



NEWS

Dear PiCCA Supporters

In these challenging times, we thought it might be timely to let you know how your support for PiCCA is translating into benefits for vulnerable communities overseas. As you might be aware, our projects have been affected by the worldwide lockdowns because of COVID-19. We, and our overseas partners, are optimistic that services will be able to resume after restrictions are eased.

We very much hope you and your family are safe, well and coping okay with all the necessary restrictions. Hopefully you will find some encouraging and uplifting news in this latest PiCCA newsletter.

Warm wishes from Stephanie, on behalf of the PiCCA Board.

Kamrangirchor Composite Project, Dhaka



PiCCA visited this project in early February to talk with our partner Symbiosis and meet some of the locals using the services. With PiCCA's assistance, Symbiosis started dental and optical services towards the end of last year, helping people on very low incomes living in one of Bangladesh's poorest areas. Two of the project's staff, the Optician and the Preschool Teacher, also perform a 'social mobiliser' role, going around the community to let people know there is help available.

The next stage of the project is to establish a maternal health clinic (some equipment has already been purchased for this) and a tuktuk driver training program. The Symbiosis team as well as every beneficiary we spoke to were extremely grateful to PiCCA members and donors!

Read stories from beneficiaries & staff

The official rates of COVID-19 infection and mortality seem low, given it is the 8th most populated country in the world and one of the the most densely populated. At the time of writing Bangladesh had 14,600 diagnosed cases and 228 deaths. Symbiosis is reporting their activities have indeed been curtailed during the national lockdown, as they are unable to do any field work at this time. This [recent article](#) in a Bangladeshi newspaper highlights some of the difficulties for millions of low-income families.



Photos above:

(Centre) PiCCA Directors Stephanie and Steve meeting Kamrangirchor project staff; (left) the project site and large sign out the front advertising the services; (right) some of the locals.

Haku Women's Collective, Bougainville (PNG)

At the time of writing there were only 8 reported cases of COVID-19 in PNG and no deaths. A State of Emergency was declared on 17 March 2020 and the government is enforcing a very strict lockdown to try to contain the spread of the virus. It is clear that PNG's health services would struggle to manage a significant outbreak. A recent Australian High Commissioner to PNG has commented that testing capacity for COVID-19 is limited and the country's real infection rate will probably still be a matter of guesswork after the pandemic has passed.

People are relying even more on their backyard gardens for food, as some stores are closed. The Haku Women's Collective (PiCCA's partner in two projects) is still operating its rice mill, so people can eat their home-grown rice. Education and training activities at Luman Hipakoko are on hold for now. However, the Collective has been able to push ahead with another construction project - this time a separate Safe House with a counselling room - with funds from a UK organisation.

Prior to the pandemic, the Collective were going really well. In early January PiCCA visited Haku to collect more stories from people benefiting from PiCCA's last project there. This was an agricultural skills development project, which also included establishing a rice mill. The project was jointly funded by PiCCA and the Australian Government (under a Friendship Grant). It has had many very practical benefits for hundreds of families in the Haku region of Bougainville. Vital agricultural knowledge and skills are being shared. The unique way that the local DPI office worked with the Collective to deliver the training will be repeated to deliver other needed training (e.g. managing fish stocks and reef health).

[Read beneficiaries' stories](#)

[Read a project summary](#)

PiCCA's Steve and Stephanie
with project beneficiary Gimots
and his wife Talits



Vietnam chicken farming project completed



The outcomes of PiCCA's project *Improving Living Quality for People with Disability by Chicken Raising* have been evaluated and the results are gratifying. 90% of people with disabilities reported that the project created jobs and generated income for their families. The income was used to buy food for the families and help with school expenses and the remainder was used to support and expand their chicken flocks.

The families reported an increase in happiness and purpose as they now have a job to do each day in looking after the chickens. 90% of the people with a disability feel that they are no longer a social burden on their family and community. Our partner, Hearts for Hue, says that family income has increased and participants' living conditions are obviously improved.



In relation to COVID-19, thus far there have been 288 reported cases and no deaths in Vietnam. Hearts for Hue has distributed face masks and hand sanitizer to all the communities it works with.

[Read a case study](#)

Grazie Dante



From left: Bernadine Leon, artist Silvia Randi and Rosalia Miglioli

A big shout out to our friends at the The Dante Alighieri Society in Brisbane, long term supporters of PiCCA.

The Dante Alighieri Society was founded in Rome in 1889 and aims to promote Italian language and culture. It is now established in most countries and major cities throughout the world. The Brisbane branch was re-founded in 1952 and supports a school of language and a wide variety of cultural events throughout the year.

You would think that would be task enough but the generous people at the Dante have found time to reach out in support of PiCCA and have assisted in fund raising efforts on PiCCA's behalf. This includes hosting craft markets at the school and doing crowd appeals during performances of the Dante's acclaimed theatrical group "Danteatro".

"It is great to be able lend our support to PiCCA" said Dante Vice President Rosalia Miglioli, "Italian culture is known for many things , including its strong tradition of solidarity". We at PiCCA have witnessed this tradition in practice. A big thank you to Rosalia, to School Director Bernadine Leon and to the Dante committee for their support.

By the way, if you know someone wanting to learn Italian, we know a school we can recommend.

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