

School Aid

kids helping kids in times of need

We just don't know how our children are affected when they witness the fallout of major tragic events around the world. Feelings of helplessness are common. Rather than allowing those negative images to build up over time with potentially harmful outcomes, one non-profit organisation is working to harness the good in our children and focus that good on those in need.

School Aid is an online philanthropy program that empowers our kids to help other kids in need. It provides opportunities for the 11,000 schools in Australia to join together in response to times of tragedy and humanitarian need, especially where affected children's capacity to attend school and learn has been compromised.

In 2003, former school principal Sean Gordon founded School Aid in response to the anxiety he felt as a parent and educator about the effect the major tragedies of the world were having on the minds of our children. His work with those children to date has helped raise about \$1.5 million for children in trouble in Australia and off-shore and instilled a sense of empowerment in students here.

After the Beslan tragedy of 2004, when terrorists massacred 150 Russian school children, a School Aid appeal raised \$463,000. In partnership with World Vision, School Aid rebuilt a central park for the community, which was named Friendship Park by the local children. Thousands of messages of condolence and hope were also written by Australian students for the children of Beslan.

Following the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2005, which killed, orphaned or left homeless many thousands of children, School Aid raised over \$250,000, and in partnership with Plan Australia, built an entire school in Banda Aceh.

Exposing our children to the benefits of charitable activity from an early age should encourage a more philanthropic society in future. It can also have a real impact today. For example, if each Australian school was able to raise just \$100 to support an appeal, more than \$1 million would be raised.

School Aid's online community will also help students and teachers access a continuous program of activities, engagement events and resources to tackle their own local projects and issues and to share their success with others.

WHY SVA BACKS SCHOOL AID

SVA is committed to supporting ventures which develop relevant and accessible educational, vocational and self-development programs which support young people from childhood to early adulthood. We firmly believe in School Aid's vision, its simple operational model and the enormous potential to scale this program has to achieve deep social impact.

SVA has had significant input to School Aid, providing critical support for its new phase of growth.

GROWTH

So far, more than 1,000 schools and about 20,000 kids have participated directly in School Aid's program.

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

The main indicator of success for School Aid will be continued student participation. As funding becomes available, the venture will begin tracking students' continued support of the venture to evaluate the program.

In terms of appeal success to date, School Aid has provided support to the following projects:

- \$260,000 for a new school in Aceh, Indonesia, following the 2005 tsunami.
- \$250,000 for a new school and youth centre in East Timor.
- \$60,000 towards reconstruction work in Pakistan after the 2005 earthquake.
- \$450,000 to build a children's Friendship Park in Beslan, Russia.
- \$80,000 towards reconstruction work in North Queensland following Cyclone Larry in 2006.

The benefits of School Aid's work are wide ranging including:

- The development of learning resources that can support student-led philanthropic activity.
- The stimulation of students to think more broadly and actively about giving and how they can make a difference in their own communities and beyond.
- The development of a national 'student community' which will help involve students in the administration of School Aid appeals so that it truly becomes "kids helping kids" in need.

School Aid brings together all sectors of education – government and private schools that represent all denominations across primary, middle and secondary schools of all denominations. The program also unites children of all ages from rural, regional and metropolitan areas, in all States and Territories across the country.

WHAT'S AHEAD

Under the guidance of a new CEO who was appointed at the end of 2007, School Aid's priorities in the year ahead will be to:

- Expand its school network.
- Build a new website.
- Stage a series of events and develop new materials to help children engage with community activities and assist teachers to implement classroom initiatives.

SVA's role in that future will include attracting new corporate partners who can contribute funding and intellectual resources, such as leadership skills and mentoring support.