ASSISI AID PROJECTS

Empowering Change



2025-26 ANNUAL REPORT

Empowering women.
Transforming communities.
Creating change together.

+61 452 065 747

assisi.org.au

assisi@assisi.org.au

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear friends and supporters,

As we reflect on another year of dedication to our mission at Assisi Aid Projects, we are delighted to present our 2025–2026 Annual Report. This report is a testament to our work to create local enterprise opportunities for women and support them to be agents of their own economic and social change.

As Chair of the Committee of Management, I am pleased to report that, through strong governance and oversight, we have ensured that Assisi Aid Projects remains accountable, financially sustainable and strategically focused on our mission. I am proud of our resilience and ability to maintain our focus on supporting marginalised women.

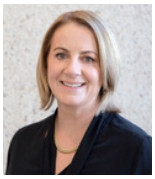
Our experienced Committee of Management worked closely with our Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Cate Coleman, to manage donor funds responsibly, uphold Australian Government and international development sector standards, including those of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and maintain Assisi Aid Projects' status as a registered Australian charity. To support this work, we continued to strengthen our safeguarding, risk management and partner oversight practices through careful due diligence, regular monitoring and review of emerging risks. These measures helped protect the women and communities we support, while keeping our programs aligned with Assisi Aid Projects' commitments and responsibilities.

This careful oversight enabled us to continue delivering impactful programs in India, Nepal and Indonesia. It also guided the responsible conclusion of projects in Tamil Nadu and the development of a new project supporting women in Telangana.

Looking ahead, we are positioning Assisi Aid Projects for a new phase, with a revised strategic plan to be developed in the coming year. The plan will enable us to continue making a positive difference in the communities where we work with local partners.

I have been heartened by the achievements made possible through our shared sense of purpose and collaboration with our donors, staff and partners. On behalf of the Committee of Management, I wish to thank our donors, including individuals, DFAT and Fondation Berfred. I also acknowledge that our work could not be delivered without the support of our local partners in India, Nepal and Indonesia, our CEO and Assisi staff. Thank you for your continued trust in Assisi Aid Projects and belief in our mission.

With best wishes,
Elizabeth Morris OAM



A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Dear friends,

It was a challenging year for our project in Nepal, as civil unrest in September 2025 effectively brought the country to a standstill. This naturally affected our best-laid plans to establish an apple processing plant in Jumla, Nepal. Despite this, thanks to the determination of the women farmers leading the apple project, I am so pleased to share that the processing plant is now up and running! You can read more about it on page 3.

Meanwhile, our work in Indonesia went from strength to strength. Together with our incredible in-country partner, Dreamdelion, over 1,700 budding entrepreneurs received training in financial management, product development and marketing, helping to strengthen their micro and small enterprises for the long haul.

Over the past few years, we have carefully designed and delivered projects to create lasting impact, so that the benefits of each project can continue after our support ends. In this report, we are pleased to share examples of past projects where the benefits are still going strong even though our support has concluded. This reflects a fundamental purpose of development work: to create real, lasting change in people's lives.

While we are on the subject of reflection, earlier this year we were fortunate to have Tom Dumaresq OAM JP, one of the founders of Assisi Aid Projects, generously share his thoughts on the evolution of Assisi since our foundation in 1974, and how practical support can make a lasting difference for women experiencing economic disadvantage. You can read Tom's reflections on page 5.

Lastly, a big thank you to you – our friends, donors and partners. I hope this report and all the achievements shared make you proud to be part of the Assisi family.

Best wishes,
Cate Coleman



NEPAL

This year your contributions supported the livelihoods of women farmers in the remote, mountainous Jumla region of Nepal through the establishment of the women-owned and managed HIMADRI Apple Processing Enterprise. Building on our previous work in Jumla, women farmers not only recovered their agro-based livelihoods but significantly increased apple production, with yields growing two to threefold in many communities.

Despite this progress, poor road access, limited storage facilities and restricted market opportunities meant that large quantities of apples were often wasted or sold at very low prices. To address these challenges, women leaders came together to establish the HIMADRI Apple Processing Enterprise as a joint business venture owned and managed by women.

The cooperative procured apple processing equipment, established cold storage facilities and received training in food safety, project planning and financial management, inventory management, market analysis, quality production and cooperative management. Women can now process surplus and lower-grade apples into value-added products such as jams, dried apple chips, cider vinegar, pickles, candy and apple tea, creating new income opportunities while reducing post-harvest losses.

> A leader of the co-op shared that **"***We can use apples that would otherwise be wasted and create products that have a better market value... Our hope is that more women can earn an income from their apples and that less of our hard work goes to waste.***"**

HIMADRI is designed to ensure long-term sustainability and reach wider markets beyond Jumla. Its success has attracted investment from local stakeholders. The local municipality has contributed to the refurbishment of storage facilities and provided a vehicle to transport and market processed apple products. This demonstrates a significant outcome as external stakeholders are now investing their own resources in an initiative that together we helped establish, strengthening its long-term sustainability and growth.

The success of the HIMADRI Apple Processing Enterprise has also attracted interest from other development organisations. A project in Nepal, led by the United Nations Development Program and delivered by Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development, recently visited the HIMADRI processing centre. This interest recognises HIMADRI's achievements and offers an exciting opportunity to grow the business and reach more farmers.



INDONESIA

This year, the successful tourism and micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) project expanded into Pandansari, a village in rural Indonesia. Ninety-four women received intensive, tailored support in tourism and small business development.

The women operate diverse micro, small and medium enterprises based on their individual skills and interests.

Mbah Karni is one such woman who is making an income from a weaving-based MSME. Already an established basket weaver, she joined the project's craft training at the age of 63 and learned new bamboo basket designs, known as besek, and weaving techniques. She sells her handcrafted baskets at the local market, receives customer orders and enjoys teaching other women how to make them.

Other project participants produced traditional and modern biscuits, which are in high demand during the holy month of Ramadan. In response to this seasonal demand, they made, packaged and sold biscuits that reflect local traditions.

Other women developed the idea of turning used cooking oil into aromatherapy candles. They completed hands-on training to produce sustainable candles for sale.

As well as developing product ideas, participants received training in business management, marketing and financial management. They learned how to analyse markets, set prices that cover costs and generate a profit, use social media to reach customers, build customer relationships and distinguish their products from competitors.

The project also helped women reach more customers by building relationships with local retailers, small shops, souvenir stores, school canteens and cafés. These partnerships create a wider range of sustainable sales opportunities.





KEY RESULTS

By June 2026:

- Seventy-six women increased their income.
- Eighty-seven women began saving regularly for the first time.
- Total recorded revenue from the sale of MSME products increased from Rp.45,246,000 (AUD 3,600) to Rp.169,045,000 (AUD 13,420) by the end of the 2025–26 financial year—an increase of approximately 274%.
- Eighty-two women reported increased confidence and active participation in community meetings or decision-making forums.

In addition to the 94 women entrepreneurs in Pandansari, a further 1,738 participants received training in financial management, product development, marketing and business management.

TOM'S REFLECTIONS



Many Assisi supporters will be familiar with one of our founders, Tom Dumaresq OAM JP. Tom is the longest-serving member of Assisi's Committee of Management and was president from 2002 to 2008. He has received several awards for community service, including the Medal of the Order of Australia in 2008 for his service to humanitarian aid and to environmental, church, education and emergency services organisations.

Tom has shared his reflections on Assisi's origins, evolution and future.

QUESTION: When you think back to the early days of Assisi, what problem were you hoping to address?

TOM: To give them a hand up to be self-sufficient when they appeared to be struggling with where to start.

QUESTION: For supporters who have been with Assisi for many years, what would you like them to know about the organisation today?

TOM: That their support provides ongoing assistance for the self sustaining groups and that the benefits have expanded into the greater community.

QUESTION: Many supporters have walked alongside Assisi for years. Why does their continued support matter so much and is there anything you would like to say to them?

TOM: We have been going over 40 years, we have made a massive difference to a large number of people in unfortunate circumstances, so please keep up the good work.



QUESTION: From your perspective, why is empowering women such an effective way to support families and communities?

TOM: By giving women support and a say in their own future, improves the welfare of the whole family and the community.

QUESTION: Is there a story or moment that particularly captures the impact of Assisi's work for you?

TOM: The realisation that a small group of women can be shown how to save, support their own businesses and change theirs and their children's lives. And then that group teaches another group, and on and on.

QUESTION: Looking ahead, what are your hopes for Assisi's future?

TOM: That it continues on, to improve more people's standard of living.



LOOKING BACK: THE ONGOING IMPACT OF PAST PROJECTS

Development is about creating change that lasts. The real measure of development is what remains after a project ends. The following examples show us how our projects continue to benefit women and their communities after our funding has concluded.

JAJAL WAE SUSTAINABLE AGRO-TOURISM PROJECT (GIRIKERTO, INDONESIA): CONCLUDED JUNE 2025

- From the beginning, we identified and supported local champions who could continue the initiatives after the project ended. Through ongoing skills and leadership development, they were prepared to take ownership and lead the work independently.
- Since the project formally concluded in June 2025, the community has continued to organise the Jajal Wae Trips independently.
- Community participation has grown, as residents who were not initially involved have become interested after seeing the positive economic benefits experienced by women who participated in the project.
- Based on feedback from community members, we estimate that more than 280 people benefit directly, while the broader benefits reach more than 2,000 people across Girikerto and neighbouring villages.

ADVANCING WOMEN IN AGROFORESTRY BUSINESS ENTERPRISE (NEPAL): CONCLUDED JUNE 2025

- Women-led agro-enterprises in Jumla (apples, marci rice, herbs, vegetables) and Nuwakot (coffee) continue, with many women sustaining and expanding production.
- More than 400 people continue to benefit directly.
- Women participants manage and lead enterprises both individually and through cooperatives.
- Successful women entrepreneurs have inspired other farmers to adopt improved practices and expand their agro-based enterprises.
- Local governments are increasingly recognising women farmers and integrating women's economic empowerment into government planning and resource allocation.

"It has been deeply gratifying to witness women from some of the remotest parts of Nepal come forward with resilience and determination to rebuild their lives as entrepreneurs and successful businesswomen. Many of them were recovering from the devastation caused by the 2015 earthquake, followed by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had severely disrupted their lives and livelihoods." — Bina Pradham, Nepal

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & THANKS

ASSISI AID PROJECTS STAFF

- Cate Coleman – Chief Executive Officer
- Kirsty Leighton – Project & Engagment Officer
- Isabel Parker – Program Officer

ASSISI AID PROJECTS COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT (CoM) & CoM SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Elizabeth Morris, OAM – President
- Judith Ascroft – Vice President
- Dione Brooks – Secretary
- Andrew Gilchrist – Treasurer
- Tom Dumaresq, OAM JP
- Nimarta Khuman
- Thoman Gribble
- Abderazzq Noor
- Dr Jacqueline Parisi
- Aan Rukmana
- Jayshree Mangubhai

OUR SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS

Business and Professional Women's Network Nepal
Yayasan Dreamdelion Indonesia
Australian Council for International Development
Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP)
The Very Good Foundation
Fondation Berfred
The Universal Charitable Fund
Australian Communities Foundation
Individual donors
Bernie and Virginia McIntosh
A & M Gilchrist
Grill'd
Ross House Association
Maddocks – especially Paul Ellis and Julie Tonkin
Lambourne Partners – especially Paul Quealey and Naum Markov
EY – especially Julie Fenton, Shona Frame and Mani Ranjitham
JSA & Associates
Logan & Hall
UtilitiseIT
Bulbul Baksi

thank you!

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

For the year ended 30 June 2026, Assisi received $87,570 in public donations, compared with $103,221 in 2024–25—a decrease of 15.2%. We are operating in a challenging fundraising environment, and we know that many of our supporters face cost-of-living pressures. We are deeply grateful to everyone who chose to support our work. Assisi also received a significant bequest, which helped us continue our work.

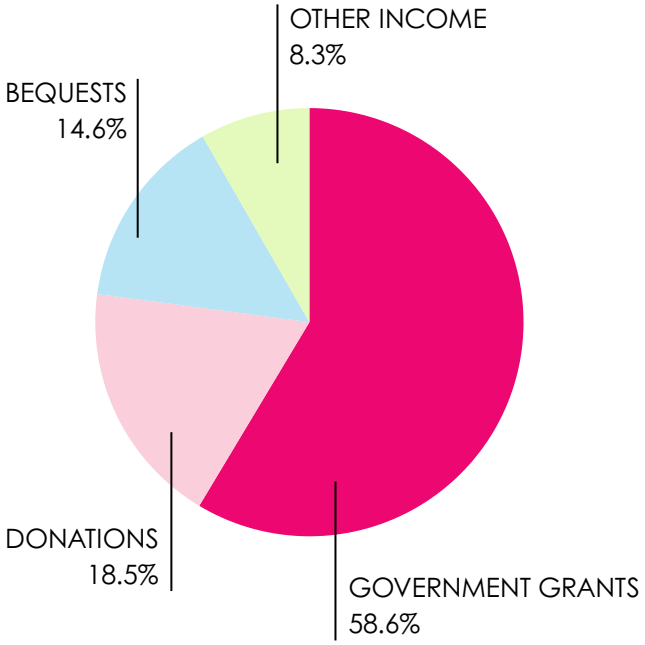
Our supporters also gave generously of their time. During 2025–26, volunteers contributed 629 hours to Assisi's Australian operations, with an estimated value of $42,174. We are very grateful for this contribution, which helps us make the most of the funds available for our international development work.

Our reserves remain sufficient to provide a financial buffer to help us manage fluctuations in income and meet our ongoing commitments.

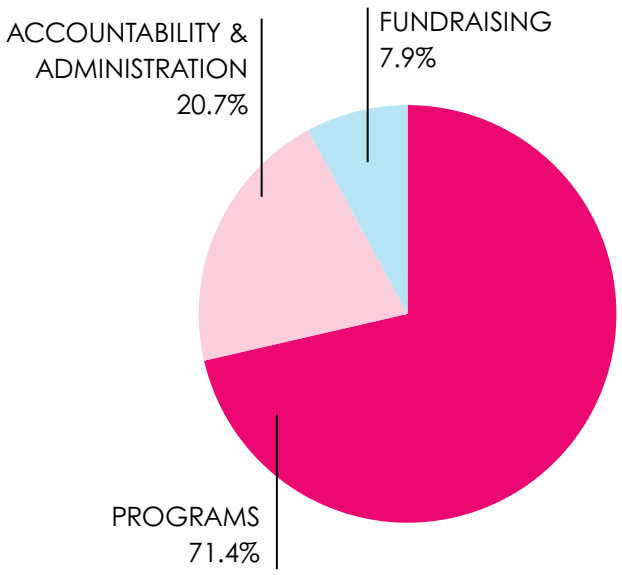
Assisi continues to manage its finances carefully, using funds efficiently and directing as much funding as possible towards effective, long-term development. Total expenditure for the financial year was $390,789, of which $278,978 supported projects in Nepal and Indonesia. Careful financial management and a lean operating model meant that Assisi finished 2025–26 with a modest surplus, which will help us continue our work.

WHERE OUR FUNDS CAME FROM

Government grants were our largest source of income and supported specific international development projects. Public donations provide important flexibility for our broader work, while the bequest received this year made a significant contribution to our work in Indonesia and Nepal. Because bequests are not a regular source of income, maintaining sustainable levels of donations and grants remains important to Assisi's long-term financial health.



WHERE OUR FUNDS WENT



Program expenditure includes the costs of our long-term international development work, including program design and implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Fundraising expenditure covers activities that help us secure the funds needed for our work. These include grant writing, donor stewardship, data management, maintaining our donation portal, and community education through social media, our website and our mid-year newsletter.

Accountability and administration expenditure supports the operations of Assisi Aid Projects. It includes audit fees, personnel costs, bookkeeping, insurance, office rent and utilities, training, and membership of peak bodies. These costs help Assisi meet its legal, financial and accountability responsibilities and operate effectively.

Note: The percentages and graphs in this summary are based on Assisi Aid Projects' audited financial statements for 2025-26.

please donate

Your support makes a difference! Every donation, large or small, supports marginalised women as they strengthen their livelihoods and create opportunities for their families and communities.

$32 can connect a woman entrepreneur in Indonesia with a business coach for 12 months, providing ongoing guidance as she develops her business.

$140 can support a woman in Nepal to strengthen her financial and digital skills and grow her business.

$222 can support 125 women and men in India to challenge harmful gender stereotypes and build more equal communities.

$5,380 can support 100 women in India to start or grow small businesses and create lasting income for themselves and their families.

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: _____ CVV: _____

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:

O post O email

I would like to support Assisi Aid Projects with a:

O Once-off donation of $_____

O Regular donation of $ _____ per month

You can change the amount you donate at any time by contacting us.

Assisi Aid Projects is a registered ACNC Deductible Gift Recipient. All donations are tax deductible and will receive a receipt for their tax return.

Assisi Aid Projects Inc.
Ross House, Level 4
247-251 Flinders Lane
Melbourne VIC 3000
Australia
T: +61 452 065 747
E: assisi@assisi.org.au

thank you!

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

https://www.facebook.com/AssisiAidProjects

@assisi_aid_projects

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



Australian Aid

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. 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 and present.

REG: A0006479K ABN: 56511265170