

ASSISI AID PROJECTS

Empowering change

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

**PLEASE
DONATE**

Your donation will help women and their communities in India and Cambodia.

See our back cover for more information

Letter from the President

Dear Assisi Supporters,

I hope that you are safe and well, and that life has not been disrupted too much during the COVID-19 emergency.

The situation in the communities in which Assisi works is evolving rapidly. Our Chief Executive Officer (CEO), is in regular contact with Assisi's partners, and working with them to adapt our programs for the needs of the communities we serve. In Tamil Nadu, India, conditions are deteriorating rapidly following the imposition of movement restrictions and the closure of schools and businesses. Many itinerant labourers have lost their jobs and are returning from Chennai and other large cities to their home villages. Many families that we support are beginning to experience food shortages. In Cambodia the situation is also challenging, with movement restrictions and shortages developing.

In India, Assisi and our partner Integrated Development Trust (IDT) are providing support and information on COVID-19 prevention to families and women via regular phone calls,

and by developing distance-learning materials for children. In Cambodia we are working with our partner Live & Learn Cambodia to mobilise community groups to raise awareness of COVID-19 prevention techniques. Your ongoing assistance and support will be crucial to enabling this work to continue, and to supporting recovery efforts once the emergency has passed.

Assisi's CEO, Chloe Reynolds, is expecting a baby in July. Chloe's replacement while she is on maternity leave is Prue Ingram. Prue has considerable experience in international development having worked for many years as CEO of Interplast Australia and New Zealand. Assisi's Committee of Management (CoM) and our many supporters wish Chloe well and look forward to hearing the news of the safe arrival of her baby.

The CoM and subcommittees are essential to supporting Assisi's ongoing operations, providing a wealth of professional and technical expertise that enables us to deliver high quality programs through our partners. This year we are

delighted to welcome several new members to the CoM. Assisi has also benefitted from the time and energy of volunteers and interns linked with the Monash University Workplace Integrated Learning Scheme. They have supported our staff and the CoM, whilst gaining experience in international development. We thank all our supporters for their time and effort. We also acknowledge the support we receive from Christian Nielson and his team at Live & Learn Australia who assist with Assisi's day-to-day finance and administration work.

Please also note that Assisi's President, Judith Ascroft, is undertaking a leave of absence whilst she recovers from illness. I have taken over as acting President for the time being, and am grateful for the support that I am receiving from Chloe, Prue and the CoM.

Take care.



Tony Britt
Acting President

Below: Assisi CEO, Chloe Reynolds, and the IDT board and senior staff during her visit to India in October.



Our Response to COVID-19

Assisi and our partners in India and Cambodia are working together to combat the catastrophic effects of COVID-19 on the communities in which we work. As the situation evolves, we have rapidly changed our ways of working to promote COVID-19 prevention, and to provide remote assistance to the women and children we support.

Supporting Single Women and Families in India

Staff from IDT are staying in regular touch with children and their families to conduct wellbeing checks, increase awareness of COVID-19, and encourage access to government support. To support children's ongoing learning, tutors have prepared worksheets which are delivered to each household.

Many families in Tamil Nadu are dependent on providing daily labour for income. With little or no income due to restrictions, they are experiencing severe hardship. In response, we are planning to deliver food parcels to 600 vulnerable families, and 1500 vulnerable women to ensure they do not go hungry.



Promoting Community Hygiene in Cambodia

In Cambodia the Chak Commune Gender Task Force (GTF) are working to combat the spread of COVID-19. The GTF are collaborating with the Commune Council and Health Centre to distribute leaflets and posters promoting COVID-19 awareness and prevention measures, and provide families with supplies to facilitate proper hand washing. Public health messaging is communicated using a mobile speaker, enabling information to be shared whilst maintaining social distancing.

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 (LEC). LEC is an experienced, non-government organisation committed to improving the livelihoods of women and children in rural Cambodia.

INDIA

Empowerment of Single Women in Tamil Nadu

Life for single women and their families in India is challenging, with many facing discrimination, poverty and exclusion from family and community life.

Assisi and our partner, Integrated Development Trust currently support 1676 women in 50 villages by providing skills, psycho-social support and leadership training, coupled with access to small loans to establish small businesses.

Sustainable Development

Sustainability is at the heart of the Assisi approach. The project now facilitates 110 single women's groups in five districts. As individual women have benefitted from the program, they have become mentors and advocates for their peers. In one district, six groups have come together to form a people's bank, which provides loans to new members from savings made by earlier recipients, with members reviewing and supporting new business ideas.



Before we were like caged birds, now we are free



Financial Independence

Mrs Adakkala is a widow and following the death of her husband found it difficult to generate a livelihood to support her family. She joined one of our Single Women's Groups and benefitted from increased confidence, legal advice and training in financial and business management. Last year she got a loan from the project to establish a hen rearing business. She invested half of the \$207 loan in chickens, and half in building hen houses. She now generates an income selling the hens at market, and can support herself.

Improving the Lives of Disadvantaged Children in Tamil Nadu


Children from remote rural villages face significant educational disadvantage in Tamil Nadu. 73% of families live below the poverty line, and many children leave school early to work. Assisi support 777 children in 30 villages through the provision of high quality daily tuition classes, which ensure children do not fall behind and continue their education.

Engaging the community in education and gender equality

A key aim of this project is to improve intergenerational gender equality, and to engage parents in supporting their children's education. We have established Village Development Committees and Parents Groups in each village, which encourage families and the wider community to attend sessions explaining the equal importance of girls and boys, including their Right to an Education, as well as broader issues such as Child Protection, Human Rights and Tribal Rights. This has seen the percentage of parents equally supporting the education of their daughters increase to 85%.

Leila* is twelve and has been attending the Assisi tuition classes and children's club in her village for two years. Before this, she nearly dropped out of school because she found the work difficult and she felt embarrassed to speak out. Leila has successfully progressed to the sixth year and is very proud of her progress. She particularly enjoys participating in the Children's Parliament, and is currently the Prime Minister of her village group, where she enjoys debating issues such as the environment and girls' rights.

* name changed



Now I have the confidence to speak out.

CAMBODIA:

Increasing Participation of Women and Youth in Local Leadership and Decision-making

Together with our partner, Live and Learn Cambodia, Assisi have established the Gender Task Force to advocate for issues impacting women and young people in Chak Commune

This project started in July 2018 working in conjunction with the local Chak Commune Council to address gender inequality, and lack of representation amongst women in local leadership. Our partner Live and Learn Cambodia established the Gender Task Force (GTF), who have received ongoing training on gender issues, human rights and advocacy techniques. The GTF have strong support locally, and last year raised 16 issues impacting women and young people to the Commune Council. They have established themselves as a capable local leaders, resulting in the opportunity to work with the local health centre and Commune Council to work on local responses to dengue fever and COVID-19.



Mrs Chin Chancy

Mrs Chin Chancy is a member of the GTF. Since joining the program she has grown in confidence, and was proud to make her first presentation on human rights recently. She is also participating in Commune Council meetings, ensuring the views of women are considered in local decision-making. Like other project participants, Mrs Chancy has also worked with her husband to make changes at home, where they are now sharing domestic work more equally.

Assisi Aid Projects: At a Glance

OUR IMPACT

In India

1676 members of the Velichem Federation of Single Women's Groups	777 children regularly attending evening tuition classes.	30 committees established to promote child protection at village level	194 families received food relief packages after The Federation successfully advocated to local leaders
110 Single Women's Groups providing women with community support, literacy classes, savings clubs and loans to start small businesses	3,412 people supported during COVID-19 with remote counselling, prevention advice and education interventions	2500 families received COVID-19 prevention information in Trichy district, working alongside the local panchayat committee	

In Cambodia

38% reduction in reported cases of domestic violence in project area from 2018-9	Gender Task Force spearheaded a public health response to COVID-19 in conjunction with the local health centre and commune council	Women hold 75% of Gender Task Force leadership posts	117 community members trained in gender equality and women's rights	902 people educated on COVID-19 prevention and provided with handwashing supplies
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Our Supporters

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
and Trade

Navitas
Education
Trust

Fondation Berfred

Logan and Hall,
Accountants and
Advisers

All our generous
individual
supporters

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Assisi are proud to launch our updated website www.assisi.org.au which is full of information, stories and news from our projects. Visit us today to learn more, donate, or subscribe to our e-newsletter!



PLEASE DONATE

Your donation will support vulnerable women and their communities

ALL DONATIONS OVER \$2 ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

Assisi Aid Projects offers a range of methods for making donations.

- 1 Direct deposit:**
Account Name: Assisi Aid Projects Inc
BSB Number: 633 000
Account Number: 124429424
- 2 Online:**
At www.assisi.org.au via our secure portal.
- 3 Cheque:**
All cheques should be made out to Assisi Aid Projects Inc and mailed to us with this form.
- 4 Credit Card (visa and mastercard only):**

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.

Name on card:

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I would like to support Assisi Aid Projects with a:
 One-off donation of \$ _____
 Regular donation of \$ _____ per month.
 Remember you can change the amount you donate at any time.

Assisi Aid Projects Inc

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 E: assisi@assisi.org.au

LEAVING A LEGACY

By including Assisi Aid Projects in your Will, it is possible to leave a legacy that goes beyond a lifetime and to ensure that people in need will continue to receive the life changing assistance that Assisi provides. Please contact our Chief Executive Officer for more information.



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Address: _____

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I would like to receive future communications via: post email

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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 is an Australian AID accredited Non Government Organisation. REG: A0006479K ABN: 56511265170