




ASSISI AID PROJECTS
Empowering Change

ANNUAL REPORT SNAPSHOT 2023-2024

The Committee of Management



Elizabeth Morris OAM – President

Elizabeth is a partnership broker, a volunteer member of Habitat for Humanity, Australia's International Program Advisory Committee, an advisor to ACRATH. She is passionate about supporting organisations to address the multi-dimensional aspects of poverty, including through building resilient communities, ending modern slavery, and supporting women's empowerment.

Judith Ascroft – Vice-President

Judith is an independent consultant with extensive international development experience across various sectors. Judith has worked for AusAid, was a Team Leader for a major Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade initiative in Indonesia and is the former CEO of Nossal Institute Limited.



Dione Brooks – Secretary

Dione has experience in aid and development and brings expertise in leadership, governance, and management. Dione started her career with Australian Volunteers International in Vanuatu and later spent a decade with Live & Learn Environmental Education, working closely with administration and communication teams both domestically and internationally.



Andrew Gilchrist - Treasurer

Andrew is a Director of Logan & Hall – Accountants and Advisers in Swan Hill Victoria. Andrew has been involved with Assisi since 2004, contributing valuable experience from the finance industry.



Tom Dumaresq OAM JP

Tom, a founding member and Assisi's President from 2002 to 2008, is the longest-serving committee member. As an active community leader, Tom has founded and presided over various environmental and community groups, earning several awards for his service, including an Order of Australia Medal in 2008.



Thomas Gribble

Thomas is a senior finance leader, interim executive and Chief Financial Officer. Thomas brings significant financial and leadership skills to the Committee of Management.



Nimarta Khuman

Nimarta, a consultant specialising in gender equality, protection, climate change and governance, brings over 17 years' experience across development and humanitarian initiatives in the Pacific, East and South Asia. Her expertise includes programme design and management, policy review, strategic planning and facilitation across civil society, public and private sectors.



Abderazzaq Noor

With three decades of experience in integrated communication, marketing, and stakeholder engagement, Abderazzaq currently serves as General Manager, Marketing and Communication at the Aged & Community Care Providers Association. His career has spanned diverse sectors including health, education, and financial services.



A message from the President

Dear friends,

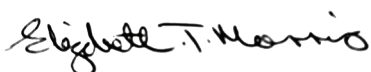
It was a busy year for our wonderful team and I cannot thank them enough for their work ensuring that our projects in India, Nepal and Indonesia have made positive changes to the lives of many women, children and communities.

This year Assisi undertook our reaccreditation process with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. That process ensures we meet Australian government standards and are eligible to receive government funding which provides the majority of our revenue base. Our successful reaccreditation also gives you, our supporters, the confidence that donations to Assisi are appropriately spent, projects are monitored and evaluated, and that we comply with governance standards. We are committed to financial integrity and transparency, and we use every donation to help as many people as possible.

Assisi is very fortunate to have an outstanding CEO in Dr Jacqueline Parisi who continues to lead with energy, wisdom, and passion. This year Jacqueline steered the reaccreditation process, and enhanced our key partnerships in India, Nepal and Indonesia. I would also like to thank our dedicated team - Cate Coleman our Program Manager, Isabel Parker our Projects and Engagement Officer and volunteer Kirsty Leighton, along with our in-house support, UltilitisIT and Logan & Hall. I also wish to acknowledge our Committee of Management and Sub-Committee members who generously volunteer their time and expertise to ensure good governance and management of Assisi.

Thank you to all our donors including the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Berfred Foundation, and to Maddocks law firm for generous pro-bono services.

Warmest wishes,



Elizabeth Morris OAM
President



A message from the CEO

As we close off the 2023-24 Financial Year with our Annual Report, I would like to express a heartfelt thank you to our many supporters and volunteers. Without your support, it would not be possible to achieve the results we do for women and their communities. Thank you.

The year served as the second of our 5-year strategy – a strategy designed to ensure economic empowerment for women, expand partnerships within Asia-Pacific, and optimise our international development impact.

It saw us deepen our impact further, helping our partners and their communities strengthen projects in India, Nepal and Indonesia. At the end of the financial year Assisi has two effective, impactful programs in India, one in Nepal, and one in Indonesia.

A marked achievement for the organisation was the successful accomplishment of our reaccreditation for continued status as a 'DFAT Accredited' organisation. This has resulted in the continuation of Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) supporting our activities.

We continue to perform with efficient resources, and throughout the year we operated with three part-time staff and the help of volunteers. We strive to optimise efficiency and effectiveness, and only 14% of our funds have been administrative spend, while 86% of our funds have been channelled to overseas programs.

Again, we extend our deep gratitude to our supporters, volunteers, our project partners, and our funding partners, including the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Berfred Foundation for your support.

Thank you!

With very best wishes and thanks,



Dr Jacqueline Parisi
Chief Executive Officer



Our Vision, Mission, Values, Strategy and Goals

Our Vision

Changing economic and social impact for women and their communities in the Asia-Pacific region

Our Mission

We create local enterprise opportunities for women, supporting them to be agents of their economic and social change – achieving this through local partnerships

Our Values

- Partnership: We support localisation, building strong, collaborative, trustful partnerships.
- Accountability: We are responsible for our actions and performance.
- Honesty: We demonstrate truthfulness, authenticity, and integrity in everything we do.
- Responsiveness: We move quickly to adapt our work to changing circumstances and aim to deliver great impact in a sustainable manner.
- Enhancement: We continuously learn and innovate our work.

Our Strategy 2022-2027

Building on our strong history, this five-year period will see Assisi Aid Projects:

- continue to shift our focus from broad women's empowerment to that of economic empowerment for women, addressing their social and gender constraints
- proactively pursue expansion of effective partnerships (both program and funding related) within the Asia-Pacific region, at a pace that ensures sustainability
- deepen and optimise our international development impact.

We will achieve our strategy through harnessing our healthy collegial culture and optimising impact by reinforcing our pillars of expertise, partnership, funding, and organisational strength.

Our Goals

The following high-level goals provide the organisational focus for Assisi Aid Projects over the five-year period:

- Codification: to develop strong subject matter expertise, and codify partnership development practices, subject matter expertise and capacities
- Growth: to develop and sustain five program partnerships
- Sustainable funding streams: to grow sustainable funding streams, including private sector partners, and double the funding stream
- Resources: to strengthen resources at a rate aligned with growth of funding and programs
- Signatories: to retain DFAT base re-accreditation and ACFID self-assessment.

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.



During 2023-24, Assisi Aid Projects was supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program.



Assisi Aid Projects is a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct, which is a voluntary, self-regulatory sector code of good practice. As a signatory we are committed and fully adhere to the ACFID Code of Conduct, conducting our work with transparency, accountability and integrity.

To lodge a complaint against our organisation, please email the Chief Executive Officer on ceo@assisi.org.au. Our complaints handling policy can be found on our website. If you are not satisfied with the response and believe our organisation has breached the ACFID Code of Conduct, you can lodge a complaint with the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee at code@acfid.asn.au. Information about how to make a complaint can be found at www.acfid.asn.au

Financial Summary

For the year ended 30 June 2024, Assisi Aid Projects budgeted to use a small portion of its equity. Strategically, the year involved a strong focus on both supporting, strengthening and expanding our projects in India, Nepal and Indonesia, and on organisational strengthening to ensure the successful accomplishment of Assisi Aid Projects' re-accreditation status with DFAT. These activities necessitated a focus both externally and internally simultaneously and were supported through strategic decision making. While this decision making incurred a shortfall, it was performed in the knowledge that Assisi had been left a significant bequest, which would be realised early in the next financial year.

Operationally, from a overseas program perspective, this total spend appears lower than in the previous year due to the timing of disbursements; at the end of the previous year, additional project funding was sent to Nepal. Increased fundraising costs were incurred in the period; this included a relatively large sum (approximately \$25,000) which related to, and will result in, the realisation of the bequest in the next financial year, mentioned above. Also, there were unexpected costs associated with the accomplishment of Assisi Aid Projects' re-accreditation with DFAT. However, throughout the period Assisi Aid Projects was able to maintain a strong focus on efficiency, effectiveness throughout the year, keeping staff and administration costs to a cost-effective level continued. These efficiencies, are a key focus of the current five-year Strategic Plan, in order to enable higher allocations to overseas programs.

Environmentally, due to economic conditions, funding development has been another challenge this year. Overall income was similar to the previous year, but no bequests were realised within the period. With increasing costs and challenges in fundraising, Assisi is conscious of the imperative to focus on building funds further in the next financial year, and has plans to strengthen its financial status to ensure sustainability of projects and impact for beneficiaries.

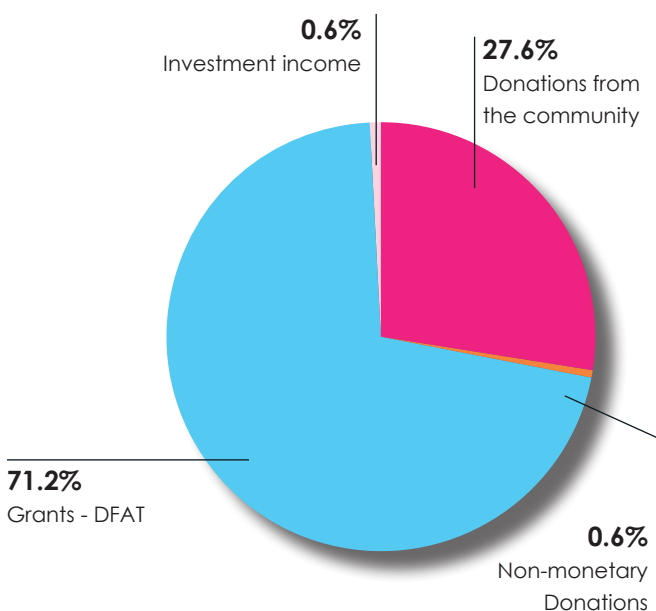
Despite the difficult fundraising environment due to many factors including cost of living pressures, Assisi was still able to raise over \$109,000 from the public's generous donations.

Total expenses for the financial year was \$547,324 with \$224,743 being applied to International Programs in India, Nepal and Indonesia. This amount reflects extra project funding sent to Nepal at the end of the 2023 financial year.

Through its new financial system and efficient administration, Assisi has kept administration costs at 14% for this financial year.

Assisi supporters gifted labour to assist with the general running of our Australian operations. Over the 2023/24 year, Assisi supporters logged 762 hours of volunteer labour with a value of \$42,721.

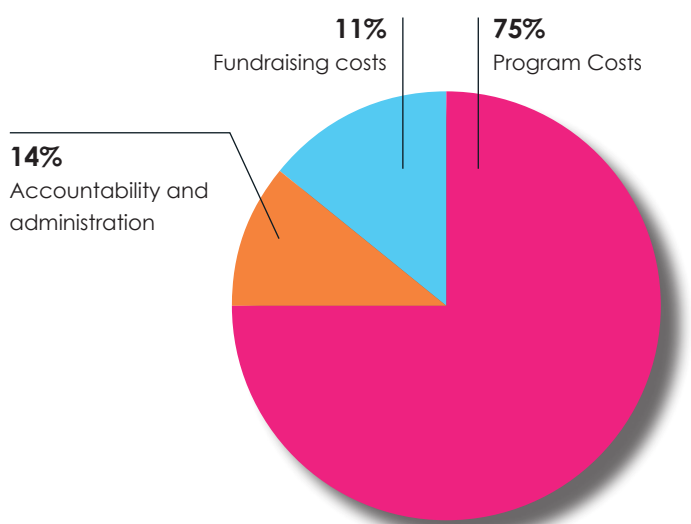
Where funds came from



Program costs 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.

Where the funds went



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.

The percentages and graphs in this summary are derived from the data found in the audited financial statements of the 2023-24 Annual Report.

Many thanks to the Australian Government for its support of these projects through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), and to Berfred Foundation for its ongoing support of our projects in India and Nepal.

India

Rural villages and tribal hamlets in Tamil Nadu, Southern India, are typically male-led communities where cultural norms keep single women disempowered and excluded from participation in community life. Widowed, divorced and unmarried women face high levels of discrimination, inequality, poverty and isolation, with severe consequences on their physical health and mental well-being, as well as their ability to earn an income. Low literacy rates and skill sets, few job opportunities and caste discrimination also equate to poor future economic prospects for children, particularly for girls. This year, through our local partner Integrated Development Trust, our projects in India reached more than 2,000 single women, 1,000 children and 1,500 parents.

In March, a celebration was held for Sr Stella, an instrumental figure in Assisi's history. This commemorated 50 years since Sister Stella's first visit to Australia to learn about cattle farming. On return to Tamil Nadu, with Assisi's support, she shared the new skills with women in her community.

Key Achievements 2023-2024

- 227 women received business management training.
- 1,447 women gained the confidence and self-esteem to wear the bindi, a tradition typically forbidden for widowed, divorced and unmarried women.
- 700 children attended 480 Children's Parliaments meetings, where they learned new skills and developed leadership qualities.
- 100 teenage girls received vocational skills training.
- 1,377 parents participated in Parent Groups, to discuss how they can support their children's education at home.
- 414 girls attended training sessions on menstrual health.

Jeeva, small business owner and Parent's Group participant

Jeeva is the mother of two children who participate in the Children's Project. She is from a tribal community in Tamil Nadu. Prior to project involvement the income earned by Jeeva and her husband was insufficient to comfortably support their family. With assistance from project staff, Jeeva started a business, using an interest-free business loan of INR5000 (approximately AUD88). The loan enabled Jeeva and her husband to sell nunku ('ice apple'), a variety of palm fruit, to other nearby villages and towns. Jeeva said, "This loan has helped me earn an extra INR1000 per month and it is helpful to my family."



Amuda, small business owner and Single Women's Group participant

Three years ago, Amuda, a widow from a rural village in Tamil Nadu joined the Single Women's Project. After the death of her husband, Amuda had struggled to support her family, and raise her children, on her income as a cook's assistant. After receiving guidance from IDT staff, she applied for an interest-free business loan and purchased a sewing machine with the money she received. Commenting on her sewing business Amuda has said, "I can earn 200 to 300 rupees a day, which helps my family" (approximately AUD5).



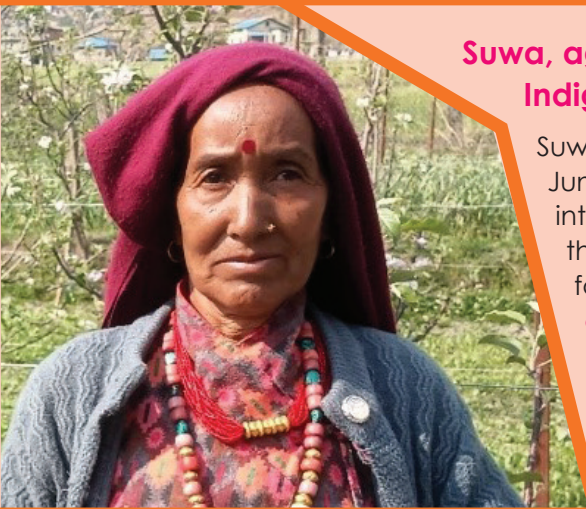
Nepal

Gender stereotypes, generational poverty and market segregation are all factors limiting women's participation in paid work in Nepal. In the remote and socio-economically disadvantaged Jumla and Nuwakot regions, our partner, the Federation of Business and Professional Women Nepal (BPW Nepal), this year supported 433 women in the Advancing Women in Agroforestry Enterprise (AWABE) project.

Through strengthening agricultural trading co-operatives, engaging women in enterprise development and providing training opportunities, AWABE empowers underprivileged women to achieve financial independence. Positive changes are starting to be seen in the behaviours and attitudes towards women farmers and entrepreneurs in the area.

Key Achievements 2023-2024

- 275 women farmers reported an increase in their income from their enterprises.
- Over 80% of women participants reported receiving help to complete household chores and caretaking responsibilities from their husbands and other household members.
- Women actively engaged with local government officials, community members and NGOs to raise awareness of gender issues and promote gender equality.



Suwa, agricultural entrepreneur and Chair of the Ramchula Indigenous Crop Production Group

Suwa is a resilient entrepreneur and lead farmer from a remote village in the Jumla District. At 62 years old, she has defied gender norms and delved into commercial farming, aided by the support of a co-operative under the AWABE project. Through her ventures in potato, walnut, and apple farming, **she has been able to bolster her family's income, invest in her children's education, and create employment opportunities**, through engaging eight of her family members and employing five others. The success of Suwa has enabled her to transform the finances of her family, and catalyse positive change in her community, by fostering employment opportunities and sharing knowledge.

Indonesia

The Ngawi region of East Java, Indonesia, has high levels of poverty, low wages and poor rates of education. Women have minimal livelihood opportunities and often have no option but to travel to cities for work, in order to support their families. The Jajal Wae Sustainable Agri-tourism Project, implemented by our partner Dreamdelion, supports women to earn sustainable incomes in their home-villages, enabling them to stay with their families and communities. In the financial year 2023-2024, the project engaged 123 participants.

Key Achievements 2023-2024

- 85% of women increased their income.
- 75% of women increased their savings.
- 72% of women reported that they had increased confidence, leadership skills and business acumen.
- 62% of participants reported increased awareness of gender equality among their community.



Ibu Titik, Jajal Wae Management Local Leader

"I have been involved in Girikerto's tourism development since the very beginning in 2017. It was a male-dominated world; I was the odd one out. Now, if you visit the Jajal Wae trip and the market, you'll see women at the heart of it, front and centre. I could not be more proud of the improvement in gender equality this project has brought to our village. Our mothers have become so confident and are proud of the great products they produce and sell together."



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 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: _____ CCV: _____

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 participants of our projects will continue to receive support to empower change in their lives. You are welcome to contact our Chief Executive Officer (assisi@assisi.org.au) should you wish to discuss options for leaving a donation in your will.

Assisi Aid Projects Inc.

Ross House, Level 4
247-251 Flinders Lane
Melbourne VIC 3000
Australia
T: +61 3 9070 9040
E: 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.