

# STORIES OF IMPACT

*The difference you're making*



International  
Development  
AUSTRALIA

Summer 2021 Newsletter

Greetings as we approach the season of Advent.

Songwriters Edward Pola and George Wyle, were spot on when they penned the words, 'It's the most wonderful time of the year'. Christmas indeed is a of excited anticipation and preparation to celebrate the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

The past many months have been challenging, stressful and disheartening for most of us, but as the world moves towards a new COVID-19 normal – and with Christmas fast approaching – it's time to get excited about the little things that can make this season special.

In recent weeks, there's been a fair bit of talk on social media about certain Christmas traditions, with one of the frontrunners being the age old question – how early is too early to put up your tree? Many responses have indicated it's never too early to embrace the spirit of Christmas. No doubt there are many trees, adorned with lights, tinsel and baubles, already bringing cheer and joy into homes across Australia. And before long, those trees will be surrounded by thoughtful gifts come Christmas Day.

Sadly, this is not the case for many around the world.

This year, our Self Denial Appeal – focusing on the work of International Development – highlighted the daily challenges faced by Salvationists and their communities in our partner territories. And we are grateful for your compassion, generosity and wholehearted commitment to support them as they address and overcome these challenges.

As we look forward to the blessings of this festive season, our prayer is that you will keep in mind and support the International Development campaign for Salvos Gifts, and help projects in territories with great need. Please keep an eye out for the Salvos Gifts catalogue in the coming weeks and consider giving a 'gift that keeps on giving'.

God bless you,

Janine and Robert Donaldson  
Commissioners, The Salvation Army Australia



## Your kindness is changing lives

The generosity of donors like you is helping  
transform lives and livelihoods in rural Malawi  
– with better access to sanitation, agriculture  
and hygiene facilities.



### Newsletter highlights:

- Introducing Major Judith Soeters
- Our COVID-19 Response
- Joyville Children's Home
- Ki Wash Program



Major Soeters with her team, Heralds of Grace excursion, in Moscow

## Introducing Major Judith Soeters, Head of Salvation Army International Development

The Salvation Army welcomes Major Judith Soeters, who was appointed as the new head of Salvation Army International Development (SAID) in Australia. With extensive experience gained from working in almost every area of The Salvation Army, including corps (churches), Territorial Headquarters, overseas service and officer training college among others – Judith is no stranger to international affairs.

“My husband [Major Mark Soeters] and I served in Eastern Europe – I was the training principal for the Institute for Officer Training and the territorial education secretary”, says Judith. “We worked in five countries – Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Russia and Ukraine [and] saw firsthand what money from Australia could do in assisting our colleagues throughout the territory and were moved about how far a dollar could go in that setting.”

### New direction guided by experience

Moving into a new role can be daunting, especially when it involves crucial work that funds international projects for vulnerable communities during the height of a global pandemic. But thanks to her vast experience and with the support of the SAID team, Judith has hit the ground running and is looking forward to making a significant contribution to the team’s in developing countries.

“We recently announced our three-year plan for international development, which is very exciting,” reports Judith. “One of the main objectives of the plan is capacity building of our partner territories – we aim to share our training and expertise with those in other territories and in the process, we also hope to learn and grow.”

Although COVID-19 impacted many SAID projects, Judith says learnings from this global event have provided valuable insight for future operations.

“One of our projects is focused on education,” she says. “During the pandemic, we pivoted to remote learning, so the students could still learn and feel valued. We also put together food parcels to ensure they were well nourished.”

### Great support that makes all the difference

The agility and dedication of the SAID team, says Judith, sets it apart from other aid organisations.

“My team works really well together, and I hope I can continue that,” she says.

“My role is to support them as best I can, and to keep the lines of communication open with other departments and territories. SAID does not operate independently – we do not do this alone.”

While recognising the importance of internal support, Judith is full of gratitude and praise for all the donors who fund the work of SAID.

“We can’t do this work without the support of our community,” she says. “Our donors are vitally important, as they show their love and concern for others through their generous donations.”

“My hope is that they know how important they are to the work we do, and the difference it makes to those we serve internationally.”

## Response to ongoing COVID-19 challenges

As Australia – and the world – continues to grapple with the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, individuals, communities and organisations across the globe have been challenged to adapt and change the way they do things, and The Salvation Army is no different.

The pandemic impacted Salvation Army International Development (SAID) community projects worldwide. Travel restrictions and social distancing measures put in place by the Australian and overseas governments severely limited the team’s ability to provide in-person assistance, monitoring and evaluations. But to get through this crisis ourselves and continue delivering crucial care, we are making some changes while still staying connected to those who need us most.

### New ways of working

Due to ongoing uncertainty and rapidly declining conditions in countries where the pandemic hit hardest, many SAID projects were placed on stand-by, with additional funding for staff and protections provided.

As conditions rapidly evolved, the ever-agile SAID team quickly pivoted to using technology to deliver much-needed assistance to those in rural and remote regions worldwide. Face-to-face meetings moved online, via Microsoft Teams or Zoom. The team (where necessary) adjusted their working hours in order to attend meetings set in different countries and their corresponding time zones. Although challenging for all involved, thanks to adequate support and guidance, the team has successfully continued to support our valuable work overseas.

While things have settled down in some regions, the team continues to monitor projects as required. It is an ever-evolving situation and SAID is keeping a close watch and communicating with partners to respond accordingly, including pause measures, adaptations or alterations to projects as needed.

Sadly, the pandemic has also affected many of those we work with significantly, with some overseas project officers and their families and communities becoming exposed to or succumbing to COVID-19. SAID continues to support our partners through these immensely challenging and heartbreaking times, to ensure their safety while also ensuring projects continue to have a positive impact and empower communities through this unprecedented global event.

### Moving forward through testing times

As SAID moves to the next phase and explores new projects internationally with COVID-safe measures firmly in place, we would like to thank our supporters for their continued generosity and support in helping us deliver our mission. We could not do what we do without you.

“Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.”

(1 Thessalonians 5:11)



# Salvos Gifts

GIFTS THAT KEEP ON GIVING

This Christmas, bring hope and joy to someone in need, with a gift that keeps on giving.



Salvos gifts are a great way to empower communities to lift themselves out of poverty. We take a holistic approach to poverty and development, considering the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of people, as well as the continuing involvement of women and men, girls and boys.

Each gift contains life-changing possibilities such as sustainable livelihoods, improved health and purposeful education. Aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Salvos Gifts fund programs that work towards the alleviation of poverty in developing communities.

To find out more or to buy a Salvos Gift, visit Salvos Gifts or call 02 9466.



International Development AUSTRALIA



ACFID MEMBER



## Your support brings joy in Joyville

Joyville Children's Home holds a special place in the hearts of many Salvos, particularly those connected to Waverley Salvos in Victoria. Back in 2007, a group from the corps travelled to the Philippines, and many corps members also chose to individually sponsor children in the home when the opportunity arose.

Over the years, things have considerably changed. Joyville transformed from a children's home to a child and community development program, and now provides temporary care for at-risk children. Familial support is essential for the development and wellbeing of children, and The Salvation Army believes that children have a right to safety and be with their family, and the home is a vital link in making that a reality for children in the Philippines.

The Philippine government's Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) provides referrals for children (whose needs cannot be met by their families for a period of time) to Joyville. Social workers at the home have case management plans for each child and assess all clients for reintegration to the family or alternative care options, to ensure that the children's length of stay does not become long-term.

The Joyville Children's home project works towards strengthening families within the community, to prevent family separation. They do so by addressing the root causes of poverty that impact a family's ability to provide for their children. Through improving circumstances, livelihoods and the capacity of families to earn, Joyville makes family reintegration possible for children temporarily in the program. But more than that, the program works to prevent families from situations that make children vulnerable to deprivation and hence, eligible for entry into Joyville in the first place.

The Salvation Army Philippines is working to 'joyfully' help vulnerable children develop their innate potential and personal skills through this program. As a mother in the community put it, "It doesn't matter how poor we are – being together as a family is the most important thing to us."

Your support goes a long way in helping Joyville continue to make a difference in the lives of these children and their families.

## Karonga Integrated Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (Ki WASH) program, Northern Malawi

The Karonga Integrated Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (Ki WASH) project is a five-year project focused on integrated water, sanitation and hygiene in rural Malawi. The overarching goal of the project – which is being run by The Salvation Army in partnership with the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) – is to contribute to improved well-being of residents in Kilupula and Kyungu areas of Karonga district, Northern Malawi.

### Impact

The KiWASH project has made a significant difference in the lives of impoverished residents in the targeted rural areas in the district. There is a marked improvement in the community's access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene. The residents have also reported improved food security, greater resilience to climate change challenges, better watersheds and water resources, and improved gender equality and human rights in WASH interventions in Karonga District.

### Building community resilience to climate change impacts

Communities in the Karonga District are vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change, particularly flooding and drought, which affects crop production and has wider reaching implications like availability of common food items like maize and rice is inconsistent.

The Salvation Army supports these communities through implementing the food security component of the KiWASH project – assisting farmers with conservation agriculture techniques and technologies to produce strong yield harvests. The broader community benefits from these climate change interventions through improved food security with consistent crop production despite harsh changes in climate.

One of the beneficiaries of this program was Mrs Suzen Nankhonde (aged 59) – a widow with two grandchildren. Previously unable to grow enough food to sustain her family, Suzen adopted conservation agriculture when it was introduced in 2019 – and is now able to support herself and her grandchildren year-round despite climate challenges, and enjoy their right to food, good nutrition and health. Suzen was even able to sell some of her harvest at profit, and purchase school uniforms and other household necessities for her family.

"...Since the coming of KiWASH project in my village, things have changed. I am able to support my family with other basic needs through this farming technology. I am now independent enough, thanks [to] The Salvation Army for coming with this farming technology in my village," says a grateful Suzen.

The KiWASH project has set out well-defined goals to achieve zero hunger, good health and wellbeing, and clean water and improved sanitation by 2030 – and we're hopeful that with your continuing support and generosity, these goals will become a possibility for those who need it most in Karonga, Malawi.

#### The objectives of the project are:

- Reduce the distance that people walk to find potable water by drilling boreholes
- Increase sanitation coverage in communities by ensuring that each household has an improved toilet and handwashing facility with soap/ash
- Increase access to sanitation facilities in schools
- Increase adoption of conservation agriculture practices
- Improve resilience capacity of water user committees (WUCs) and improve investment in sanitation and hygiene through diversified income sources

The project is estimated to directly benefit 10,000 right holders in Kilupula and Kyungu.



## NORTHERN MALAWI

Mr Kumwenda captured proudly working in his backyard garden after being oriented by TSA staff on back yard garden establishment.

