n India, new orphanage on horizon for Adventist supporting ministry

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Asian Aid is building a new orphanage for seventy orphans currently living in a cramped home on the outskirts of Bobbili, India. Sunrise Orphanage, slated to open early next year, can house more than twice as many underprivileged children.

Sunrise's 12-acre plot means the orphanage can grow some of its own food and sell crops for income. Each child will plant a vegetable plot to learn gardening skills and the value of industry, a press release from the ministry said.

Established in Australia forty years ago, Asian Aid now operates an American office, based out of Collegedale, Tennessee, in addition to its headquarters in Wauchope, New South Wales. The ministry operates more than one hundred schools and orphanages in India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Through sponsorships, Asian Aid sends 8,500 children to Adventist schools in the region.

"We're not only giving them an education, but introducing them to Jesus," says Asian Aid CEO Jim Rennie. "Sponsorship is really a daily missionary activity. If someone wants to know that they're making a difference in the mission field every day, they can."

Basic sponsorships cover a child's tuition at a local Adventist school, with higher sponsorship levels providing shelter and food as well.

Orphans in India are often abandoned and ostracized by society, Rennie says. In one recent instance, current Sunrise Orphanage staff awoke to find a child tied to a post in the yard.

"She went from being a little girl who was petrified to another of the bright, cheerful kids at Sunrise who've got a very loving, spiritual couple to look after them. To see the difference in that little girl was very exciting," Rennie says.

Asian Aid's ministry is not limited to sponsorships. The ministry also oversees numerous development projects, such as providing clean water sources, literacy and vocational training for adults and medical care for underserved populations, including Nepalese women and leper communities. Asian Aid also provides shelter for women who have escaped human trafficking.

"We can't solve all of these problems, but we have a responsibility as part of our mission outreach to help those in need. I think we give a very direct vehicle to help those in need," Rennie says.

To learn more about the ministry, visit AsianAid.org.