for example, have escalated since covid. However, he also stressed the importance, for the improvement in local sanitation, of the community volunteerism that Sinangpad has fostered. The people of the community must own the problem and be accountable for what their community needs instead of relying on incentive-driven mechanisms or pressure to comply with health standards to start solving sanitation problems.

Not all municipalities have been as successful as Pasil as yet. In the Municipality of Tinglayan, for example, although the percentage of households with toilets has increased, still only 69% of households have pour flush toilets with septic tanks, while in some other Kalingan municipalities the percentage is even lower. A key problem reported in the workshop (apart from funding obstacles) was the reluctance of residents with little land space to allocate some of this land for a sanitary toilet. This is a problem that is only being solved through intensive education and regular barangay visits to encourage people to comply with sanitation standards – a solution with which Sinangpad continues to help.

The workshop was also reminded that while achieving



# THE PHILIPPINES: SINANGPAD HEALTHY LIVING PROJECT

PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR: DR CECILY NEIL

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zero open defecation in Kalinga is a key goal of Sinangpad, Sinangpad's members' work continues in encouraging and supporting the construction of other simple infrastructure to improve sanitation. The Sanitary Inspector of Tinglayan, Kalinga commented, for example, this had been particularly important with respect to the penning of pigs previously self-foraging and allowed to roam the villages contaminating the ground where children played.

The Balbalan Municipal Health Officer summarised her discussion by suggesting an acronym - S-I-N-A-N-G-P-A-D - when she addressed the younger generations of health workers in the audience.

Sustainability: Sustenance of the project was manifested on the yearly budget allotment on toilet and sanitation.

Inspiring: Younger generation health workers, who represent the majority of the participants, must be inspired to dedicate their skills, talents and efforts to their work.

Nourishing: To gain wisdom, health workers must also nourish each other by sharing and listening to people surrounding them of their experiences and insights.

Assessment: Health workers must assess that impact of the project on the community and avoid doing work just for compliance.

Network collaboration: Progress of plans will never be attained if you don't communicate with other organisations and individuals

Gratifying: Satisfaction is felt if you give all the effort and passion in your work.

Plan and Partnership: All projects and activities must be planned thoroughly to guarantee its success. A lot of obstacles are expected especially with respect to the approval of plans, but the younger generations should not be dismayed and instead be focused on the positive and brighter side rather than the negative aspect of it. Acceptance and accessibility: The plan must benefit the people and must be accessed by the community.

Direction: The planning must have a direction or goals for us to move forward.



Photo provided by the Sinangpad Healthy Living Project.



# SRI LANKA: OUR PROJECT TO ASSIST WAR WIDOWS OF THE JAFFNA

REPORT BY: DR ROGER HUGHES

Most readers will be aware that Partners in Aid, with its implementing Partner Organisation Y Gro, had a single-year pilot project on the Jaffna Peninsula in the north-west of the Sri Lanka. The aim of the project was to help war widows (from the civil war of a decade earlier) establish themselves as small-scale dairy farmers, thereby giving them an income. The pilot project, under the watchful eye of Partners in Aid's Jacquie O'Brien, worked well with approximately 90% of the war-widows who took part managing to make a success of the venture. However, we did learn a few things:

- It is necessary to have the more successful widows mentor the group.
- The extremely poor members of the group do not have the financial resilience to take even minor setbacks.
- There is a need to develop some means of spreading the benefit of being in the project to other war widows not directly in the project, possibly by having participating war widows distribute to others some fraction of the calves born in the project.

Given the success of this pilot project, Partners in Aid decided that the pilot project should be extended to a three-year project involving a larger group of war widows. Y Gro put together a proposal to this effect. However, its implementation was thrown into chaos by dramatic inflation in Sri Lanka, reaching 67.4% in September 2022 with high inflation for much of the year before and months after then. Fortunately, inflation in Sri Lanka has now returned to being similar to inflation in Australia. Concerned about this inflation at its peak, Y Gro asked that our financial support not be transferred at that time and the planned three-year project was delayed.

During this financial turmoil, the Sri Lankan rupee declined against the Australian dollar dramatically – by over 50%. Although still very weak, the rupee has since recovered slightly. This decline in the rupee has restored much of the purchasing power of our Australian donations to the project. Hence, with this recovery, the original project proposal is being rapidly revised with an aim to see its implementation initiated in early 2024, or maybe earlier if logistically possible.

In the meantime, an external report into the dairy industry has been prepared by other donors to Y Gro. Some of that report is leading to some revision of the plan for our project. However, the emphasis in that report is on increasing milk production for the benefit of the nation of Sri Lanka, which involves making more resources available to the most efficient farmers. Such an aim is distinct from our aim of enabling the poorest members of the society to increase their income, even though our beneficiaries are not necessarily the most efficient dairy farmers.

If any reader is interested in seeing this project area on the Jaffna Peninsula and what has been done, I am planning a trip to the project area later this year. If you would like to join me and possibly see the SEDS project area, please contact me or the office.



Photo by [Jahzan Ahamed](#) on [Unsplash](#).





# 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 us on 0477 743 053 or email [info@partnersinaid.org.au](mailto:info@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 [info@partnersinaid.org.au](mailto:info@partnersinaid.org.au) to advise us of 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

- \$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 an 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 [info@partnersinaid.org.au](mailto:info@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

\$





## A NOTE ABOUT OUR IMAGES

Wherever possible, we include images of our projects that have been 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, some images in our newsletters are sourced from free online photo sharing websites like Unsplash.

## DO YOU NEED TO UPDATE YOUR DETAILS?

If your postal address has changed, please email [info@partnersinaid.org.au](mailto:info@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.

## OUR COMPLAINTS POLICY

Any complaints should be addressed to the Board Chair via email or regular mail at the details found at the bottom of this page. All complaints will be treated seriously, acknowledged promptly and resolved within two months. Details of our Complaints and Whistleblower Policy can be found on our website: <https://partnersinaid.org.au/resources/>.

## 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.

### 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.