

**OFS Active Presence in the World Survey**  
**OFS National Fraternity of Oceania (Australia)**  
**Assisting to poor families in India - *Project Adoption***

### **1. Project Description**

*Project Adoption* is an initiative of the Secular Franciscans in Australia. For over forty years, we have supported poor families in Kerala State. Working with the Franciscan Family Apostolate in India, we send quarterly donations to two Catholic dioceses there. *Project Adoption* also supports St. Alphonsa Home for Disabled Girls in the Thrissur Archdiocese.



### **2. Background History**



*Project Adoption* was established in Australia in 1971, after a Canadian Secular wrote in the Franciscan Herald of the plight of impoverished families in India. Here in Australia, the Seculars took up his challenge and *Project Adoption* was the result. Now, in 2013, we sponsor 240 families and the girls' home.

### **3. Project Coordination**

*Project Adoption* is run by volunteer Secular Franciscans. At present, these volunteers belong to the Holy Spirit Fraternity in Waverley.

Administration costs are met by Secular Franciscans, and are kept to an absolute minimum, so that every cent donated for poor families goes to those families. We hold an annual sponsorship drive through the fraternities, and through local parish churches, so we have many sponsors who are not Franciscans.

#### 4. Impact on Society

Last year we sent more than AU\$30,000 to India. Funds are used to help pay for books for education, medications, building and repairing homes, and to buy livestock which can enable families to become self-sufficient. We also support the day-



to-day needs of the 25 girls who live at St. Alphonsa Home, and in previous years, we have helped the Home purchase a bus, sewing machines, uniforms and computers for the girls.

#### 5. What we have learned

We have learned how lucky we are in Australia. The World Bank estimates that 400 million people (32.7% of the total Indian population) now live under the global poverty line of \$1.25/day - that is nearly 18 times more than the entire population of Australia. There is no social support system for assistance. Literacy for males is 73.4% but for females, it is 47.8%. The risk of infectious diseases is high; risks include bacterial diarrhea, hepatitis A and E, typhoid fever, dengue fever, malaria, rabies and leptospirosis and 2.4 million people in India live with HIV/AIDS. Nearly half the children aged under 5 years old in India are underweight and many ailments go untreated because of poverty, and result in crippling disfigurement and disability. Through *Project Adoption*, we help alleviate some of this burden of poverty.

*Figures from Wikipedia and the CIA World Factbook*

#### 6. Contact person

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