



**Partners in Aid**

AUSTRALIA

## **SEDS INDIA – Child Education Sponsorship Program ANNUAL REPORT 2024**

### **Background**

The Social and Education Development Society (SEDS) Child Education Sponsorship program began after a visit in October 1994 by the former Chairman, Ian Pickering, and me. That was my first of 20 self-funded visits. Ian had made one visit to SEDS prior to follow up on a project and investigate new potential projects. .

After daily visits to the field over a two week period to gain data on watershed projects with Ian and Rajen, I asked questions about children playing in the villages and not attending schools. We visited a number of the schools on our field trips. The answer was quite simply that in many cases, the local headmaster or teacher might not be attending school himself that day or week, (all males at that stage) as he was out recording loads of soil from the tank desilting project operated by SEDS with the local villagers. Being a rural area, there was not a lot of follow up by authorities. Once the child education program commenced, the local Village Organisation parents ensured the teachers turned up to school!!

The majority of parents and grandparents in this rural area at that time were illiterate and there was not a strong push to educate students, particularly past Grade 5.

Discussions were carried out with then SEDS Director, Rajen Joshua and CEO Manil Joshua about the possibility of seeking sponsorships from Australian families to sponsor a child.

Ian Pickering and I visited many organisations in Australia and were able to generate funds for both project work, followed by the child education program which appealed to a different demographic of support.

### **Local Context**

SEDS in India is located in central southern India, approximately two hours south of Bangalore. The area for many years was very much totally rural. That has changed considerably over the past 15 years, closer to the larger towns, after the large main divided highway between Bangalore and Hyderabad was completed. However, there are still large areas of the SEDS developmental work which remain quite rural. The terrain is mostly flat except for rocky mountain outcrops formed by earlier volcanic activity. Sustainable agriculture has been very much encouraged after tank desilting work. Many crops including ground nuts rely on rain which at times can be very scarce. The farmers who have access to water have been diversifying their crops instead of only relying on one crop each year. That has had an impact also on stability for the local families as they can remain in their

villages, farm or work for others and their children can attend the local schools. There has been less loss of students from the program in the past five years. The area is classified as drought prone with bore wells prevalent in some areas. Larger industrial facilities are being built along the freeway. This has given work to many of the local people who will take a bus to work, and sometimes a company bus will collect them from the villages.

### **SEDS Child Education Goals**

The main goal was the education of students who might not otherwise have the opportunity to attend school, and pay for their uniforms, books and school fees. Students are weighed and measured regularly and any irregularities health wise is able to be monitored.

To achieve this goal, students were selected in various ways

1. Principal or teacher recommended the student for sponsorship.
2. SEDS Health care workers and SEDS Field staff who lived in many of the targeted villages were aware of the needs in their local community.
3. VO's (Village Organisation) which consisted mainly of women were often instrumental in advising SEDS staff of potential students requiring support.
3. Parents, grandparents or carers would visit SEDS and request sponsorship support.

All data collected was checked and verified by CEO Manil Joshua prior to a student commencing on the program

### **Specific Goals for 2023-2024**

There were no specific goals for 2023/24 as the program has continued to operate very successfully. The program has been in operation since late 1994 and implementation has changed over the years as needs and expectations were met for the students in each of the local communities. New students have traditionally and mainly been selected from the areas chosen for new tank desilting and sustainable agricultural projects.

### **The Current Situation**

Currently there are 170 students attending various schools. The age range is from 4 to 16 which covers Upper Kinder Garden( UKG) to Year 10. The majority are from the lower grades, with students at upper levels being recommended by a school for support to remain in school. Two students are currently at university at the request of SEDS. Their sponsors were more than happy with that decision.

### **Outputs/Outcomes Against Specific Goals**

Excellent results again this year from Year 10 students with 18 Year 10's sitting their exams. Sixteen of those students passed with the majority with First Division Passes. There were Second Division passes, and general passes. Two students re-sat one failed exam, with one passing and the other failing for a second time. The students at all other levels have also had a very good year. As project coordinator, I check all reports and any which indicate a potential problem, I ask questions of CEO Manil and SEDS staff. Monitoring has taken place by Anne Marie who has visited SEDS with her husband Michael who is the project coordinator of the SEDS Watershed and Sustainable Agriculture Project. I intend making a visit in 2025.,

## Expenditure

SEDS Child Education program is fully funded by the donors who support the students. Other funds are sent to cover medical supplies come from some student supporters, and from other people in PIA. The medical supplies may cover glasses for students, creams for skins conditions, something which is prevalent in this area, and other minor needs

## Current and Anticipated Risks and Action to Mitigate Risks

<i>Identified Risk</i>	<i>Likelihood (Low/ Medium/ High)</i>	<i>Impact (Strong/ Moderate/ Weak)</i>	<i>Action taken to Mitigate Risk</i>
Student leaving the program - relocating	Low	Weak	Students who leave the program do this due to a number of reasons. 1. parents relocating to a larger city in search of work 2. , A student is offered free board and education at a Government Hostel. These are both under the control of the parent. SEDS staff are advised and they in turn advise me at PIA
Exams – failing – Year 10	Low	weak	At Year 10, students are able to re-sit any failed exams
Exams – failing – all other levels	low	weak	Students who are noticed to be struggling are offered some extra tutoring in their home villages, and this is available for many other students as well. All reports are check by myself as project coordinator and this year were again at a very acceptable level

Lyn Pickering

November 2024