

Thanks to the Korogo Life Straws Project, all households in Korogo, PNG, are now using a family LifeStraw unit.



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TRANSFORM

South Australian Rotarians are transforming the lives of people living in the remote and disadvantaged communities of Korogo, PNG and Rania, Iraq.

KOROGO LIFE STRAWS PROJECT

THE Korogo Life Straws Project began as a means of reducing infant mortality rates in the villages along the Sepik River, Papua New Guinea. Due to poor drinking water accessibility in the region, dehydration, dysentery and diarrhoea were rife, leading to many preventable deaths – particularly among the youngest members of the community.

Art gallery operator Paul Greenaway OAM, who lived for many years in Korogo, and fellow art enthusiast Malgosia Schild brought the situation to the attention of the Rotary Club of Adelaide, SA. In collaboration with RAWCS, extensive fundraising was undertaken to purchase LifeStraw water filters. The filters reached the villages in 2016 and were immediately put to use.

A group of seven, including Paul, travelled to the village in November.

“With relief and joy we found all

households in Korogo using a family LifeStraw unit and reporting that the general health of all had improved,” Paul said.

The project continues, aiming to fund water filters for additional villages along the Sepik River, as well as supporting other community development initiatives.

“Education was a great concern in the area,” Paul said. “Korogo School only caters for children to Grade 8. After that, children need to go over the mountain range between the river and the coast, to Marprick Secondary School and board there. For most villagers this is too expensive.”

To assist, the project team agreed to launch a second stage of the project offering scholarships to children wishing to attend high school.

“We asked students to write a short paper on why they wanted to

do further studies, and we awarded 14 scholarships. While there, we also decided to start a small library and will send books to the village every three months,” Paul said. “Education is an important tool for the young people to support and maintain their culture in a country facing the many struggles and dangers of our contemporary global hunger for resources, which threatens both these ancient cultures and the ecosystem.”

The project also arranged the purchase of a hand-operated sewing machine, which one of the women from the village will use to teach others how to sew children’s clothing. A purchase was also made of 100 handmade *bilums* (string bags) from local women to re-sell in Australia – the profits from which will be directed back into the project.

(Photos: Grant Hancock)



The second stage of the Korogo Life Straws Project offers scholarships to children wishing to attend high school.