

ASSISI AID PROJECTS

Snapshot 2020-21



A message from the President

This year the generous support of our donors and friends has meant that we continue to make a difference to women and children who are in need. I would like to thank our donors for their ongoing support during a year which presented us with many challenges due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The past year has been a tough one for many impacted by the pandemic. For us it has necessitated major adjustments to our work. Our projects have pivoted to address those challenges ensuring activities have been delivered in a COVID-safe manner. A number of COVID-19 response activities were implemented to strengthen the capacity of the communities we support.

Our achievements would not have been possible without the dedication, resilience, and hard work of our long-term in-country partner, Integrated Development Trust (IDT), delivering project activities safely and securely in Tamil Nadu, India. It is a privilege to work with Integrated Development Trust and in June 2021 saw us renew and strengthen our partnership further, by formally committing to the next three years. This will enable us to continue our support for those who have no-one else.

COVID-19 has also meant that our team worked remotely across Australia. Thank you to our dedicated Committee of Management and Sub-Committee members for their commitment and expertise in ensuring that Assisi Aid Projects continues to be a valued and effective organisation.

A message from the new CEO

Hello,

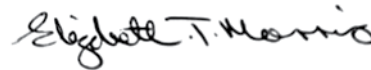
It certainly is a privilege to be part of the Assisi Aid Projects team. In my short time with the organisation, I have been continually impressed, and highly appreciative, of the kindness and generosity of our supporters and volunteers. Thank you!

I come to the organisation with a passion for international development, and in particular a focus on the empowerment of women in disadvantaged communities. Please be assured I am committed to continuing the good work, and to assisting women, children and communities in Tamil Nadu and beyond.

I would like to particularly acknowledge the contribution of Prue Ingram, who in June 2020 took over the reins as Acting CEO of Assisi Aid Projects and remained in the role until September 2021. Following Prue's tenure, a new CEO has been appointed. I would like to extend a very warm welcome to Jacqueline Parisi, who joined the team in August 2021.

Thank you also to Caroline Gatenby, Program Manager, who has brought significant international development experience to the organisation since June 2019; to Isabella Kenne, our Project Officer; and to our interns, all of whom have been required to work remotely.

Assisi Aid projects values the generous support of our donors. This support allows us to achieve our vision. We acknowledge our partners including the department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Navitas Education Trust and Berfred Foundation for their support. We are very grateful to you



Elizabeth Morris OAM
President



Over the coming year at Assisi Aid Projects, we will be focused on strengthening our organisational systems and processes further, developing new strategy and expanding our geographic reach and impact. As we do this, I hope I get to meet many of you and have the opportunity to thank you in person.

With very best wishes and thanks,



Dr Jacqueline Parisi
Chief Executive Officer



When Every Woman Thrives – India Women

Key Achievements

91% (1646) of participants understand and demonstrate COVID-19 prevention measures.

1398 participants were trained in financial literacy or business skills.

1024 women received literacy training.

255 widows and 35 women with disabilities accessed government schemes or bank loans.



Participants have been supported to establish businesses which enable them to earn an income. Image credit: IDT 2021

The Single Women's project aims to improve economic, social, and civic participation of over 1700 single women and their families in rural villages in four districts of Tamil Nadu. Widowed, divorced, and unmarried women in rural Indian villages and tribal hamlets face discrimination, isolation and poverty. Widows face additional social stigma and discrimination, impacting on their dignity, self-esteem, ability to participate in civic life, generate an income, and health outcomes.

The project activities aim to support women and their families. Specifically, the activities aim to assist women rebuild their and pursue economic, health, and community leadership opportunities not previously available to them. Through the 121 Self-Help Groups and 45 Village Development Committees and other activities, women connect with the community and improve their skills in income generation, access loans to establish businesses, and improve their knowledge of human and tribal rights. In doing so, they are empowered to confront and dismantle entrenched perceptions surrounding single women.

Uma* is a participant in the single women's project. The 32-year-old lives with a disability. Uma faced a number of hardships after her father passed away. She runs a small grocery shop with her mother and sister and reported experiencing greater levels of

stress and depression after her father's death. Uma spoke of the positive impact the project has had on her livelihood.

“

I felt lonely because it was unfortunate to live a normal life in my village. I had the opportunity to join a single women group. It boosted my confidence and allowed me to socialise with more women. I recently got a business loan from the program, which helped me expand my grocery sales. I am thankful for the IDT and Assisi program that has raised my standard of living.

Uma, project participant.

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Many thanks to The Berfred Foundation for its ongoing support of this project.

* name has been changed for privacy purposes

When Every Woman Thrives – India Youth

The Children's project seeks to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged children in Tamil Nadu. This is achieved through supplementary education and extracurricular support programs. The children are largely first-generation learners whose families have had few opportunities to access quality education, personal development opportunities, and future employment pathways. Many are from the Irular tribe, isolated from mainstream Indian society and face caste-based discrimination.

The Children's project works with participants to overcome disadvantages across 15 rural villages and 15 tribal areas. The participants actively engage in supplementary education programs, wherein a large focus is placed on gender equality. Within the project, parents are encouraged to take an active role in their children's education and discuss issues that may be impacting their child within the

parent's groups. These discussions focus on gender equality, child protection, health, and children's rights.

Assisi Aid Projects remains committed to ensuring children receive a quality education and that communities remain connected despite the challenges of COVID-19. Project activities, such as evening tuition classes and the 30 Parents' Group have adapted in response to the rapidly changing COVID-19 environment. Where possible, students engaged in home-based learning activities and parents' group meetings have been replaced by village level meetings, in order to reduce movement and decrease the risk of COVID-19 spread.

Many thanks to the Navitas Education Trust for its ongoing support of this project.

All activities promote equal participation irrespective of gender, ability, and caste, supporting children and their families to improve their livelihoods and foster inclusion within their communities.



Street-Level study groups enabled children to continue their in-person education when possible this project year. Image credit IDT 2021

Key Achievements

- 80% of parents** participated in group meetings and discussed the development of their children's education.
- 553 children** gain literacy skills by a trained tutor, using activity-based learning.
- 497 community members** trained in child protection measures
- 303 families** grew vegetables in home gardens.
- 116 households** grew surplus vegetables, enabling them to support their families as well as others in the community.

Our COVID-19 response



Earlier in 2021, over 400,000 daily cases of COVID-19 were reported at the height of India's second wave. The communities we support are acutely impacted by the pandemic due to extended lockdowns, movement restrictions, and the impact on the informal economy.

Assisi Aid Projects is committed to continue to support the rural and tribal communities of Tamil Nadu. Throughout the past 18 months, Assisi Aid Projects has been working closely with our partner, Integrated Development Trust (IDT), to monitor the COVID-19 situation in India and ensure project participants are best supported. IDT staff have emphasised the importance of COVID-19 preventative hygiene measures throughout all project activities. Where possible, participants have been supported to access vaccination and other health services.

Distribution of humanitarian relief packages

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, Assisi Aid Projects was able to provide a second relief distribution to the vulnerable tribal hamlet and rural village communities in which we work. In July 2021, the team was able to respond quickly to requests for more support. Over 2680 women and their families received much-needed support as they face ongoing challenges from food insecurity and income loss. Assisi Aid Projects supported IDT to distribute over 26,000kg of rice and more than 5000 masks among the women and

their families across five districts.

The women and families with whom we work have expressed their heartfelt thanks for the generous support from Assisi Aid Projects' donors. Your contribution helps to ensure that they do not go hungry and that they have access to masks that enable them to protect themselves and their communities.

When Every Woman Thrives – India Youth

At the beginning of the 2020-21 project year, children and parents were gradually able to return to socially distanced, COVID-safe, face-to-face project activities. A key feature of this was the street-level study groups operating in all study centres, where 746 students attended classes across 347 street study groups. This enabled participants to re-engage with their communities while maintaining necessary safety measures.

Unfortunately, in April 2021, face-to-face study groups and children clubs were no longer deemed to be a safe delivery option. However, Assisi Aid Projects continued to work closely with our partner to ensure children were supported in their ongoing education and skills development. Children engaged and connected with their community through remote COVID-19 awareness-related activities, including drawing pictures, writing essays, and making videos on the importance of hygiene and other safety measures.



COVID-safe protocols adhered to during the relief distribution.
Image credit IDT 2021

When Every Woman Thrives – Single Women

Throughout the year, the Single Women's project activities were modified in response to the worsening and rapidly changing COVID-19 situation in Tamil Nadu. Where possible, activities proceeded in-person as originally designed while ensuring the application of COVID-safe measures. The 106 Single Women's groups continued to meet monthly with extra precautions. For much of the 2020-21 project year however, activities have been required to operate on a remote basis. Our partner organisation has worked consistently to ensure the safe delivery of project activities for participants and staff. This has included undergoing training to provide psychosocial support and outreach phone calls to participants, focussing on vulnerable women and girls and those experiencing family violence. Further, participants were supported remotely to apply for business loans, Family



Single women participate in awareness training from a Community Facilitator. Image credit IDT 2020

Ration cards, pension identity cards, and other government welfare systems.

A Few Words from IDT, Tamil Nadu, India

Throughout 2020-21, Assisi Aid Projects has proudly continued to work in partnership with our long-standing in-country partner in India, Integrated Development Trust (IDT). IDT brings to the project their expertise, skills, commitment, and a deep understanding of the local environment in which our projects in India are delivered.

IDT is a not-for-profit organisation registered under the Indian Trust Act that aims to improve social, environmental, health and economic opportunities for impoverished communities living in Tamil Nadu, through locally led, culturally sensitive, and sustainable solutions.

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We take this opportunity to thank the Assisi supporters - your contributions are making a real difference in the lives of vulnerable families in our community, especially during the COVID-19 crisis. Your kindness has helped us redistribute rice and masks to 2684 families.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought many challenges in implementing the programs, but with your generosity we can support the families to restore their lives with covid-safe measures.

The 832 children in the education program are improving their literacy skills and are ready for COVID-safe school classes in the coming months. Over 1800 Single women are regaining their economic and social status through our training and regular guidance from the staff. Additionally, small business loans have been provided to vulnerable women to strengthen their family income.

The 2684 families are experiencing good health through adopting COVID-19 health practices, of which 17 tribal families have received assistance from the legal department to obtain community certification, and 335 kitchen gardens have been set up in the field.

Our program continues to bring positive change to families, and once again, we thank the supporters for their ongoing support.

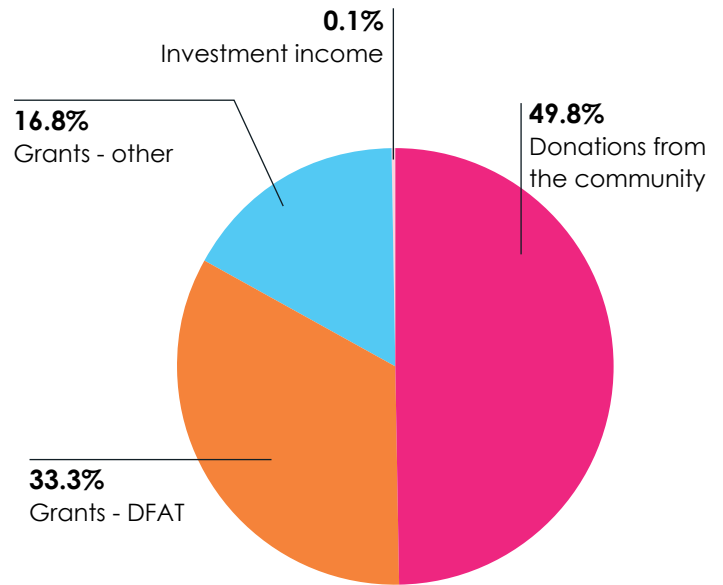
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Financial summary

Assisi Aid Projects had a surplus of \$154,143 for the year ended 30 June 2021. This was a result of savings in staff costs, and reducing overseas programs costs due to a shortfall in funding. Assisi Aid Projects is exploring different avenues to increase and diversify funding to enable higher allocations to overseas programs.

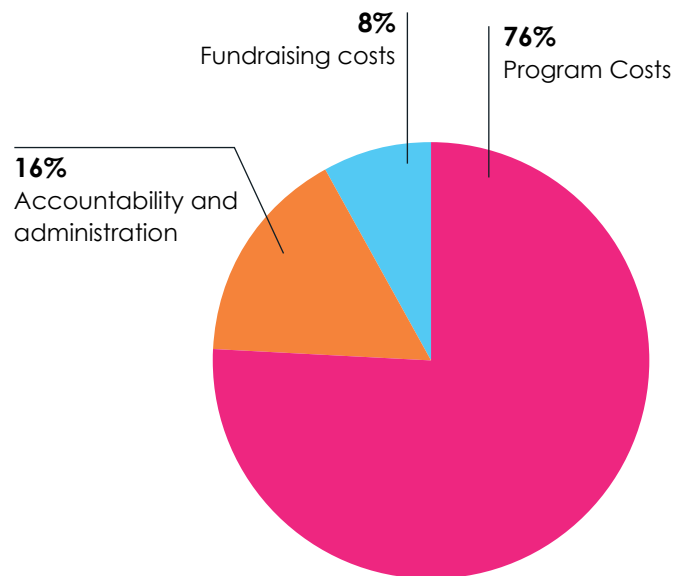
Where funds came from

Donations from the community	49.8%
Grants - DFAT	33.3%
Grants - other	16.8%
Investment income	0.1%
Other revenue	0%
Bequests	0%



Where the funds went

Program costs	76%
Accountability and administration	16%
Fundraising costs	8%



Total expenses for the financial year totalled \$295,658 with \$128,680 being applied to International Programs in India. As restricted fundraising reduced the amount we could spend on overseas programs this year, accountability and administration totalled a larger proportion of costs than in previous years. Some costs including audits, Australia Council for International Development membership, and financial management could not be reduced whilst maintaining accountable programming. Due to a change in accounting practices, two years of audit fees were paid this year.

Program cost

Includes expenditure on long-term international development, community education, program design and implementation, training, advocacy, and monitoring and evaluation.

Fundraising

Includes marketing and communication costs to secure donations to fund our work.

Accountability and administration

Relates to the overall operational capability of Assisi Aid Projects, such as audit fees, personnel, finance and administration costs, insurance, and membership to peak bodies.

For full financial statements please see our Annual Report 2020-2021 on our website: www.assisi.org.au



PLEASE DONATE

THANK YOU!

ALL DONATIONS OVER \$2 ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

Assisi Aid Projects offers a range of methods for making donations. You can donate by:

1. ONLINE: at www.assisi.org.au and donate using your credit card.
2. DIRECT DEPOSIT into the Assisi Aid Projects account:
Account Name: Assisi Aid Projects Inc
BSB Number: 633 000
Account Number: 124429424
3. CHEQUE: Please make out to Assisi Aid Projects Inc and mail to us along with this form.
4. DEBIT from a credit card (Visa and Mastercard only).

Card Number: _____
Card Expiry Date: _____
Name (on card): _____

YOUR DETAILS: Please fill in your details below and return so we can provide a receipt.

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone/Mobile: _____
Email: _____

I would like to receive future communications via:

- post email

I would like to support Assisi Aid Projects with a:

- Once-off donation of \$ _____
 Regular donation of \$ _____ per month.
You can change the amount you donate at any time by contacting us.

Please add your name as the reference. First time donors please contact us with your address details so that we can mail a tax receipt.

Bequests: leaving a legacy

Including a donation of any amount to Assisi Aid Projects in your will ensures the beneficiaries of our projects will continue to receive support to empower change in their lives. You are welcome to contact our Chief Executive Officer (ceo@assisi.org.au) should you wish to discuss options for leaving a donation in your will.

Assisi Aid Projects Inc.

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Assisi Aid Projects acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of all the lands on which we work and live. We pay our respects and express our gratitude to their Elders - past, present and emerging.

Australian Aid 



ACFID
MEMBER

Assisi Aid Projects is a signatory to the Australian Council for International Development Code of Conduct, which defines minimum standards of governance, management and accountability for non-government development organisations. Our voluntary adherence to the Code of Conduct demonstrates our commitment to ethical practice and public accountability. Assisi Aid Projects has DFAT accreditation and complies with DFAT policies. REG: A0006479K ABN: 56511265170