



# INNOCENTS RELIEF

*Helping poor children in developing countries since 1962*

PO Box 4096, St. Lucia South, Qld 4067, Australia

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## From the President—February 2021



Welcome to our second February newsletter. On behalf of Innocents Relief, I would like to thank the 34 donors who generously contributed an additional \$27,000 over the Christmas period. These very welcome donations will support the eight specific schools or special projects requested by the donors.

Also, a big 'Thank You' to all who contributed to our COVID-19 appeal which enabled us to give an additional \$72,000 to our schools.

The pandemic has highlighted the myriad of issues facing our schools. School Directors report major struggles from very basic lack of food and no Government support to inspirational tales of using social media to keep children learning in lockdown.

Late in 2020, we asked members who were 'Child

Sponsors' to transfer their financial support of an individual child to the child's school. This move was strongly supported by all School Directors as individual child sponsorship was not always in the best interest of the school, with some children being sponsored while other equally needy children were not. As a 'School Sponsor', members will now be able to take pride in knowing that they have helped a number of children break the cycle of poverty. There is however a continuing urgent need to assist many children and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic. As you will see below, we have launched another appeal to assist our schools meet their COVID-19 challenges.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your continuing support and may you all have a happy and safe 2021.

Gregory J Seymour AM  
**President**

## COVID-19 Appeal (SPCOV4) 2021: *Can you give a little more?*



In normal times all of our schools need additional funds as most get little or no Government funding in their countries. In a pandemic, demand has increased as local donations have dried up. Unemployment is a major local issue. Your gift, however large or small, will be wisely used and greatly appreciated.

**BSB No:** 124001

**Account No:** 10110882

**Account Name:** Innocents Relief

**Reference:** Your name, SPCOV04

Donate via **PayPal Giving Fund:** [www.paypal.com/au/fundraiser/hub](http://www.paypal.com/au/fundraiser/hub)

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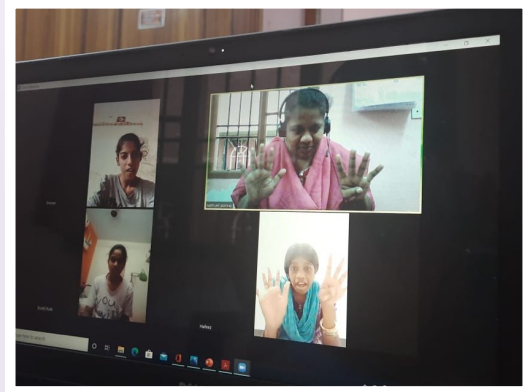
Make cheques out to Innocents Relief and post to PO Box 4096, St Lucia South, Qld, 4067.

# COVID-19: Our schools innovate

Educating poor children in a pandemic is a major challenge for our schools. Sickness, death, unemployment, lack of food have been reported. Help from governments is often missing. While dealing with these very basic needs some of our schools have been able to innovate, using smart phones, YouTube and WhatsApp to deliver lessons while schools are closed. Here are some of their stories.



**St John Vianney Girls Primary and Secondary School (IND 77), Palliyadi, Tamil Nadu, India.** Since students' homes are in the countryside, internet speeds are very poor or non-existent. Teachers had to adapt, recording lessons and making them available to students when they could access their parent's mobile phone and use WhatsApp video or YouTube. IR funds were also used to supplement food supplies for very poor families.



**Little Flower Convent School for Hearing Impaired Children (IND 41) Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India.** Virtual education for hearing-impaired children is being conducted through apps such as WhatsApp, Zoom and Google Link by the school's educators. The provision of laptops sponsored by IR for three special educators has been a boon and the teaching is more interactive and effective.



**Holy Family Care Centre (SAF 03) Limpopo, South Africa.** The orphaned and abandoned children at this centre have benefited greatly with the extra funds provided by IR. During lockdown additional textbooks and stationery were purchased and the children continued their education with live-in tutors.



**Infant Jesus Orphanage and School (IND 08), Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu, India.** During India's lockdown, whilst continuing to educate the children via smart phone, video and WhatsApp messaging, the school also used IR's funds to provide poor families where the parents had lost their jobs with rice, eggs and other foodstuffs.

# Surviving in a pandemic

**Manuel Duato Special Needs School (Per 01), Lima, Peru.** Fr Ed O'Connell reports: *Biosecurity steps are not being observed so there is a second wave expected to peak in February....teachers have been in "virtual" contact with the parents and nearly 400 children for ten months. The teachers are exhausted and worried. By November, 13 special needs students out of 395 had COVID. Sadly, three fathers and 28 other relatives have died so far. IR's funds have helped 44 families in dire financial difficulty.*

**St Matia Mulumba Solidarity Fund (UGA 01), Kampala, Uganda.** The centre has been severely affected by the pandemic. Many politicians have used the pandemic for political and economic gain. Local donations have dried up and the centre's major sponsor, an Italian organisation, has been unable to help due to the pandemic in Italy. Lack of food is a serious problem. In May, the centre began food distribution to families in need.



**St Ignatius Secondary School (PNG 02), Aitape, Papua New Guinea.**

Students and staff have their temperatures taken before entering the school and are required to wear masks. Taps and soap were installed outside each classroom for handwashing.

**St Francis Xavier Convent and School (IND 52), Srivilliputhur, Tamil Nadu, India.** WhatsApp classes were conducted for each class group, books and learning guides and test materials were distributed and tests later corrected. Teachers used any spare time to attend classes to improve their English.

**Immaculate Heart of Mary Convent (IND 60), Pattathanam, Kerala, India.** Students struggled with online classes due to poor connectivity, lack of devices and limited use of technology. Funds from IR helped 42 families with textbooks and study materials. The school bought smart phones for children in remote villages without the internet. The COVID lockdown left the poor without food and money, and its rapid spread created chaos. With no government support for food, housing and clothing the monsoon rains added to insecurity and misery. After witnessing youth suicide following positive COVID tests, support and counselling were provided.



**Prithipura Communities (SLA 01), Sri Lanka.** This centre takes in severely disabled babies and children. They have been struggling to pay their bills since COVID-19 impacted regular donors' income. Extra funds from IR have been spent on food, medication and utility bills for the Infants Home. As a team, they worked together to plan special activities for the children to give more variety to the days.

## Special Projects: *Making school possible for poor children*

During 2020, IR funded nine special projects in nine schools at a cost of \$120,425. The grants, valued from just \$4,000 to \$22,425, deliver major benefits to schools and facilitate a child's attendance at school. They can make education possible for poor children. Here are a few progress reports.



**Dormitories.** Salesian Primary School (KEN 02), Chera, Kenya. Three dormitories have been constructed above existing classrooms to house 57 abandoned or orphan children who had nowhere else to go.

**Solar Energy.** Society of the Daughters of the Cross School (IND 16) Gujarat, India. Documentation has been submitted to meet Indian regulations. COVID-19 has caused delays. Approval is expected to take two months then installation can begin.

**New roof.** Convent of Our Lady of Lourdes School (IND 54), Kerala, India. The high school now has a new roof. Sr Rani Thomas writes:....*Our school roof work is over and class rooms are ready....Thank you so much for your support and encouragement...*

**Water Supply.** SFS Integrated Primary School (KEN 01), Katani, Kenya. The installation of guttering and a large in ground water tank to provide water for the school and vegetable garden is complete. Fr Sunny expressed his thanks and wrote:....*it was completed before the rainy season in November. It is 12 feet in radius and 14 feet deep. Once filled it will be a big blessing.....I fold my hands in prayer for all who helped us to achieve this.*



*Salesian Primary School Kenya*

**Textbooks, Notebooks.** Bishop's House Schools (IND 62), Arunachal Pradesh, India. Textbooks notebooks were purchased for 84 girls at four boarding schools. The girls come from poverty stricken border villages. Some are refugees from Bangladesh. Others are from the Wacho tribe bordering Burma or the Tangsa and Adivasi tribes.

## How to contact us



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