

ASSISI AID PROJECTS

Empowering change

**PLEASE
DONATE**

Your donation will help to create a
more equal world for everyone

See our back cover for
more information



Our vision is a world in which all people
have equal opportunity to determine and
achieve their economic and social potential.

Assisi Aid Projects: At a Glance

OUR IMPACT

In India

1132 community members

have attended group meetings and training sessions, building their awareness of the importance of education.

34 women

were able to start new businesses, with an additional 189 women benefiting from income from these businesses.

766 children

regularly attend evening tuition classes.

30 villages

participating regularly in tuition classes and children's clubs.

622 children

have access to child protection services and child friendly spaces, including children's clubs.

In Cambodia

LLC are implementing a project to encourage women's participation in community level development and bring about transformational change in gender equality through the creation of a Gender Task Force.

100% of the members

of the Gender Task Force have undertaken child rights and protection training, as well as training in gender issues.

Women's voices amplified

Women's participation in the Gender Task Force has enabled them to raise three major community issues that impact women to the local authorities.

Our Partners

In India, we continue to partner with Integrated Development Trust (IDT), Sr Stella, the founding partner of our work in India continues to be actively involved in guiding the work of IDT.

In Cambodia, we continue our partnership with Live & Learn Cambodia (LLC). LLC is an experienced, non-government organisation committed to improving the livelihoods of women and children in rural Cambodia.

Letter from the President

Dear Friends of Assisi

Through your ongoing support and the dedication and hard work of our partners in India and Cambodia, we continue to achieve wonderful results in the communities where we work. In this newsletter we've highlighted just some of Assisi's many achievements.

Like me, I hope that you will continue to be inspired by the many ways in which our work and vision is leading to real change to the lives of those in need.

I am delighted to introduce you to Chloe Reynolds who joined Assisi Aid Projects as our new Executive Officer in February 2019. Chloe brings a wealth of international development and management expertise to this critical leadership role having worked most recently for Save the Children. Chloe is already making a difference. The Assisi Committee of Management looks forward to working with her to achieve our vision for the disadvantaged communities in which our projects are based.

Continuing a partnership extending over many years, we also acknowledge the strong support we receive from Christian Nielson and his team at Live & Learn, especially Indira Wijesinghe and Lakshman Vithana who assist with Assisi's day to day administration. Their help has been vital to the smooth running of Assisi over the past year.

Supporting Assisi's very small team, we also benefit from the assistance of volunteers. I am grateful for the commitment of Committee of Management and Sub-Committee members who provide a broad range of expertise and contribute many hours of voluntary time. I thank all Committee members for their service, and acknowledge those who through a range of personal and work commitments have found it necessary to step down this year. I welcome the new members who have recently joined our sub-committees.

We have also been incredibly fortunate to benefit from the enthusiasm and commitment of several volunteers and interns who have contributed their expertise in the past year. We are grateful for all that they do and for our partnership with Monash University that has made this possible.

You can read about our current volunteer team and why supporting Assisi is important to them in this newsletter. I also encourage you, members of your family and those in your broader community networks to consider how you can assist either directly in a voluntary capacity or through a financial contribution to support our work.

You, our generous supporters, continue to make everything that we do possible. Assisi Aid Projects, our partners and the communities who benefit from your

generosity are very grateful. Rest assured that your donations are making a difference to the lives of the people supported by our projects.

The financial environment continues to be challenging for Assisi and we recognise that each of you is balancing a range of commitments. We sincerely thank you for continuing to support us and urge you to consider a further contribution to Assisi as we approach the end of the financial year. Your on-going donations will enable us to maintain our commitment to our partners during 2019- 20. Donations to Assisi are tax deductible.

Sr Stella's vision and the Assisi approach focuses on the empowerment of women as active participants in their own development. We hope through reading this newsletter you will continue to be inspired to support this important work.



Judith Ascroft
President



INDIA:

Education and Skills Development for Disadvantaged Children

This program, implemented by IDT aims to address the high levels of illiteracy within tribal villages in the Kanchipuram district, which perpetuates a cycle of extreme poverty and discrimination.

Economic necessity often leads to early school drop outs and interruptions in children's education.

Our work with IDT enables us to support 766 first generation learners, across 30 villages, to regularly attend evening tuition lessons 5 days a week.

Case Study

"Ganapathi was socially withdrawn, displaying a lack of interest in his school studies and interacting with his peers. After participating in evening tutoring classes, Ganapathi developed a passion for science, which rekindled his passion for school and encouraged him to design a mixer machine. The mixer machine then won a prize and was displayed in a science exhibition at his school.

This program has not only provided him with access to tutors and academic material, but also life skills classes to help him feel confident in group situations and make friends. Ganapathi's family are very proud of him and his father said "I never dreamed of this. The evening classes helped him to be responsible."





“My fear is gone...
I feel free to talk
and express myself”

- Navin, Program
Participant



Improved academic and life skills education

Our comprehensive outlook on education utilises an ‘activity based learning approach’ to improve outcomes in academic and life skills knowledge. Children are continuing to display improvements in their understanding of maths and language, as well as also being educated on pressing community issues such as hygiene practice, gender equality and children’s rights. Through life skills lessons, in areas such as interpersonal relationships, stress management, and communication. Assisi’s work aims to ensure not only the academic wellbeing of children. but also enables young people to nurture their psychological and social health.



Parent Groups

The Parent groups operate to encourage active parental participation in their child’s development, reinforcing the importance of school attendance. 1132 people have participated in group meetings and training to develop an awareness of the importance of education, with 356 members involved in the parent groups. Program staff assist in facilitating parental involvement in monthly meetings, discussing topics such as child protection, nutrition, hygiene, health, and gender issues. This helps create an enabling environment for families to prosper. Income generation support from IDT, in the form of skills development and provision of loans to vulnerable families, aids in the ability of families to cover tuition fees, setting the foundations for children’s education and development and ensuring the project’s long term longevity.

INDIA:

Supporting women to create change

This program, implemented by Assisi's partner Integrated Development Trust (IDT), aims to support 1679 women living within the rural communities of Tamil Nadu.

The new year has seen an increase in the number of participants and villages that are able to access services, which includes financial training, literacy education, psychological care and tools for building leadership skills.

Case Study

Mrs. Jayalaskhmi came to the counselling program run by Assisi in partnership with the IDT, after the passing of her late husband.

Widowed at a young age, Mrs Jayalaskhmi suffered from depression and found council from the support groups. As her resilience grew overtime, she was motivated to give back to her community and underwent training to become a tutor with our children's program.

Mrs Jayalaskhmi has identified a noticeable change in her self-confidence and has become a source of positivity in her the community, working to support young people in gaining an education.



GET INVOLVED
YOUR DONATION CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO WOMEN LIKE MRS. JAYALASKHMI



Introducing the New Federation

Assisi is pleased to announce the creation of a new women's Federation – 'Velicham Single Women Federation', registered in Tamil Nadu. The Federation is independent and works towards advocating for the rights of women within the communities of the Kanchipuram, Trichy, Ariyalur and Perambalur districts. Since its creation, training sessions have been provided to Federation members on relevant issues such as gender rights, and has assisted in the development of petitions and the establishment of a people's bank. This has resulted in an increase in the number of women with the knowledge and skills to advocate and initiate change in their communities.



International Women's Day March 2019

The newly formed Federation gathered together this year, to advocate for the rights of widowed women in their communities. On the 11th of March, 122 single women rallied and marched towards the District Collector's office. After the march, with the support of Federation representatives 64 widows were able to submit applications for the Widows Pension scheme. Having access to the Widow's Pension will enable these women to have greater financial freedom to improve their livelihoods and care for their families.

CAMBODIA:

Women's Empowerment in Local Community Development

This project, implemented by Assisi's partner Live & Learn Cambodia, aims to strengthen women's participation in community level development in the Chak Commune.

The project provides 25 members from 5 villages with training on gender issues and rights based approaches to development. This promotes dialogue between community members and local authorities, to bring about positive change in the community.

Advocates for Change

A Gender Task Force (GTF) has been set up with both male and female members over the last year, to discuss and advocate for gender issues in communities. Issues discussed include violence against women and the heavy burden of unpaid domestic work performed by women.

The project has built the capacity of the GTF members to identify opportunities in their own communities, and to ensure local authorities respond to the different needs of women and men. The project is enabling women to exercise their voice and promote their interests and priorities in their communities.



"It is important to have knowledge about women's rights, in particular about the rights-based approach to help the GTF committee to participate in local community development processes."

Ms. Song Ly, Member of the GTF



GET INVOLVED

YOUR DONATION
CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE
TO ENABLING
WOMEN'S VOICES
TO BE HEARD

Community Engagement with Local Authorities

In project areas, local authorities have been highly supportive of the GTF's focus on gender in their communities. Importantly, influential Commune Council members have invited the GTF to attend the Council meeting each month, enabling valuable dialogue.

Ms. Van Sela's case study

Van Sela, is 18 years old and a member of the GTF. Before being involved in the project, Van was very shy and nervous to speak to people. From the project training, Van has become particularly interested in discussions on gender issues, and has really enjoyed the role-plays conducted at the GTF training sessions. She recognises the project has been important in helping support community engagement and participation. Previously, Van did not participate in community decisions, but now has developed the skillset to problem solve and collaborate to address community issues. Van now has the confidence to voice her opinions and participate in Commune meetings. "I think that women can do everything like men, if women have clear goals and objectives."

Mrs. Chora's case study

"Before, I was a housewife or just a community person and I also thought I could only do housework. But when I attended or became a member of GTF group, I started to see my potential and I started to present my idea to group or to do many things for mobilizing member of GTF to attend training/workshop with project. I changed myself, I also have a dream to change the mindset of community women in Chak commune" Ms. Chora, member of GTF."



Gender and the Rights-based Approach

Early this year, the project provided practical training on the rights-based approach, in order to enable the GTF to develop knowledge on how to assess gender issues across their 5 villages.

Trained in this area, the GTF was able to effectively collect and analyse information from their communities, in order to contribute to a community action plan.

Training was also provided on advocacy approaches and facilitation skills, to provide members with the ability to disseminate their knowledge and learning effectively within their villages.

The Assisi Team

Assisi Aid Projects Inc is governed by a volunteer Committee of Management, who each bring a valuable and diverse range of business, not-for-profit and development experience to Assisi.

The Committee of Management make certain that Assisi's actions align with our strategic direction and ensure that our programs are both effective and accountable. The work of Assisi is supported by three Sub-Committees; Finance and Risk, Fundraising and Communications, and Projects and Strategy.

It is only with our dedicated supporters, donors, and volunteers that our work remains possible. We would particularly like to acknowledge:

- The Department of Foreign Affairs
- Australian Council for International Development
- Navitas
- Logan and Hall, Accountants and Advisers
- Crowe Horwath Australia- Melbourne

Our 2019 Committee of Management and Sub-Committee Members:

Judith Ascroft

President, Member of all Sub-Committees

Tony Britt

VP and Member of the Finance and Risk Sub-Committee

Andrew Gilchrist

Treasurer, Member of the Finance and Risk Sub-Committee

Dione Brooks

Secretary, Chair of the Finance and Risk Sub-Committee

Nimarta Khuman

Member of the Committee of Management, Chair of the Fundraising and Communications Sub-Committee

Tom Dumaresq (OAM)

Member of the Committee of Management

Jayshree Mangubhai

Member of the Projects and Strategy Sub-Committee

Beth Sargent

Member of the Projects and Strategy Sub-Committee

Tanya Caulfield

Member of the Projects and Strategy Sub-Committee

Chloe Adams

Member of the Fundraising and Communications Sub-Committee

David Britton

Member of the Fundraising and Communications



Chloe Reynolds (centre)
Executive Officer

Assisi Volunteers

Amelia Pace

Studied a Masters of International Development Practice

Hanaa Damire

Studying a Masters of International Development Practice

Maryam Schegeni

Studying a Bachelor of Arts & Commerce

Rebecca Hough

Studying a Bachelor of Arts

Read what inspired them to volunteer with Assisi on the next page

THANKYOU

We couldn't do it without you.



"I was inspired by the compelling history of Assisi, as well as its grassroots approach to increasing women's social, economic and political empowerment through transformational change."

"I was inspired by Assisi as it aligns with my interests in women's rights. The environment here is great as you are able to see the impact the work has on individual women and hear their stories."


"I was inspired to volunteer for Assisi due to its huge impact on empowering women and children in vulnerable communities. I share Assisi values of achieving social justice and gender equality."



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