

The Dignity Project Half-year update

January - June 2024

Introduction

It's been a busy six months for The Dignity Project (TDP), with a strong focus on policy and strategy at a board level, as well as the expansion of programs and new buildings at overseas operations. Highlights from the January-to-June period include the transition to a new campus for Wonderkids school in Khajuraho; the expansion of the pad distribution program; the completion of documents and evidence to support a formal ACNC charitable status application and the development of strategies to drive TDP forward.

From the board

The board met three times in the first-half of the year; meetings focused not only on the ongoing operations and business of TDP but also on the discussion, development and commitment to establishing strategies and policies that further strengthen not only how it operates, but future goals and targets. Among the work executed by the board include the development of TDP's Educational Priorities and Values and the formal adoption of policies including a TDP Code of Conduct, TDP's Policy for safeguarding children and vulnerable people and policies relating to financial regulation and anti-corruption measures. These policies and strategies allow TDP to move forward more confidently with consistent focus and policies that support its decision making and expansion plans.



Overseas operations update

Wonderkids, Khajuraho (INDIA) – TDP is delighted to report that the school has finally moved to a new and bigger campus. After much work preparing the premises, Wonderkids began the new school year at its new location. The new school has more classrooms, more toilets, a dedicated kitchen in the heart of the school, a staffroom, a bigger computer lab, a playground for the students and an office. With the new site, the school has also expanded to Year 9, allowing Wonderkids to retain students who would have previously moved to a different school. There is still much to be done at the new site, with furniture to be bought for classrooms and some ground works. We are looking forward to visiting in September to inspect the new school and provide support to further set-up the site. These photographs have been provided by the school principal in the first few weeks at the new site.



Meals program – In the first six months of the year a total of 12,382 breakfasts were served to both students and staff. This program continues to be an integral part of the school routine, with each day at the school starting with a shared breakfast. Importantly, school administrators report that a key facet of the program is that children can eat until they are full and are not limited to a single serve, allowing students who come to school hungrier than others the opportunity to start with day with a full stomach. Additionally, the meal rotation has been expanded to include a wider range of options with a focus on adding more macro-nutrients at each meal. This has been achieved with a push to use a greater amount of ghee in cooking and preparation, plus the inclusion of more nuts in some dishes. The school is also seeking to source butter milk to be included once per week, plus a water purification filter.



Sanitary Pad Program – As previously reported, TDP expanded its sanitary pad program this year, with a visit and initial pad session to the tribal village of Banki. A follow-up meeting and feedback session is planned for the second-half of the year with the women of this community and further distribution of reuseable pad packs will occur at this time, subject to community feedback.

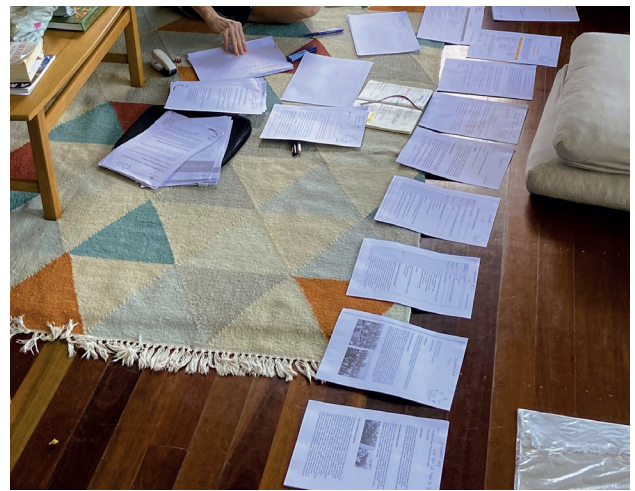


Other items – The Dignity Project is grateful for the support of families and schools that donated pencils and crayons at the start of the year to help build good quality resources at Wonderkids in Khajuraho. These items will stay at the school for ongoing use by staff and students, as we seek to promote creativity on both thinking, learning and bookwork.



Items of significance – ACNC application

A key focus this year has been achieving recognised Australian government charitable status and much time and work has been dedicated to preparing an application to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission. As part of this process, we have prepared, reviewed, discussed and adopted close to 20 formal policies and strategy documents, conducted risk assessments and audits on our operations and reviewed most aspects of TDP operations. As a result, we have submitted 60 pieces of evidence, as well as 3 completed checklists to our lawyers Russell Kennedy who will now support TDP to prepare a formal submission to the ACNC. The TDP board approached this process methodically, and while it has been slow and at times frustrating and laborious, it has also been extremely valuable in guiding our operations and further enhancing our administrative and decision making processes. As a result, after the work of the first six months on the ACNC application, we feel stronger and more structured. Below is an image of Madelene working through the paperwork for the ACNC application, highlighting the efforts we have made on this.



Looking ahead

In August, Madelene will return to Khajuraho to continue working with the senior students on conversational English, with a proposed focus on reading and comprehension skills, as well as supporting some of the teachers with their English classes and teacher instruction. The board is scheduled to conduct its second AGM in September, with all board members planning to meet in Khajuraho. During this meeting, the board will continue its strategic planning, visit the new site and participate in the second annual Wonderkids Athletics Carnival. We are also in the process of preparing our first Annual Report too! Additionally, a group of students from the Richmond Institute will visit in September and conduct some team building and sport workshops with the students at Wonderkids. Proceeds from the Richmond Institute tour will be donated to TDP, with projected fundraising of \$9000.

Finally, we wish to express our ongoing gratitude and thanks to all the individuals and groups who support the work of The Dignity Project. We acknowledge all of the contributions, large and small, donations, support and interest in our work and express our sincere appreciation to you all. Your support allows us to continue with the work of TDP and to promote dignity for all. Thank you.