



Mercy Association

for the Underprivileged



Dear Friends of Mercy Association,

Our hearts are grateful to our Lord Jesus Christ for blessing and entrusting us to share His love and serve His underprivileged brothers and sisters both in Australia and Egypt.

2013-2014 was a very fruitful year in terms of our services and outcomes. Your support and contributions helped achieve much for those who were in most need. New initiatives started for the first time and our activities expanded to support more families.

In this issue *A brief summary of activities that took place in 2013-2014.*

Egypt

- Better Life for Widows and their Children - Sohag Governorate.
- Integrated development in three villages - Bani Suef Governorate.
- Easter and Christmas help.
- Home improvements program: El Minya Governorate (Districts of Bani Khalid; El Barsha and Shiba El Garbia).
- Education Program.
- Environmental projects.

Australia

- Bush Fire support for 2013 New South Wales Victims.
- Merry Christmas wishes for Elderly patients.
- Canberra Homeless Connect Day.
- Crises bags for the Homeless.
- Support for Road House program with Australian Red Cross.

Newsletter 2013-2014

Egypt

Your financial support and contributions reached to thousands of underprivileged families and children in several governorates through funding a number of projects and activities.

The following is an outline of achievements in 2013-2014:



Better Life for Widows and their Children - Sohag Governorate:

This is a five-year project, of which, we are in the second year. The mission aims to empower widows through providing means to start income generating projects, as well as providing financial support for the education of their children. Some of the achievements this year include:



■ **Establishing nine new microenterprises:**

The project funded different types of income generating projects for the widows including candy floss, and raising sheep, goats or poultry such as ducks and pigeons.

■ **Celebrating mother's day with widows:**

On mother's day, the project organised a celebration for all widowed mothers. The day program focused on increasing their confidence to face challenges, and it included a talk about the characteristics of a successful woman.

■ **Organising a fun and educational day for the widows' children in two of the villages:**

This program included simple and basic training about the concepts of personal hygiene, such as washing hands after using the toilet and before eating, and explaining benefits of neatness and tidiness, as well as the importance of having clean and pure hearts, not only clean bodies. At the end of the day, each child received a present consisting of a towel, a bar of soap, a toothbrush, toothpaste, a comb, a game and a meal.

Egypt



■ Distributing some clothes to the children:

Project staff noticed that the children, in the areas being served, needed some clothes. The staff took the children's sizes and bought necessary cloths, including underwear and a training suit each, for 23 children.

■ Computer training for orphan students:

This project arranged a training course on four different computer programs. This helps the children of underprivileged families to understand computer concepts they would otherwise not know because they have no access to computers at home. The course was attended by 23 children from three villages, all of whom expressed happiness with the course.



■ Distributing food packs to children:

As part of the project's efforts to contribute to the children's health improvement, the project staff distributed healthy food packs for the 23 children covered by the project each containing a chicken and some fruit.

Egypt



Integrated development in three villages - Bani Suef Governorate:

This program aims at developing three villages in the Upper Egypt Governorate through an integrated development approach that includes activities such as empowering local organisations, contributing to health improvement, providing educational training and support, family planning, environmental development and agriculture extension. Main program achievements this past year include:

■ Educational program:

Three literacy classes were conducted for 45 women in the three villages using a program developed by Caritas Egypt Names (Educate yourself Free yourself).

As part of the program, 150 awareness sessions were held for students targeting mainly women to improve their awareness in area of health, hygiene, rights and responsibilities and children's nutrition.



■ Educational support for 300 students:

Due to the financial hardship that many families suffer in Egypt, and especially in Upper Egypt, many children are forced to drop out of school.

300 students were therefore supported by this program through the provision of educational materials, school bags, books, notebooks, pens, pencils, pencil cases, etc.

The staff involved in the program were also conducting regular home visits to 100 children, to follow up their performance and provide them with additional support in their studies.

■ Child-to-Child program:

The goal of this program is to develop childrens' awareness, and increase their involvement, in the development of their communities through reaching out to other children.

The program provides training and empowerment sessions to 50 children from three villages.

The program focuses on health and environmental issues affecting the children and how they can contribute in their community to improve the situation.

Egypt

During the year, the program conducted three classes for the children, and offered them practical ideas and project opportunities that they can implement in their community to improve the health conditions. The children also performed three plays for the village communities about the risks of smoking, importance of medical tests and check ups, importance of cleanliness, and the importance of balanced food. The villagers were very impressed with their childrens' performances and positively received the messages communicated in the plays.



■ Health awareness program:

This program aims at improving the health of the mothers and their children in the three villages.

During the year, nine awareness sessions were held on the importance of breast feeding, winter diseases, hepatitis, parasites infestation, the importance of vaccination and managing of bed-wetting for children.

These sessions were run by doctors and specialists and were attended by over 30 women.

■ Nutritional Awareness for women:

The program aims at teaching and increasing skills and awareness for women to cook balanced meals for their familis using the limited local resources. About 45 women enrolled in the program in the three served villages and 36 sessions were conducted during the year. The program included theoretical and practical sessions. Theoretical sessions included information on breast feeding, malnutrition, the importance of vitamins, and balanced food.

The practical session included baking cakes, cooking lentils, chicken pasta and making yogurt.



Egypt

■ Mobile clinic and mobile medical laboratory:

This program arranged eight visits for the mobile clinic to the three villages. The clinic carried out check ups for 123 individuals and supported the treatment of 12 illness cases. The Mobile medical laboratory conducted four visits and 114 cases were tested in the three villages including 25 cases that received treatment.

■ Family planning services:

The program arranged seven visits to the three villages and 80 women had check ups; the doctor also carried out 27 home visits to patients.

■ Agriculture extension program:

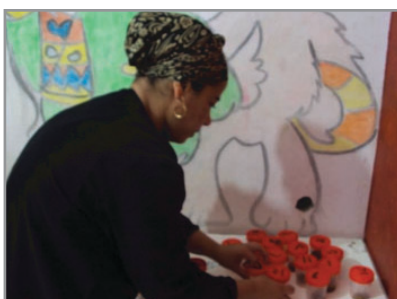
This program aims at increasing the productivity of wheat and maize farms. Three sessions on agriculture extension were conducted during the year. The program arranged for the farmers to visit to the agriculture research centre to hear from the experts, and it provided financial support to the farmers to purchase improved seeds. About 120 farmers participated and benefited from these activities.

■ Veterinary extension services:

This program aims at increasing farmers' skills in the areas of veterinary care including increasing awareness about balanced diets for the animals, symptoms of diseases, and animal first aid.

The program carried out three sessions attended by 25 farmers. Session topics include poultry diseases, animal balanced food, foot and mouth disease, and first aid for animals.

Veterinary doctors carried out five visits and 25 cases were treated. The veterinary first aid volunteers also treated 50 cases.



Egypt

■ Environmental program:

This program aims at increasing the environmental awareness for the families in maintaining the cleanliness of their environment. The program installed one water connection and four toilets, and carried out eight streets cleaning campaign.



Easter and Christmas help:

Your generous support for Easter and Christmas reached around 1000 families in need in Sohag, Shobra El-Khima and El Manoura. Mercy provided around \$60,000 in 2013-2014 to support underprivileged families in these Governorates.

- Food supplies include “chicken, meat, butter, cheese, rice, pasta in addition...” to providing clothes and cash money. Families served include widows, families with disabled children, disabled and sick.



Egypt



Home improvements program:
El Minya Governorate (Districts of Bani Khalid; El Barsha and Shiba El Garbia):

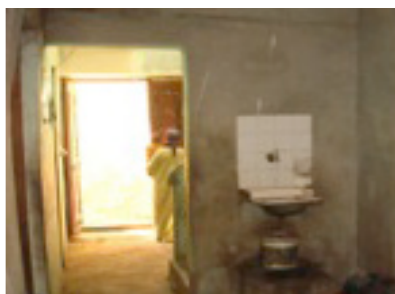
■ House renovations:

During the year, Mercy financed renovations of 18 houses in three villages. Renovation work included roof installations, toilets and water connections maintenance, door and windows maintenance.



Environmental projects

- This program financed the installation of six electric meters, 12 water connections, and six toilets in different houses that had no water, sewage or electricity connections.



Education Program:

- This program opened one literacy class providing education and awareness to 22 women and students. The program also trained 10 literacy teachers to increase their teaching skills.



Bush Fire support for 2013 New South Wales Victims:

In collaboration with the Salvation Army, Mercy Association contributed \$10,000 in cash for affected families who lost everything just before Christmas. Upon donating this amount, we asked that it would be passed on in cash to allow families to purchase essential items at their discretion, to enable them to have a good Christmas after such a devastating event.

Merry Christmas wishes for Elderly patients:

In cooperation with Calvary Hospital in Canberra, volunteers from Mercy visited several elderly patients on Christmas day, spent quality time with them, and offered them gifts with Christmas cheer.



Canberra Homeless Connect Day:

Mercy supported the homeless connect day on the 8th of August 2013 in collaboration with Early Morning Centre in Canberra. The event took place in the Uniting Church on Northbourne Ave. Mercy sponsored the day through cooking and providing food for all the homeless individuals and other volunteers from governmental and charity organisations attending the event. Young volunteers from Mercy also participated by helping serve the food and beverages during the day. The organisers and the homeless individuals who attended were very pleased with the services, deeming the event to be a success, and they requested Mercy to continue sponsoring the day in future years.



Crises bags for the Homeless:

During the past year, Mercy provided 120 crises bags for the homeless. These bags provided basic items for homeless individuals who didn't have access to kitchens or other cooking facilities. Each bag contained food and beverage items including noodles, cereal, milk, tea bags, coffee sachets, sugar sachets, tuna cans, baked beans cans, juice, sultana, muesli bar and gum.



Support for Road House program with Australian Red Cross:

Mercy supported the Road House program, an initiative managed by the Australian Red Cross, which provides daily lunch for the homeless. Mercy provided several food items such as skim milk powder, pasta, rice, tuna, tinned tomato, sugar, coffee, tea, chickpeas, kidney beans, lentils, herbs and spices, cooking oil, napkins, and disposable gloves.

