

# ASSISI AID PROJECTS

2021-22 Snapshot





## A message from the President

This year I was impressed with the positive impact of our programs in supporting those without access to the opportunities and basic needs that we are fortunate to enjoy.

We've continued to build on our programs, and I have been overwhelmed with the generosity and the engagement of our donors and supporters.

Our CEO Dr Jacqueline Parisi has made a strong start since joining the team in August 2021. Under Jacqueline's energetic leadership we have been developing a new strategy and building our team of volunteers and interns. We welcomed Cate Coleman as our Program Manager in March 2022.

We have a wonderful voluntary Committee of Management, including our long-serving and dedicated Tom Dumaresq. This year we have focussed on our organisational structure, policies and our risk management processes.

Our valued partner in India, Integrated Development Trust (IDT) has delivered programs to more than 1900 women and over 800 children. I have been fortunate to have met virtually with Sr. Stella over the past year

and through our conversations I have gained a more in-depth understanding of the positive impacts of Assisi's partnership with IDT.

In May 2022 we partnered with the Federation of Business and Professional Women Nepal (BPW Nepal) and Australia's Ambassador to Nepal joined for the virtual signing ceremony. Together we launched the 'Advancing Women in Agroforestry Business Enterprise in the Wake of Pandemic' (AWABE) that will support 105 women in Jumla, Nepal.

We acknowledge our partners including the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Navitas Education Trust and the Berfred Foundation for their support.

On behalf of the Committee of Management, I thank our staff and volunteers for their commitment, and to our donors, supporters and partners for believing in us and caring about those in need. Thank you for all your support.

Elizabeth Morris OAM  
President



## A message from the CEO

The past year at Assisi Aid Projects has certainly flown.

As we close off the 2021-2022 Financial Year with our Annual Report, I would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to all our supporters and volunteers. Without your support, there would be no impact for the women and communities in Tamil Nadu, Nepal and beyond.

The year has seen us deepen our impact. We have strengthened our projects, expanded our geographic reach into Nepal, and have continually refined our organisational systems and processes - retaining our signatory status of the Australian Council for International Development.

We also commenced the development of an exciting new strategy for Assisi – a strategy to ensure economic empowerment for women, expand partnerships within Asia-Pacific, and optimise our international development impact.

On a personal note, I view it as an enormous privilege to work with such a wonderful organisation. It is truly rewarding and very humbling to experience first-hand such generosity from our supporters and volunteers. We extend our deep gratitude to all our supporters, volunteers, our project partners, and our funding partners, including the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Navitas Education Trust, and Berfred Foundation for your support.

Thank you!

With very best wishes and thanks,

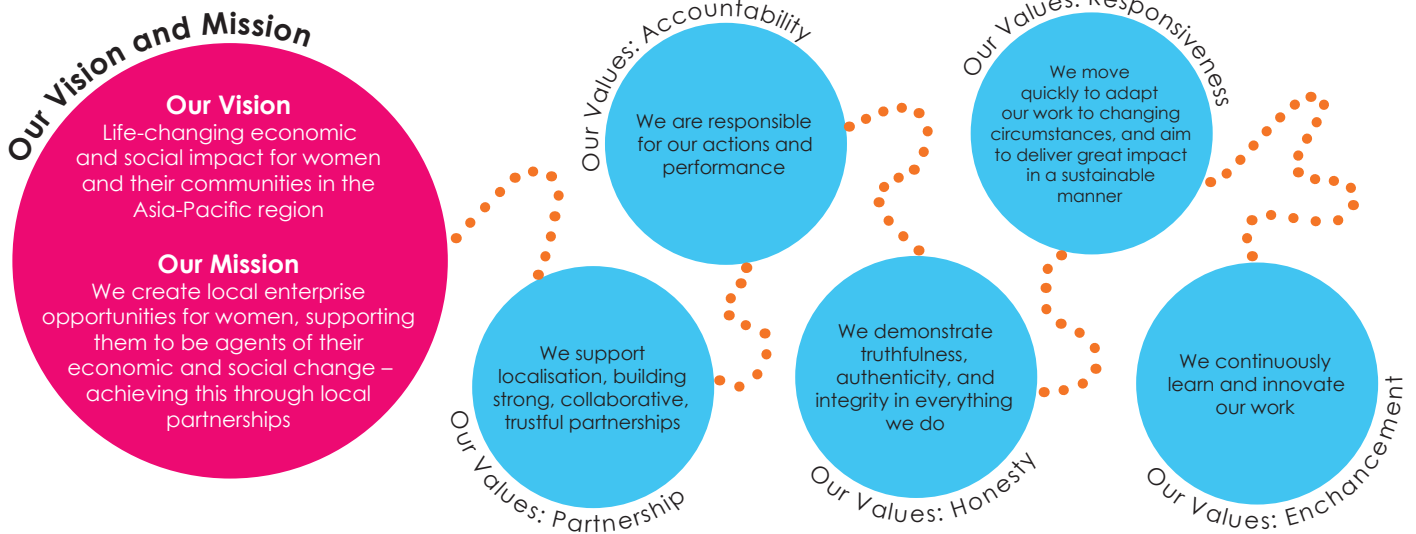
Dr Jacqueline Parisi  
Chief Executive Officer



# Our New Strategy: 2022 - 2027

The team at Assisi Aid Projects is pleased to share news that the Strategic Plan for 2022-2027 has now been developed. To see the new Strategic Plan, head to our website [www.assisi.org.au](http://www.assisi.org.au).

The new vision, mission and values are shown below.



## Assisi Aid Projects News - Congratulating Tom Dumaresq

Assisi Aid Projects is delighted to share the following news that took place in the 2021-22 Financial Year.

Congratulations to Assisi Aid Projects' longest standing Committee of Management member Tom Dumaresq OAM JP, for being inducted into the Hall of Excellence at Assumption College, Kilmore, in April 2022. Tom was recognised with a plaque (pictured), commemorating his dedication to community and international development.

As a founding member of Assisi Aid Projects, and having served as President from 2002-2008, Tom has been instrumental in the organisation's

development. Following the devastating 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, Tom was involved in fundraising efforts with supporters from across regional Victoria to support the communities in which we work to replace their fishing boats that had been destroyed. The new boats were named after the towns that had led the fundraising initiative, including Shepparton and Wangaratta, among others.

The team at Assisi Aid Projects extend their congratulations to Tom on this wonderful achievement.

An excerpt from an article in Tom's local parish newsletter, which featured his achievement. Image Credit: Dumaresq Family 2022

To stay up to date on the latest news from Assisi Aid Projects, follow us on Facebook and Instagram, and connect with us on LinkedIn.

**Thomas (Tom) Dumaresq OAM**  
Environmentalism and Humanitarianism  
Last Year Attended 1956

Tom Dumaresq was a founding member of the philanthropic organisation Assisi Aid Projects with Sr Stella Ettadu, which began its work teaching women in India to farm, with the intention of improving food security in local communities. Over time, Assisi Aid Projects expanded its operations to work with local partners in Cambodia, India and Timor Leste to deliver women's empowerment projects in agriculture, education, health and microfinance aimed at breaking the cycle of poverty in these countries. After the 2004 Tsunami, he was involved in a fundraising project to help people in Southern India replace fishing boats and protect their livelihoods.

### Congratulations Tom Dumaresq

**For being recognized with a special plaque and inducted into the Hall of Excellence at Assumption College, Kilmore on 29th April, 2022**

Tom has been involved with Overseas Aid and was a Foundation Member of the Assisi Aid Project when it was formed 35 years ago. He has travelled to India 8 times and supported Sister Stella to establish the formation of a dairy farm in Tamil Nadu, South India with the object of getting cows into villages so kids could have access to fresh milk each day.

He supported groups of 20 women in their villages to become financially independent and self sufficient in being able to feed their families. 1400 groups were set up totaling 28,000 women. Tom was so proud of their progress as some went on to set up cottage industries, market gardens and mini supermarkets.

Tom has received an Environmental Award for raising awareness of these issues and was awarded the Tree Grower of the Year in 1992 after planting 50,000 native trees on his farm at Undera.

Tom loves to give back to his community and has been a Justice of the Peace for over 45 years and is still active in that role now.

**TOM, YOU ARE AN INSPIRATION TO ALL OF US, AND ST. MARYS MOOROOPNA SALUTES YOU**

## Key Achievements

1938 women improved their saving practices.

Women now have greater community respect; they leave their homes and speak up for their rights, overcoming societal barriers that previously prevented them from participating.

179 women benefitted from access to government support cards and pensions.

70 women resolved ongoing issues with the help of free legal assistance.

Humanitarian distribution July 2021: 1738 families each received 10kg of rations and 2 cloth face masks.

**Program Budget: \$110,312**

Life in rural and tribal Indian communities is typically male led and dominated, leaving women lacking in power if they are widowed, divorced, or unmarried. Deprived of equal rights and opportunities, single women and their children often face isolation and poverty.



Income-generating programs support women to become financially independent. Image credit: IDT 2021-22

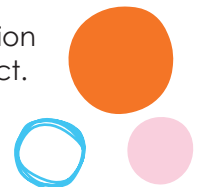
## Empowering Every Woman – India

The Single Women's Project, implemented by our partner organisation in India, Integrated Development Trust (IDT), supports over 1900 single women to increase their income, influence social and institutional change, and have improved wellbeing and livelihood outcomes. Through 134 Self-Help groups and 25 Village Development Committees, the project provides practical skill development for income generation, and access to loans, supporting small enterprises. All participants in the project are members of the Velicham Federation, a state-wide network, which brings together women from across Tamil Nadu to build connection and challenge negative societal norms.

Women now have greater community respect; they leave their homes and speak up for their rights. Widows have begun proudly wearing the Bindi and attending public family events – practices they have traditionally been excluded from.

In June, 11 women from the Single Women's Project, alongside IDT staff, met with members of the Australian High Commission, Chennai. Mrs. Jeyanthi shared that during the height of the pandemic in India, she was able to earn an income through a project initiative, sewing reusable masks for others in the community. She told how "staff phone calls during the COVID were very supportive, comforting and helpful".

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



# Empowering Every Girl – India Youth

## Key Achievements

83% of the children improved their reading and writing skills, and successfully qualified for the next grade.

832 students regularly engaged in learning programs; of which 639 have improved their skills across Tamil, maths, Social Science, and English subjects.

1046 participants received regular psycho-social, delivered by trained staff.

57 people with disabilities were supported to access government welfare benefits and identity cards.

Humanitarian distribution July 2021: 946 families each received 10kg of rations and 2 cloth face masks.

**Program Budget: \$131,416**

The Children's Project supports over 800 children from more than 500 families to receive quality education and improve their livelihoods. The project works across 30 villages in rural Tamil Nadu to provide opportunities for children and their communities to thrive, by adopting a holistic approach - including working with parents to best meet the educational needs of the children, strengthen communities, and address gender inequality. Assisi Aid Projects, together with its partner IDT, provide support to children from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes – recognised by the Government of India as some of the most disadvantaged in society.

The 2021-22 project year saw the Children's Project continue to progress strongly, assisted in part by the return of in-person activities, and further easing of COVID-19 restrictions. The reintroduction of the Children's Parliament activity – which had been postponed since 2020 due to COVID restrictions - was a particular highlight. Each child takes on a role in the parliament and builds on their public speaking and leadership skills. Parents groups have enabled over 1000 parents to actively engage in their child's development and have provided the opportunity to discuss important village issues, such

as children's rights, child protection, health and gender equality.

In June of this year, IDT staff met with representatives from the Australian High Commission in Chennai. 15 children from the project attended, with consent from their parents, and shared how the Children's Project had impacted their lives. Priyadarshini, a year eight student, told attendees "I enjoy studying at the Evening Study Center, the teacher... give[s] me respect".

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

Mrs Sowpakiyam and her husband from Alappakkam Village are members of the parents' group, and their two children study at our study centre. As labourers employed to weed the farmland, insufficient equipment made it difficult to gain consistent jobs. Community facilitators encouraged the couple to apply for a project business loan - INR 15000 (approx. AUD\$271) - to assist them in buying a new lawn mower; they saved up to pay for half while IDT loaned the other half. Since purchasing a second-hand lawn mower in March 2022, the family has increased their job security and income.



Mrs Sowpakiyam pictured with her family's lawn mower, purchased thanks to a project business loan. Image credit IDT 2021-22

# Advancing Women in Agroforestry Business Enterprise – Nepal



Mrs Mahatara (pictured), is one of 105 women participating in the project. She shared how the initiative has changed her life. Image credit: BPW Nepal 2022.

“

I have spent a lot of time on vegetable farming. When I received training in vegetable and fruit cultivation through the project... I did commercial farming and earned good income. Earlier, it was not enough to bring food from farming, but after cultivating commercial vegetables farming, my life has suddenly changed, and I have been able to teach my children for higher education in the capital. Now my son has also got a government job.

- Mrs Mahatara

”

2022 has seen Assisi Aid Projects' operations expand, with the commencement of a pilot project in Jumla, Nepal in May 2022. Assisi Aid Projects has partnered with the Federation of Business and Professional Women Nepal (BPW Nepal) to bring this project to fruition. The project supports women in rebuilding their agro-forest-based enterprises in the wake of the pandemic.

This project supports women to become self-sufficient and has brought about change for women whose lives and livelihoods have been adversely affected by the impacts of COVID-19. By creating economically viable solutions in the agro-forestry sector, the women are able to become

self-reliant and capable of sustaining their incomes, further contributing to the local economy. Though the project is still in its infancy, it has had promising outcomes for the women in Jumla and Assisi Aid Projects, along with BPW Nepal, hopes to extend and develop the project in the coming years.

In line with our strategic priorities for 2022-2027, Assisi Aid Projects is proactively exploring potential future project partners, with a view to increasing our life-changing economic and social impact for women and their communities in the Asia-Pacific region. Plans for the commencement of an additional project in 2023 are underway.

## Our Finances

Assisi Aid Projects had a surplus of \$79,231 for the year ended 30 June 2022. This surplus is less than the previous year due to expansion into Nepal and a consequential increase in program activity. The focus on efficiency, effectiveness and keeping staff and administration costs to a cost-effective level continued. Assisi Aid Projects continues to explore different avenues to increase and diversify funding to enable higher allocations to overseas programs, and this is a key focus of the next five-year Strategic Plan.

### Where funds came from

Donations from the community	39.2%
Bequests	15.0%
Grants - DFAT	36.6%
Grants - other	9.1%
Investment income	0.1%
Other revenue	0%

Note: These percentages are based on total revenue received)

### Where the funds went

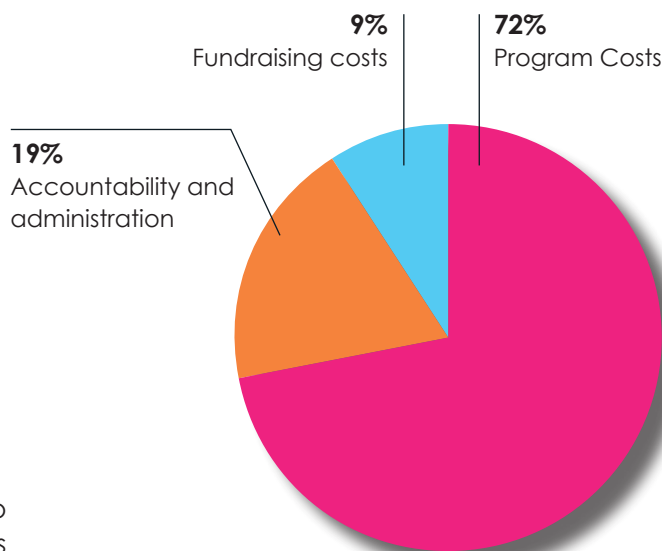
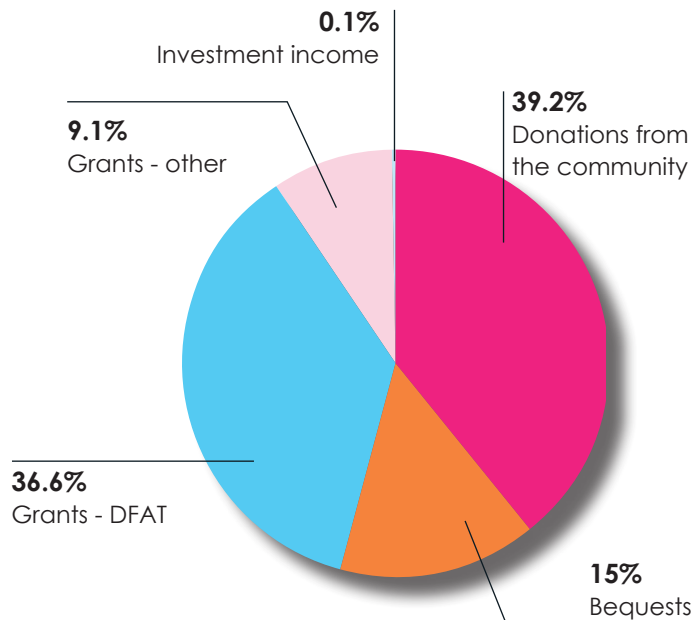
Program costs	72%
Accountability and administration	19%
Fundraising costs	9%

Note: These percentages are based on total expenses.

During the financial year, Assisi was fortunate to be the beneficiary of a number of past supporters that remembered us in their Wills. These bequests represented 15% of total revenue being over \$60,000. Given the tough fundraising environment during COVID, Assisi was still able to raise over \$160,000 of donations from the public.

Total expenses for the financial year was \$330,055 with \$109,692 being applied to International Programs in India and Nepal. Given the uncertainty around COVID-19 and the ability of our partners to deliver the projects, Assisi's budget for projects was reduced in the 2022 financial year. This uncertainty has now eased and fundraising is returning to normal levels. Along with a new partner in Nepal, Assisi will be able to return to sending more funds for overseas development in future years.

A review of our finance systems and some efficiency changes resulted in short term increases in our administration costs. This meant that our administration costs as proportion of total expenses



(19%) was slightly higher than last year (16%). These extra costs will not be recurring and have made our systems stronger and more secure.

#### 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 2021-2022 on our website: [www.assisi.org.au](http://www.assisi.org.au)  
The percentages and graphs in this summary are derived from the data found in the audited financial statements of the Annual Report.



# 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](http://www.assisi.org.au) and donate using your credit card.
2. DIRECT DEPOSIT into the Assisi Aid Projects account.  
We accept payments directly into our account, please contact us and we can provide details.
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.*

### 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](mailto:ceo@assisi.org.au)) should you wish to discuss options for leaving a donation in your will.

### Assisi Aid Projects Inc.

Ross House, Level 3  
 247-251 Flinders Lane  
 Melbourne VIC 3000  
 Australia  
 T: +61 3 9070 9040  
 E: [assisi@assisi.org.au](mailto:assisi@assisi.org.au)

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.



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