



CEO Update

Dear friends,

Welcome to our mid-year newsletter! It is so wonderful to have this opportunity to connect with you and keep in touch.

First, I would like to thank you warmly for your on-going support for Assisi Aid Projects. Without your assistance, the work on our projects would not be possible.

As a brief and concise update, it has been an exceptionally busy first half of 2022 at Assisi Aid Projects, and during these first few months several key milestones have been achieved. These milestones have included:

- Development of a new 2-year project in India with our long-standing in-country partner - Integrated Development Trust - an organisation established through the support from Sr Stella, who many of you know well
- Expansion of our programs to Nepal, focusing on an exciting new agri-business project, supporting rural women
- Development of a new 5-year strategy (July 2022 – June 2027) for Assisi Aid Projects, bringing a sharpening of our focus and a drive for deeper impact
- Strengthening our organisational practices – in preparation for our 'DFAT re-accreditation'
- On-boarding of two new part-time team members – Cate Coleman (our Program Manager) and Isabel Parker (our University of Melbourne Intern).

We extend a big welcome to Cate and Isabel – both are invaluable and are very welcome additions to our small and dedicated Assisi team, which also includes Isabella Kenne (our Project & Engagement Officer) and me (as Chief Executive Officer).

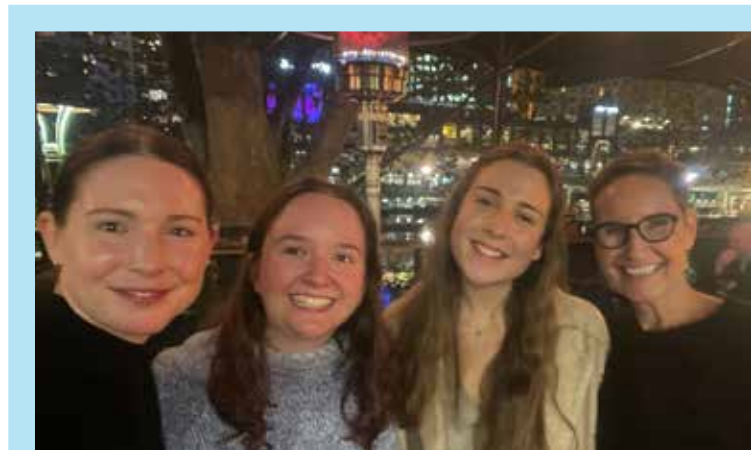
The work of our project partners in India, and now also in Nepal, continues to thrive. There are so many beautiful stories of impact – some of which you will read about in this newsletter. Each story is made possible through the co-created design of the projects, the work of our wonderful colleagues in India and Nepal, and most critically with your help.

We, together with the teams in India and Nepal, and with the communities who benefit from our projects, are hugely appreciative. Please accept our heartfelt thanks for being a part of, and contributing so generously to, Assisi Aid Projects.

With thanks and best wishes,



Dr Jacqueline Parisi and the Assisi Aid Projects Team



Empowering Change: Our India Projects

Single Women's Project

This past fiscal year (July 2021 – June 2022), your donations have helped empower nearly two thousand single women in rural Tamil Nadu. This has been made possible through our Single Women's Project, implemented by our partner in India, Integrated Development Trust. Some of the women in the Single Women's Project have shared their stories:

Mrs Tamil Selvi has been in the women's group for the last 6 years. She has participated in rallies and statewide campaigns alongside other women, and has received a business loan for farming activities, through which she encouraged her family members to do organic farming. "Being on this team, everyone respects me, and I gained confidence. Before that, I would not go anywhere. But even though I am blind, my team members take me everywhere. Thanks for starting this group."

Mrs Muniyammal is a young widow in the Single Women's Project. "When my husband died 6 years ago, I was worried about not knowing what to do with small children. But IDT started a group and gave me interest-free loans. I started a business and today I have given higher education to my kids with that income".

Mrs Sakunthala, an active member of the Single Women's Project, has expanded her grocery store, thanks to your support: "I get an average of 500 rupees (approx. \$9 AUD) a day and 800 rupees (approx. \$14 AUD) during festival periods. With that profit, I have a new sheet roofing, expanded the front portion, and bought a CCTV camera. I have been making small savings in income and strengthening the business, and now I am fine".

Additionally, in March 2022, over 400 participants from women's groups across our 51 village locations celebrated International Women's Day. The event was an opportunity for the community to learn more about women's rights and it brought together women's group representatives and elected Panchayat leaders to raise support for the program.

Children's Project

In the Children's Project - which assists over 830 children from 535 families - your support has continued to enable great work. The project operates across 30 villages and adopts an integrated approach, focusing on children's education, skills development, and family health. The enduring benefits of the project were recently highlighted when Mrs Reeta, an alumna of our Children's Project, contested a local-body election and won as a President of her Panchayat, the local village council. Mrs Reeta studied at the Evening Study Centres from year 1 to year 10 in the village of Katiyambandal, and served as Prime Minister for the Children's Parliament, improving her leadership and academic skills. During her speech at this year's International Women's Day event, Mrs Reeta greatly acknowledged the service of the project and its long-term benefits in her life. Congratulations to Mrs Reeta!



Photos from top to bottom:

IDT staff with posters at the International Women's Day event; Celebrating International Women's Day; Left - Mrs Sakunthala, a women's group member, at her grocery store. Right - Mrs Reeta was an active participant in the Children's Project; Participants in our Children's Project receive face masks, helping to keep students and their communities safe; Children supplement their education by regularly attending the study centres run by tutors in our Children's Project. All images credited to IDT 2022.

Empowering Change: Extending Our Reach

Nepal Project Launch

In May 2022, we expanded our program operations into Nepal. An exciting opportunity emerged to partner Federation of Business & Professional Women Nepal (BPW Nepal) and implement a new short-term project, 'Advancing Women in Agro Business Enterprise in the wake of the pandemic'.

The project will support 100 women in Jumla, Nepal, whose lives and livelihoods have been negatively affected by the pandemic, by enabling them to rebuild their agro-forest-based enterprises. Through the provision of tailored skills helping to address specific needs, the women will be supported to become financially independent and contribute to the local economy.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) formalising the partnership was signed via zoom on 28 April, with attendees from Assisi Aid Projects, BPW Nepal, and Her Excellency Ms. Felicity Volk, the Australian Ambassador to Nepal. BPW Nepal President, Ambica Shrestha, wishes to share the following message with Assisi Aid Projects' supporters:

"On behalf of Business & Professional Women Nepal, I extend my upmost gratitude to Assisi Aid Projects for the support to the women in Jumla, one of the most remote and disadvantaged districts of Nepal, for recovery of their agroforestry enterprises post-COVID-19, towards building their resilience and economic empowerment. I am very confident that our partnership, in working together for the betterment of the lives and livelihoods of the women, will go [a]long way in the elimination of poverty and work towards gender equality. We are truly grateful to Her Excellency Ambassador Felicity Volk for the introduction and linkage of our two organizations that has resulted in this partnership. We are confident that this will be the beginning of our cooperation and friendship in strengthening our future ties."

Assisi Aid Projects remains committed to its current projects in India and its longstanding partnership with in-country partner organisation, Integrated Development Trust.

Some supporters may find they wish to direct their donation to either India or Nepal; if so, please indicate this with your donation. If you have any questions regarding the projects, please contact the Chief Executive Officer via email on assisi@assisi.org.au or by phone on +61 3 9070 9040.



Photos from top to bottom:
MoU signing for our new Nepal project, with attendees from Assisi Aid Projects, BPW Nepal, and Ms. Felicity Volk, the Australian Ambassador to Nepal.
Women in a Kathmandu agri-centre with their products. Image credit BPW Nepal 2022.
Women attending the annual sales & exhibition of products run by small and medium-sized enterprises. Image credit BPW Nepal 2021.
BPW Nepal's expertise and localised knowledge enables women to build their entrepreneurship capacity. Image credit BPW Nepal 2022.



Connect with Us

Have you had a chance to look at our website?

We post photos, videos, and stories from the project locations on www.assisi.org.au

 [www.facebook.com/Assisi Aid Projects](https://www.facebook.com/Assisi-Aid-Projects)

 [@assisi_aid_projects](https://www.instagram.com/assisi_aid_projects)

 [www.au.linkedin.com/
company/assisi-aid-projects](https://www.au.linkedin.com/company/assisi-aid-projects)

News from India

Our partner in India, Integrated Development Trust, has recently welcomed a new board member, Sr. Anila Christy, who has commenced as Chairperson. Meanwhile, Sister Stella – whose work was central in the origins of Assisi Aid Projects - is among those celebrating milestones in 2022: in June, Sr. Stella and Sr. Piusha are commemorating 25 years since the establishment of the Vadanallur convent; while Sr. Piusha marks her 50th year in religious life.

A message from Integrated Development Trust's Managing Trustee, Sr. Piusha:

"On behalf of the Integrated Development trust in India, I would like to thank you for your generous support ... and I am pleased to note that this is making a real difference to the vulnerable families in our communities.

The children are advancing in education, despite significant changes in this COVID situation. In particular, widows excel at improving their livelihoods and advocating for their rights, which seems to be a progressive change for program sustainability.

Although COVID has impacted the families severely, the projects continue to work with them to improve their capacity and confidence.

Thanks again for your generosity ... we are always grateful for your kindness."



Above: Sister Stella is among those celebrating milestones in 2022. Image credit IDT 2022.



Both images credited to IDT 2022

End of Financial Year (EOFY) Donations

30 June 2022 is just around the corner! It's not too late to make a difference with a donation as we approach the end of the financial year. Many of our supporters often dedicate an EOFY donation to a loved one, in honour of their memory, while others find it helpful to leave a Bequest to Assisi Aid Projects, ensuring their legacy leaves a lasting impact. Assisi Aid Projects is a registered ACNC Deductible Gift Recipient. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible and supporters will receive a receipt for their tax return.



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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. We acknowledge 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. REG: A0006479K. ABN: 56511265170

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