



MID-YEAR NEWSLETTER 2024



A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Dear friends,

I hope this mid-year newsletter finds everyone well.

It is wonderful to have the opportunity to provide an update of our current projects and take this opportunity to recognise and thank our long-standing supporters.

Our strategy to enable life-changing economic and social impact for women and their communities, achieved through working with our partners, is progressing well. Our partners are Integrated Development Trust in India; Business and Professional Women in Nepal (BPW Nepal); and Dreamdelion in Indonesia.

Our projects are visibly impactful and are creating local enterprise opportunities for women, supporting them to be agents of their own economic and social change. The past six months have been extremely busy with these projects, along with work for our organisation to maintain our Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Accreditation status. This process enables us to disburse Australian Government funding to our projects, after achieving and maintaining the highest of compliance standards and safeguarding and ensuring value for money of donations and funding.

Additionally, on 17 March 2024, there was a celebration in Tamil Nadu, India to mark the 50th anniversary of Sister Stella first coming to Australia. For those of you newer to our organisation, Sister Stella came to Australia as a young sister to learn of dairy farming techniques. She returned home to Tamil Nadu and established the Assisi Farm and Training Centre to share the skills she learnt with women in her community in Tamil Nadu. This event triggered the beginnings of Assisi Aid Projects, originally established to support the Assisi Farm and Training Centre in Tamil Nadu.

Our international development work has evolved to include other countries, and other people and cultures, and the following pages show a sample of the wonderful work of each of our partners, in India, Nepal, and Indonesia.

Thank you once again to each of you, for your tremendous support to Assisi Aid Projects, without which, we could not achieve the impact and changes in the lives of the women and communities in India, Nepal, and Indonesia.

With very best wishes and thanks,

Dr Jacqueline Parisi
CEO, Assisi Aid Projects





Image credit: Integrated Development Trust 2023.

In India, through our projects in rural Tamil Nadu, delivered in partnership with Integrated Development Trust, your donations are helping to empower more than 2,000 women and over 900 children.

BREAKING BARRIERS IN INDIA

In the Single Women's Project, women's groups offer a platform for women to overcome social and cultural barriers, network and strengthen bonds, and develop skills. Dhanamani is a young widow with three children, who faced significant stress in providing for her family when she first joined the project. Project staff encouraged her to join a women's group and get involved with project activities, as well as assisting

"I have hope in life and raising my children".

Dhanamani,
Women's project participant

her to apply for a widow's pension. This reduced her financial burden.

"I never considered this a possibility and feel privileged to learn this skill."

Nanthini, Children's project participant

In the Children's Project, this year we have focused on increased vocational training for adolescent girls. In recognition that these skills are crucial for improving long-term prospects, 100 girls have been supported to enrol in computer courses. 15 year old Nanthini* (pictured) would have been unable to undertake computer training due to her family's financial situation, but was supported by the project to complete a 3-month course.

*name changed

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

In March, a celebration was held in India, commemorating the 50 years that have passed since Sister Stella, an instrumental figure in the founding of Assisi, first visited Australia. In 1974, Sister Stella spent seven months on farms throughout Victoria learning dairy farming techniques, in an effort to help fight food insecurity in Tamil Nadu, Southern India. Returning by ship with 33 Australian Cattle, she established the Assisi Farm and

Training Centre and began sharing the skills she had learned with women in her community, an act which transformed the lives of countless women.

Assisi Aid Projects was initially founded to support the centre, and we retain a deep connection to Tamil Nadu in our work today, as well as harnessing the learnings from this partnership to help empower many more women, both in India and further afield.

SUSTAINABLE INCOME GENERATION FOR WOMEN IN INDONESIA

Our Jajal Wae Sustainable Agrotourism project in Indonesia, implemented by our partner Dreamdelion, continues to increase the confidence, leadership skills and business acumen of women in the Ngawi region of East Java, as well as providing them with opportunities to create sustainable sources of income.

Before her involvement in the project, Bu Asih (pictured) was concerned with the limited opportunities available to the women in her community, beyond traditional roles as mothers and wives. Hoping to create a positive platform for women to engage in more productive activities, she established a community group for 25 women in her village, "Mahmud", focused on group savings.

"I am so happy and proud of the Mahmud community... together we have produced a total of 100 kg of vegetables, with an approximate value of Rp 8,000,000 (AUD \$767). We could not imagine before that we could create such an amount that now can be used to purchase more plant seeds, farming equipment, and land maintenance."

Bu Asih

Since teaming up with Dreamdelion last year, Mahmud has expanded activities and started a vegetable-picking tourism initiative, garnering appreciation at the Ngawi district level. This recognition has served as a reminder to the women that they possess significant potential to be powerful agents of positive change in their communities.



Image credit: Dreamdelion 2023.

HARVESTING CHANGE IN NEPAL

In Nepal, our 'Advancing Women in Agroforestry Business Enterprise' project, in partnership with Business and Professional Women Nepal, supports 400 women to participate in viable and sustainable agricultural cooperatives. In doing so, they are overcoming entrenched generational poverty and barriers to participation in the communities where they live.

At Assisi, we believe women's economic empowerment is an important way of creating broader societal changes. So far in the

project, not only have participants increased their income through agricultural enterprises, but also their influence at the household and community level. Last year, over 90% of participants reported making decisions on their own or in consultation with other household members, and the percentage of women that received help from other household members, in care work and household chores, rose to 70%. Without your support, the transformative changes brought about by our projects would simply not be possible.

LEAVE THE GIFT OF A LIFETIME

The gift of a legacy in your Will serves as a powerful means to influence the lives of others. Once you have ensured your loved ones are looked after, a gift of any amount to Assisi Aid Projects will support a cause aligned with your personal values and enable you to make a continued positive difference to the lives of others.

At Assisi Aid Projects our mission is to create local enterprise opportunities for women, supporting them to be agents of their own economic and social change. Through your gift of a legacy, you are able to empower vulnerable and disadvantaged women and children to break the cycles of poverty. If you are interested in finding out more about leaving a gift to Assisi in your Will, please contact Dr Jacqueline Parisi, Chief Executive Officer, via email at assisi@assisi.org.au to discuss your options or request a brochure with more information.

END OF FINANCIAL YEAR DONATIONS

30 June 2024 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 End of Financial Year 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.



Image credit: Dreamdelion 2024.



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/AssisiAidProjects



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



au.linkedin.com/company/assisi-aid-projects



www.assisi.org.au



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