

# Focus



AUSTRALIAN AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

DECEMBER 1997

DROUGHT IN PAPUA NEW  
GUINEA

RWANDAN WOMEN WITH  
HOPE

HELPING FARMERS BUILD  
THEIR OWN SOLUTIONS



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# Contents

IN FOCUS	2
NEWSBRIEFS	2
THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT RENEWS ITS AID COMMITMENT TO THE REGION	3
DROUGHT IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA	5
READY TO TAKE AIM AT FIRE	9
KATHY SULLIVAN - Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs	11
RWANDAN WOMEN WITH HOPE	12
HELPING FARMERS BUILD THEIR OWN SOLUTIONS	16
SUPPLYING WATER AND LEARNING ABOUT DEVELOPMENT	26
DEVELOPMENT STATISTICS	28
DEVELOPMENT ISSUES BRIEF - Better Aid for a Better Future	30

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**Cover photo:** Carrying cut grass in Makroman, East Kalimantan, Indonesia.





On 18 November, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Alexander Downer MP, presented a major statement to Parliament on Australia's aid program. The Minister's statement, *Better Aid for a Better Future*, detailed the new policy parameters for the aid program into the next century. The Minister announced that the objective of the aid program will be 'to advance Australia's national interest by assisting developing countries to reduce poverty and to achieve sustainable development.' This new objective is important in giving a clear focus for Australia's aid and in highlighting that international poverty reduction and sustainable development are firmly in Australia's national interest.

Program development and implementation will follow six key principles:

- First, our aid program will be determined in partnership with developing countries.
- Second, it will be responsive to urgent needs and development trends. Our aid program will provide rapid relief to victims of natural disasters and emergencies and take account of changing pressures in developing countries.
- Third, our aid will provide practical assistance. It will be realistic in assessing what can and cannot be achieved and will concentrate on practical efforts that can alleviate poverty and promote sustainable development.
- Fourth, there will be greater targetting. Clear priorities have been identified and our efforts will be assessed against these priorities.
- Fifth, our aid program will be identifiably Australian – it is a reflection of Australian values and is a projection of those values abroad.
- Finally, the program will be outward looking. It will be open to new ideas and approaches. It will seek to draw on the best ideas in Australia and overseas.

There will be five priority sectors: health, education, rural development, infrastructure and governance. The Minister also announced that Australia's aid will remain focussed on the Asia-Pacific region; that a Ministerial Advisory Committee will be introduced; and that an Office of Review and Evaluation will be established to enhance attention to quality control and achievement of outcomes.

These and other key issues raised in the Minister's statement are covered in more detail later in this edition of *Focus*. The full text of the Minister's statement can be found on AusAID's Internet site ([www.ausaid.gov.au](http://www.ausaid.gov.au)).

The Minister's announcements bring to a close the process of review and consultation in relation to Australia's aid policies and programs which began when the Minister commissioned the Simons Review in June 1996. It has been the first time since the early 1980s that the aid program has been given such comprehensive consideration and analysis. Australia's aid program has a new agenda. The challenge now for AusAID is to ensure that the process of organisational reform, underway since April this year, places us in the best possible position to implement this agenda.

# NEWS BRIEFS

## VIETNAMESE HEALTH AWARD FOR AUSTRALIAN DOCTOR

The Vietnamese Government awarded Dr Paulus Santosa the prestigious National Health Service Medal. The award, given in August, was for his work in assisting the Vietnamese Ministry of Health develop a national program for eliminating iodine deficiency, a part of the AusAID-funded Australia Vietnam Iodine Deficiency Control Project. Dr Santosa is the Australian team leader of the project.

Iodine deficiency (ID) is the single most significant cause of brain damage and mental retardation among Vietnamese newborns, and can cause serious learning difficulties among children and adults. Heavy rain on the mountain slopes and flooding in the deltas over many decades has washed away almost all of the natural iodine from the soil and inland waterways of Vietnam, leading to endemic levels of iodine deficiency among many populations.

A major focus of the project led by Dr Santosa has been the development of a national strategy for the introduction of iodised salt to replace Vietnam's lost natural iodine sources. Recent surveys conducted by the project have shown that up to 90 per cent of target households are now aware of the importance of iodised salt in the prevention of iodine deficiency. Iodine deficiency has been greatly reduced in the five provinces chosen to pilot the ID control models developed with the assistance the project team. The overall goal of the project is to assist the Vietnamese Government reach its target of eliminating of iodine deficiency by the year 2000.

## HELP FOR VIETNAMESE TYPHOON VICTIMS

Australia is providing \$745 000 to help thousands of families restore their lives after Cyclone Linda hit the Southern Provinces of Vietnam. Over 3000 people were reported missing and 452 people were dead. The assistance, provided by AusAID, will be channeled through NGOs in the form of rice, blankets for the homeless and mosquito nets to prevent malaria.

*CARE Australia* will provide 6000 households in Ca Mau province with emergency packs comprising iron roofing sheets, blankets and mosquito nets.

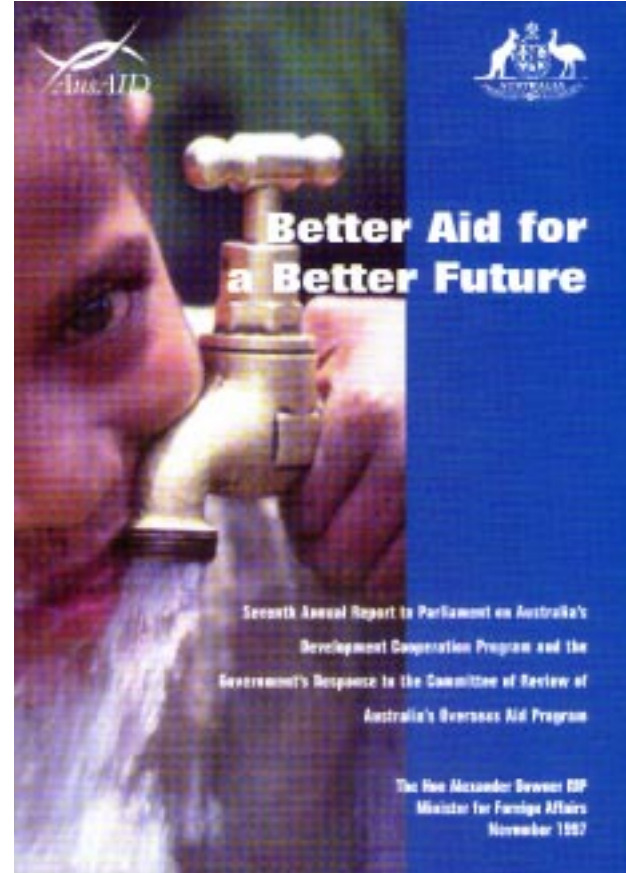
*World Vision* is assisting more than 3000 people in Ngoc Hien district, including the distribution of latrines. They are also training staff in hygiene and sanitation and will use Australian funds to restore two community health stations destroyed in the storms.

Assistance is also being provided to rebuild the economies of coastal villages engaged in shrimp production and fishing. The *Adventist Development and Relief Agency Australia* will provide small boats, nets and fishing cages so villagers can resume work. Relief staff are helping rehabilitate damaged rice paddies and shrimp farms.

The relief agencies are working closely with local organisations and women's groups to deliver assistance to the most destitute. Australian NGOs will also run training courses to strengthen the capacity of local organisations to respond to disasters.



# THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT RENEWS ITS AID COMMITMENT TO THE REGION



**T**he Asia-Pacific region will continue to be a high priority area for Australian aid, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer reaffirmed in his recent report to Parliament. He announced this when detailing the Government's response to the Report of the Committee of Review on the Australian Overseas Aid Program. The review was commissioned in June 1996.

Australian aid will focus on assisting regional Governments with their efforts to alleviate poverty in some of the poorer areas of the Asia-Pacific such as the outer islands in the Pacific, eastern Indonesia and the southern Philippines, while continuing to concentrate selectively on development needs in South Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

The Minister said recent events such as the severe drought in Papua New Guinea, forest fires in Indonesia and the current South-East Asia economic turmoil served to bring home the diverse and urgent problems faced by Australia's nearest neighbours.

The Minister denounced the view expressed in some quarters that there was a choice between dealing with domestic problems and providing assistance overseas as a "misunderstanding and self-defeating." By promoting growth in developing countries, Australia's aid program helped foster stability and also addressed many threats to regional prosperity such as HIV/AIDS, global environment problems and narcotics.

Fundamentally, by promoting human rights and addressing the needs of the world's most disadvantaged, Australia's aid program was a "clear statement of Australian values." It reflected the Australian ethic of "giving others, much worse off than ourselves, a fair go."

The Australian aid program will be directed by six key principles. It will have a focus on partnerships with developing countries, be responsive to urgent needs and development trends, concentrate on practical efforts, be more targeted, have a clear Australian identity and be outward looking

and open to new ideas. It will give priority attention to five key sectors: health, education, infrastructure, rural development and governance.

Over the next six months, the Parliamentary Secretary, Kathy Sullivan, and AusAID officers will conduct a series of seminars on the future directions of the Australian aid program in cities and rural centres around Australia. These will be targeted to the needs of special interest groups and to reach out to new audiences.

Full copies of the Government's response, the Minister's speech to Parliament and *Better Aid for a Better Future* - the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Report to Parliament on Australia's Overseas Aid Program are available on AusAID's Internet site at [www.ausaid.gov.au](http://www.ausaid.gov.au), as well as full copies of the original review report or you can order them from AusAID's publication distributor Bibliotech, telephone 02 6249 2479, postal address GPO Box 4, Canberra, ACT 2601 or email [Jenny.Morris@aplemail.anu.edu.au](mailto:Jenny.Morris@aplemail.anu.edu.au)

# NEWS BRIEFS

## AUSTRALIAN SUPPORT FOR PACIFIC PARTNERSHIPS

Australia is to provide \$100 000 for a new Pacific Reform Partnership Scheme. This scheme will promote the sharing of ideas and strategies between Pacific governments currently formulating or implementing significant economic reforms. The Scheme will be particularly relevant to the Solomon Islands as they embark on a program of economic and public sector reform.

A number of Pacific island countries are well advanced in implementing locally-initiated economic restructuring programs and have valuable expertise and advice to offer their neighbours. The Pacific Reform Partnership Scheme will support short-term visits and attachments in key government agencies or ministers' offices as well as other relevant forms of cooperation between island countries.

The Pacific Reform Partnerships Scheme is not only an important new form of support for the region's reform efforts but also a recognition of the growing body of local expertise which should be tapped for the longer-term benefit of the region.

## AusAID WATER PROJECT BOOSTS PACIFIC HEALTH

AusAID is funding a \$10 million Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in the Solomon Islands. The project will be completed in 2001 and will provide safe drinking water to about 260 000 villagers. Rural communities are working with project managers to identify water and sanitation needs. They are also helping to plan and construct their new facilities. This development process will ensure that the villagers of the Solomon Islands will be left with facilities they want and understand. This water and sanitation project will benefit the health and lifestyles of people in 5200 communities.

## ASSISTANCE FOR AFGHAN DEMINING PROGRAM

Australia will contribute \$500 000 to ensure that the highly successful Afghan demining program can continue until January without having to scale back its operations due to lack of funds. The Australian contribution will support both United Nations and NGOs directly involved in demining. Ten million landmines are thought to be buried in Afghanistan. They kill or maim 10 Afghans each day.

Established with Australian technical and financial assistance in 1989, the demining program, now known as the United Nations Mine Action Program (UNMAP), is

regarded as one of the most efficient in the world. Since UNMAP began mines have been cleared from more than 117 square kilometres of high priority, contaminated land and 110 square kilometres of former battlefield. AusAID's additional contribution will allow 3 teams of 30 deminers to continue working in Afghanistan's most heavily mined region, Kandahar Province, until the end of the year.

## AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL RICE RESEARCH INSTITUTE DIRECTOR RESIGNS

The Director General of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Australian Dr George Rothschild, resigned his position effective 1 December 1997. Dr Rothschild cited personal reasons for his resignation, which the IRRI Trustees accepted with regret. Dr Rothschild's accomplishments during his tenure included guiding the creation of a new medium-term plan for the next three years, developing stronger linkages with Asian countries as donors, developing the Asia Rice Foundation concept, directing recent staff separation and reorganisation programs, forging new relationships with the West Africa Rice Development Association, strengthening collaborative activities in Africa, as well as various initiatives to improve staff welfare at the Institute. Dr Rothschild joined IRRI in April 1995.

# DROUGHT



## in Papua New Guinea

MARK GIFFARD AND ANTHEA WEBB

*By most accounts, Papua New Guinea is facing its worst drought this century. Since early this year, drought and crippling frosts have affected numerous districts in PNG's 19 provinces, forcing thousands of people to exist on a starvation diet of insects, banana leaves and native plants. Initial assessments revealed that 500 000 had been affected by the drought and frosts.*

*Even if the rainy season does arrive – and weather forecasters aren't confident it will – it will be months before hundreds of thousands of Papua New Guineans will have food in their gardens again. The traditional sweet potato crop takes nine months from the time it is planted until it is ready to be eaten. The faster-growing Irish potato takes 100 days, so relief will still be necessary in the meantime.*

FOCUS

5





Droughts are not uncommon in PNG, but this one particularly severe. Dr Bryant Allen, who conducted an assessment of the drought for the PNG government and AusAID, commented, “What marks out this frost and drought as different is the sustained lack of rain. In previous droughts people living in highland areas had been able to move to the lower areas and survive by paying others for the food they consumed. This time the people living in the lower regions don’t have any food either.”

## A HELPING HAND

The Papua New Guinea Government asked for Australia’s help in the mammoth task of assessing and responding to the drought. AusAID provided funding for Australian experts to assess the impact of the drought and floods on the country. Their report identified those areas most in need of relief.

Drs Bryant Allen and Mike Bourke from the Australian National University know PNG very well. They helped organise 13 drought assessment teams made up of PNG experts and Australian counterparts. They devised a five-point scale, to gauge the severity of the drought’s impact. Category One indicates unusually dry but no major food problems and Category Five indicates the worst affected

districts, where only famine food is available, water is in short supply and many people are ill or at risk.

“I would go to a village and start digging around for food,” says Allen. “I would say to someone, ‘You look all right. What have you eaten?’ It may sound harsh, but I would push them until I made them say ‘I had a little rice’, or some other food. I had to know the extent of the problem.”

The drought is a continuing problem, so ongoing monitoring is essential to ensure the people most in need receive the aid they need. The drought assessment teams mobilised again in December to re-survey all the PNG provinces, identifying new high-priority districts, and reporting where conditions had improved.





Crossing some of PNG's most isolated provinces to assess the drought, Dr Allen had some close shaves. The photos featured in this article were actually stolen when Dr Allen's car was held up and robbed in Southern Highlands province, but they were returned together with some other personal effects to his motel room later that night.

Based on these assessments, the PNG government plans its priorities and response. The PNG National Disaster Emergency Service (NDES) coordinates relief administration and operations. AusAID supports the NDES with technical advisers and responds to the relief programme they identify.

Australia's Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs have reassured PNG that Australia will do whatever it can to help its neighbour. A relief effort coordinated by AusAID and involving the Australian and PNG Defence Forces, Emergency Management Australia, and NGOs is expected to be needed at least until March next year.

The Australian aid program agreed to deliver food to those areas worst affected and which were only accessible by air. In collaboration with the PNG Defence Force, Australian Army, RAAF and Navy personnel and craft then began loading and delivering more than

600 tonnes of rice, flour and oil for 60 000 drought stricken people in five provinces: Western, Gulf, Central, Milne Bay and West Sepik. By the end of November, Australia was spending about \$1 million each week on the operation.

Australia also sent \$1.2 million of medical supplies, including antibiotics, rehydration and anti-malarial medicines to help combat the health effects of the drought. Outbreaks of dysentery, malaria, and skin disease have been reported from districts particularly affected by the drought. As in any drought, children and the elderly are the first to suffer.

Meanwhile the people of PNG hope that if and when the rainy season arrives, it won't be too much rain - as is often reported at the end of an El Nino event like the one affecting PNG now. Too much rain would create even more problems for growing sweet potatoes, the traditional food of the Highlands.



# NEWS BRIEFS

## NEW AusAID REPORT OF EVALUATION FINDINGS

AusAID will release in December a report summarising the findings of its evaluations conducted over the past five years. The report is *Evaluation Findings: A Compilation of AusAID's Evaluation and Review Reports 1992-1997*. Twenty-five evaluations and reviews, looking at a range of AusAID projects and programs, will be included in the report. These range from the evaluation of a health project in the Philippines to the recent review of AusAID's food aid activities. The report provides a useful summary of the main findings of these evaluations, as well as the significant lessons learned. This report has been prepared for AusAID by a consultant, Associate Professor Jim McMaster of the University of Canberra.

AusAID's Lessons Learned Database is soon to be available on AusAID's Internet site. Together with the *Evaluation Findings* report, this will make the benefits of AusAID's project experience available to a wide audience, including consultants and non-government organisations.

Current and planned activities of AusAID's Evaluation Section in this financial year include:

- Evaluation of a cluster of PNG Agriculture projects;
- Evaluation of a cluster of PNG Institutional Strengthening projects;
- Evaluation of a cluster of projects in Fiji and Vanuatu;
- Review of the Evaluation Capacity of Multilateral Development Agencies;
- Study of Monitoring & Evaluation Capacity-Building in Recipient Governments;
- Study of lessons learned by AusAID and other donors in providing development assistance in Indonesia's Eastern Islands;
- Study of lessons learned by AusAID and other donors in providing development assistance in the Philippines island of Mindanao; and
- Guidelines-setting for future AusAID Student Tracer Studies.

AusAID plans to publish regularly compilations of its evaluations and reviews. People interested in obtaining a copy of *Evaluation Findings: A Compilation of AusAID's Evaluation and Review Reports 1992-1997* when it becomes available should contact AusAID's publication distributors Bibliotech, telephone 02 6249 2479, postal address GPO Box 4, Canberra, ACT 2601 or email [Jenny.Morris@aplemail.anu.edu.au](mailto:Jenny.Morris@aplemail.anu.edu.au)

## AUSTRALIA ASSISTS WITH PHILIPPINES PEACE EFFORT

Australia will provide \$2 million towards peace and development efforts in the southern Philippines island of Mindanao. The funds will be used to support emergency programs in Mindanao's isolated post conflict areas and to help former MNLF soldiers find civilian jobs.

On 2 September 1996 the Government of the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) signed a peace accord bringing to an end more than two decades of armed conflict in the southern Philippines. Since the accord was signed the Philippines Government, the private sector and international donors, including Australia, have made Mindanao a focus for investment. Over the next few years Australia expects to provide health, water supply, and agricultural projects valued at \$100 million in Mindanao in addition to current projects.

## AUSTRALIA HELPS CAMBODIAN REFUGEES

Australia is contributing \$500 000 to a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) appeal. The appeal will help the reintegration of 60 000 Cambodian refugees currently in Thailand. UN and NGO teams will target Australia's funds towards Quick Impact Projects in the areas of health, sanitation, food and infrastructure within Cambodia. These projects will make it possible for Cambodian refugees to return to their villages.

# READY... TO TAKE AIM AT...



## Deborah Cameron in Jakarta

**T**wo hundred pairs of strong Australian boots and 400 willing Indonesian feet will be at the first line of defence the next time that fire threatens rural southern Sumatra.

The boots along with hard hats, safety goggles, gloves and face masks were in a \$95 000 shipment of fire fighting equipment delivered to Lampung in October.

The shipment was a part of Australia's \$2 million response to the fire emergency that mainly affected Kalimantan, Sumatra and Irian Jaya but also caused smoke haze that drifted across the ocean to Singapore, Malaysia and parts of northern Australia.

But even before the fire fighting equipment arrived, AusAID had sent Bruce Arthur and Ian Dicker of the NSW Rural Fire Service to

Lampung to pave the way for six training specialists to run courses for local fire fighters.

"One hundred and eighty trainees will receive basic fire fighting training," said Mr Dicker who is the operational leader of the program.

"They will be taught about fire fighting strategy, fire behaviour, fire related first aid and instructed





in the use of pumps, fire fighting foam and safety equipment. After training they will understand how to fight fires both with and without water and would be ideal ground support for fire bombing aircraft,” he said.

The equipment sent on ahead of the trainers makes up a basic starter-kit for

the individual fire fighters and also includes 12 small “slip-on” fire-fighting tanks and pumps which are made to fit utilities and pick-up trucks and are the building blocks of Australia’s own rural fire brigade network.

AusAID is funding the training to help Indonesia’s emergency response capability. Local fire fighters proved to be overwhelmed during this year’s dry season fire emergency which by November had burnt out an estimated 1.7 million hectares of land.

Australia was among the first nations to respond to the Government of Indonesia’s requests for assistance and quickly sent two water bombers which were successfully deployed in the areas around Lampung in southern Sumatra - eventually dropping hundreds of thousands of litres of water over a wide area.

The planes - Airtractor AT802’s - were manned by crews from the Country Fire Service of South Australia who returned to Adelaide in early November to begin preparing for their own fire danger season.

The commander of the first phase of the water bombing operation, Andrew Lawson, said that fire-fighting foam dropped from the planes had stopped fires from spreading further into plantations and toward local villages.

Australia also assisted Indonesia with meteorological read-outs and sent health assessment teams to areas affected not only by fire but also by a drought brought on by an El Nino weather pattern that has caused widespread crop failure.

Health advisors from the Australian Red Cross are now working with AusAID on a plan that will boost the emergency response capability of the Indonesian Red Cross.



# KATHY SULLIVAN

## Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs



Kathy Sullivan MP is the new Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs, charged by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Downer, with a special responsibility for assisting him with Australia's overseas aid program.

Mrs Sullivan's electorate is the seat of Moncrieff in Queensland, a seat which she has held since 1984. She was originally elected to the Senate for Queensland in 1974 and resigned to contest the seat which she currently holds in the House of Representatives in 1984.

Mrs Sullivan has held various Parliamentary appointments and positions, including Parliamentary Representative on the Council of the National Library of Australia; Member of the Advisory Council on Australian Archives; Deputy Chair of Committees; and Member of the Speaker's Panel.

She has visited many developing countries throughout the Pacific and Asia, variously as Member, Deputy Leader or Leader of several Parliamentary delegations.

*Mrs Sullivan witnessed the devastating effects of Papua New Guinea's drought during her recent visit to Pumani village in Milne Bay Province. Along with Mr Downer, she saw how difficult it is to get emergency rations into isolated villages.*

"The terrain is so formidable and the logistics pretty daunting. I came away with the impression that this was going to be a very big, very difficult job to try to get food and maybe water to these people," Mrs Sullivan recalls.

She explains that Australia is obligated to assist Papua New Guinea (PNG) and she perceives strong community support for the relief operation.

"I believe the great majority of Australians would want to be considered good world citizens, particularly when it comes to poor people and responding accordingly."

Mrs Sullivan's views reflect her long standing interest in aid policy, which has culminated in many visits to Australian aid projects.

"I like the approach which is essentially a fairly low key and practical one."

As to her personal commitment to the aid program: "I believe it is as essential as having a social welfare program. It is an expression of a country and its standards."

Mrs Sullivan plans to lift the profile of the aid program by providing more information through intermediaries, for example, via churches, the Red Cross and the Country Women's Association.

"People don't understand the respective roles of NGOs and the Government in PNG at the moment," she adds.

Another priority is ensuring the aid program provides better outcomes for the poor.

"I would like to think that we followed an aid program *for people*, particularly women and children because in developing countries they are the most vulnerable. I would be very anxious that we had an aid program that addressed the way that people live and gives them the best chance for a basically decent life."



Washstand and waterpoint.

# RWANDAN WOMEN WITH HOPE



Serena Ann, Emergencies Desk, Community Aid Abroad (Oxfam Australia).

## FOCUS

12

*Since the massacres of 1994 Rwanda has remained a grieving divided nation. It is estimated that 800 000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed at that time. Then, at the end of 1996, 1.2 million refugees returned (an estimated 20 per cent of its population) and included among them was an armed force opposed to the current Government. There is evidence that the opposition force, while still in the refugee camps of neighbouring Zaire prior to their return, had been plotting to recommence the genocide under the plan entitled 'Operation Insecticide'. "Operation Insecticide" relates to the use by the ex-government of Rwanda and the Interahamwe of the term 'inyenzi' (cockroach) to denote members or sympathizers of the RPF, and by extension, all Tutsi. Although many of them fled further into Zaire, the remnants of their army has returned to Rwanda and conflict has escalated.*

Monitoring projects in Rwanda commonly involves facing the unexpected - a mass grave at the bottom of the garden at the boarding house used for project staff, or the explosion of a grenade going off two doors away killing a member of that household. The greatest surprise so far, however, has been pleasant. Women from the Shyanda Commune took time out from their busy agriculture activities to dance and sing about the project in which they are participating.

Funded by AusAID and Community Aid Abroad (Oxfam Australia) from December 1995 until the present, the Health, Water and Sanitation Project has



been setting up water systems in 14 communes of two of the poorest Prefectures, Butare and Gikongoro. They will provide access to clean water. The project is implemented through Community Aid Abroad's Oxfam partners and managed by a Rwandan, Dr Aisa Kirabo.

Dr Kirabo's appointment was made quite independently of considerations of the Australian funding for the project yet, by serendipity, she completed her post-graduate training in agricultural economics at James Cook University in Queensland under an AusAID scholarship. In her words, "I could not be more pleased than to be working with Australians again in my role on this project."

The most obvious benefits of the project are the physical constructions. Mainly underground, the 150 kms of gravity water systems have been rehabilitated with taps above ground at intervals for water users. The completely new parts of the system are 400 springs providing clean water for an average of 270 people each. On new housing developments, 40 toilets have been constructed for widows and their large families which usually include orphaned children.

The reason for joy in Shyanda Commune of Butare Prefecture is this access to clean water from new springs and some clean places to wash clothes on washing slabs built adjacent to springs. The washing slab construction began only this year, due to popular demand from women. Washing slabs have 4-6 basins each. They have been a big hit. Adjacent to a spring and standing waist high, they enable the family laundry to be done in the several clean basins with clean water, without having to carry

water or crouch in mud over the spring run-off. Shyanda Commune received 40 new springs and 10 washing slabs.

We arrived in Shyanda with little notice. Insecurity has returned to this part of Rwanda and monitoring is best done without advising complete details of our movements. Commune authorities knew only that we would arrive to see the springs in that week. Yet within 20 minutes of our arrival a hastily composed team of dancers formed, some even costumed for the event in their best clothes. There was a great deal of rushing around as women and children arrived from fields and tried to clean up and stop puffing.

Over the last 2 years I have spent around four months visiting various regions of Rwanda. Until this time I had never seen anyone dancing, nor heard anyone sing, or even whistling, though I have often passed people's compounds and gatherings of children. Yet here were women and children gathering with laughter and excitement.

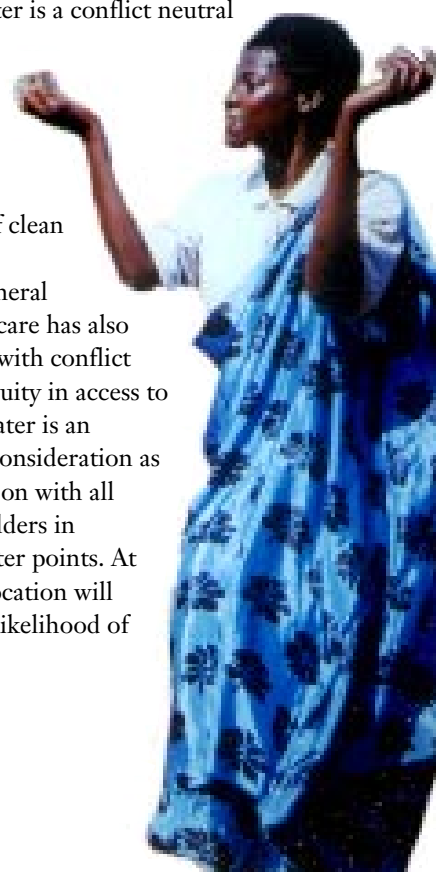
Not long after the dancing began the lead singer, Apolinaria Mukabaranga, started to address the Oxfam group and Dr Kirabo translated the verses. This was not a traditional song, but a song composed for the Australian people who had funded the water project and for the Oxfam team implementing the project. The song first expressed gratitude but its full significance came towards the end when it addressed the commitment of the women of Shyanda to live and work together, Tutsis and Hutus. Together they would continue to provide the voluntary work to build the springs and other public works.

As though to fully express this renewal of hope the lead dancer, Vestine Mucyeshyarugo, appeared from the back of the dancers in complete African dress and with great vitality and enthusiasm danced her own wildly joyful steps.

With rebels in the surrounding hills, people are not only fearful of more war but desperate to have a livelihood. The 1997 'Human Development Report' ranks Rwanda among the 7 countries in the world lowest on development indicators. This impoverishment, linked to competition for land, provokes communal violence so that neighbours fear one another as people compete for any advantage to make life more possible.

It is not possible yet for Rwandans to discuss face to face their frightening recent history when neighbour killed neighbour and victims to be killed were identified by ethnicity and political leanings. People carry their pain within them. With conflict unresolved and on-going around them, any project in Rwanda must address the impact of conflict. Not even the provision of clean water is a conflict neutral activity.

The project design focused on provision of clean water to improve general health, but care has also been taken with conflict impacts. Equity in access to the clean water is an important consideration as is consultation with all the stakeholders in locating water points. At best their location will reduce the likelihood of



conflict, and at worst will not increase underlying tensions within communities.

The evidence from the women of Shyanda is that working together is rebuilding their positive relationships with one another. So too is the impact reported from other communes where access to new springs in their own sector (neighbourhood) meant that women and children using water points in a different sector were no longer exposed to the irritation of other water users taking water from *their* source. It is much harder to quantify the conflict impact related outcomes than the technical achievements of the project. Song and dance as evidence was a bonus.

At the end of 1995 estimates show that 30 per cent of Rwandan households were headed by women (compared with 22% before the war). Recent reports suggest this is now 36% with the return of refugees from neighbouring countries. Many of these women are survivors of genocide, struggling with the multiple burdens of being the major breadwinners, often fostering orphan children in addition to



*Lead singer (blue) Apolinaria Mukabaranga, lead dancer Vestine Mucyeshyarugo.*

supporting their own remaining children, and dealing with the trauma of bereavement or sexual abuse. There is still little to sing about.

According to Esperance Uwambeyi from Avega ( a widow's association):

*"Most of the members of Avega don't have anything left. They don't have the means to fight for justice. Some of them have been thrown out of their homes. Others are incapacitated and don't have the means to work."*

Yet such women are leading the way in getting on with reconstruction.

The communities participating in the project have little experience of involvement in sustaining their own services. In the words of the evaluator of the project, Peter Chamberlain, "Rwanda is perhaps the most centralised, top down society in Africa. The population look to the government for initiative."

Self motivated community groups are looked on with suspicion by the Government. Community participation has to follow the traditional communal labour pattern. Despite this limitation, a participative structure has been possible through the project with people volunteering their involvement in small committees starting with a group of 3 water-users at each water point and who representing their interests up to the Prefecture level.





This network of positive relationships between community members to sustain their access to clean water may be an even more valuable asset than the technical achievement of constructed water systems. With conflict on everyone's doorstep continuing it is still too early to tell if women will go on being positive about working together.

Vital to the sustainability of the water systems is the participation of women in the committee structures. Their involvement has been limited by their work-load, the patriarchal social structures and the war related suspicions about the dangers of taking community responsibility. So far their membership of committees at the water-point level is about 30% and it decreases as the structure goes up the hierarchy to Prefecture level. The hygiene education component of the project is being developed with the local level health system. It offers another opportunity for encouraging women to be in the water-user network and take representative roles.

To build the network the project community workers have provided training for representatives in this structure and helped people organize it. Training has been provided for more than 80 government officials, 3500 community committee members, and 75 plumbers, plumbers-assistants and community development workers.

The network enables a small tax to be collected, about A\$0.50 annually, for maintenance needs and to support the organization necessary to keep the water-points clean. For every water-point (spring or tap in a gravity system) there is a group to manage it chosen by water-users. They select someone to represent them at the



sector level (neighbourhood), the sector committees elect representatives to a commune level committee, (district) and these elect a Prefecture level committee.

John Muyenzi, Oxfam Program Officer explained "In order for people to reconcile and start working together again, they have to be organized around activities which mean something for them, activities which take care of their needs, which deal with their priorities. That's why we have to start with people at the grass roots, to look at their priorities and work with them, so they participate in their own development."

Clearly the work on the water systems has provided a process for women in Shyanda to begin this reconciliation.

Attempts at creating accountability for public assets, services, and actions affecting the public, from the local level to the national level in Rwanda has an unedifying history. Corrupt leaders have presided over massacres, used the army and judicial system to control their political enemies, and insulated themselves from

*Left to right: Oxfam community worker, deputy manager of Shyanda, Dr Aisa Kirabo, Oxfam project manager.*

democratic processes. At the community level people do not even have the expectation of being consulted let alone taking responsibility for their own asset and services management.

Attempts at democracy in this part of the world have led to electoral competition and all too often multiplied divisions rather than enhanced the cohesion that is essential for peace. As a step towards responsible participation it is necessary to start somewhere to give people a positive experience of voluntary representative groups alleviating their poverty. The water project has provided this opportunity to gain some such experience, strengthening structures of participation and decision-making from the bottom relating to a practical task which the whole community, all ethnic and political groups, can acknowledge as beneficial.



# HELPING FARMERS BUILD

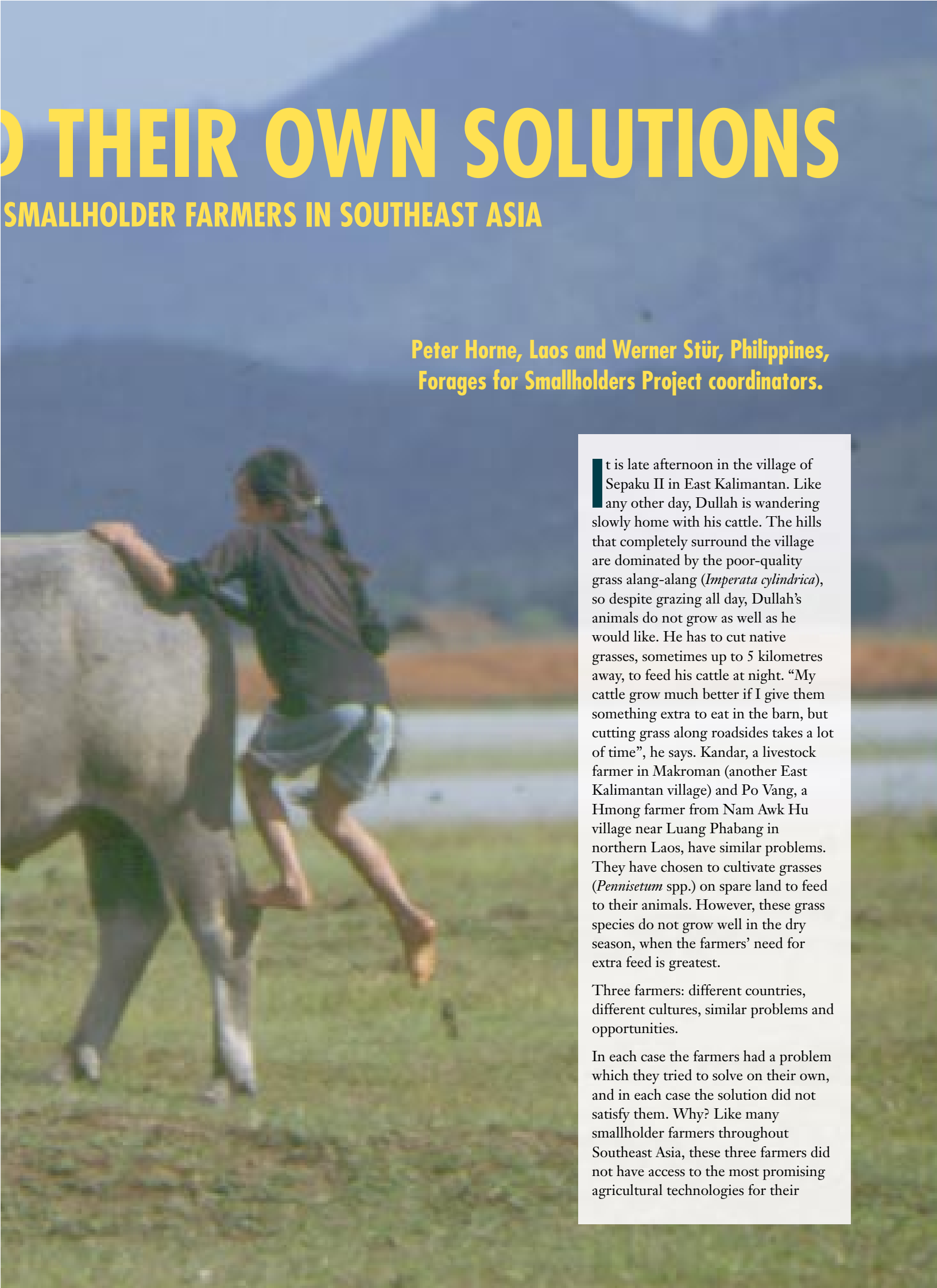
DEVELOPING FORAGE TECHNOLOGIES WITH SA



# THEIR OWN SOLUTIONS

## SMALLHOLDER FARMERS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

**Peter Horne, Laos and Werner Stür, Philippines,  
Forages for Smallholders Project coordinators.**



It is late afternoon in the village of Sepaku II in East Kalimantan. Like any other day, Dullah is wandering slowly home with his cattle. The hills that completely surround the village are dominated by the poor-quality grass *alang-alang* (*Imperata cylindrica*), so despite grazing all day, Dullah's animals do not grow as well as he would like. He has to cut native grasses, sometimes up to 5 kilometres away, to feed his cattle at night. "My cattle grow much better if I give them something extra to eat in the barn, but cutting grass along roadsides takes a lot of time", he says. Kandar, a livestock farmer in Makroman (another East Kalimantan village) and Po Vang, a Hmong farmer from Nam Awk Hu village near Luang Phabang in northern Laos, have similar problems. They have chosen to cultivate grasses (*Pennisetum* spp.) on spare land to feed to their animals. However, these grass species do not grow well in the dry season, when the farmers' need for extra feed is greatest.

Three farmers: different countries, different cultures, similar problems and opportunities.

In each case the farmers had a problem which they tried to solve on their own, and in each case the solution did not satisfy them. Why? Like many smallholder farmers throughout Southeast Asia, these three farmers did not have access to the most promising agricultural technologies for their



The Forages for Smallholders Project (FSP) is a Southeast Asian regional project that began in 1995, funded by AusAID and managed by CIAT (Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical) and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) Division of Tropical Agriculture. Its focus is to develop forage technologies in partnership with smallholder farmers in upland areas, where they are needed for livestock feeding or resource management (including erosion control, soil fertility improvement, weed control and reducing labour requirements).

The FSP is a network of smallholder farmers, development workers and researchers. It is working with national organisations in Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam and southern China, fostering change in the way these organisations work with resource-poor farmers.

For further information, contact the FSP coordinators in Philippines (Werner Stür, P.O. Box 933, 1099 Manila, Tel. 63-2-8450563, Fax: 63-2-8450606; email: [w.stur@cgnet.com](mailto:w.stur@cgnet.com)) or Laos (Peter Horne, P.O. Box 6766, Vientiane, Tel. 856-21-222796, Fax: 856-21-222797; email: [p.horne@cgnet.com](mailto:p.horne@cgnet.com)).

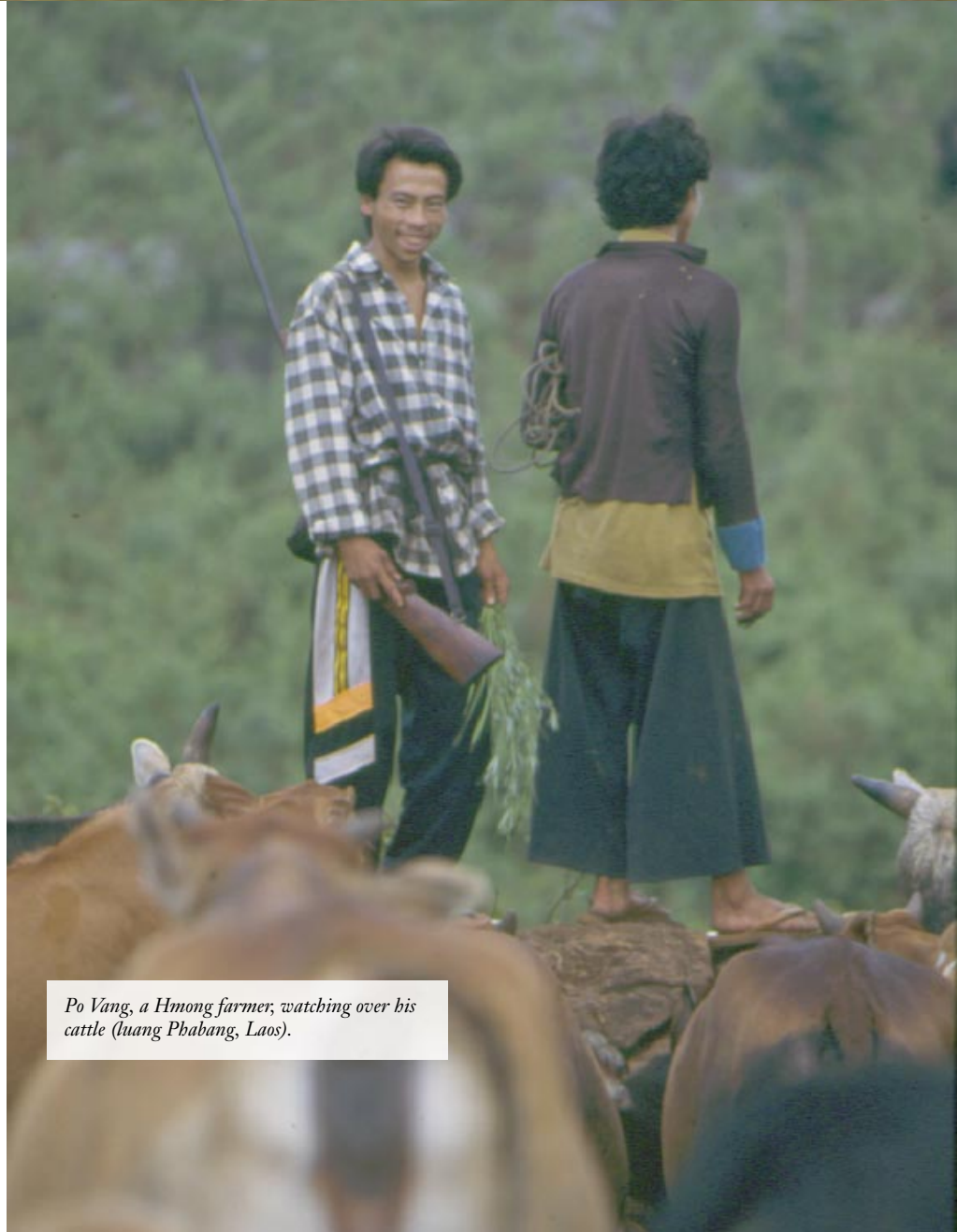




*Dullah bringing home his cattle after grazing in Imerata grassland (Sepaku II, East Kalimantan, Indonesia).*

conditions and needs. Sometimes the crop and forage species used were poorly adapted to the area or the agricultural technologies did not address farmers' needs, as they were fully developed on research stations and then delivered to farmers as finished packages. Either way, rates of adoption were disappointing, as the species were poorly adapted or the technologies did not address farmers' real needs. A different approach to developing agricultural technologies was required; one based on farmers' needs and experiences.

Dullah, Po Vang and Kandar, along with hundreds of other farmers throughout Southeast Asia, are playing an important part in an emerging approach to agricultural technology development, an approach known as Farmer Participatory Research (FPR) or Participatory Technology Development (PTD). These farmers are natural experimenters;



*Po Vang, a Hmong farmer, watching over his cattle (Luang Phabang, Laos).*



frequently all they lack is information and planting material. FPR/PTD methods are based on empowering farmers like these three to develop their own solutions by providing access to the information and promising technologies they lack.

There are three main stages in FPR/PTD: Diagnosis, Experimentation and Evaluation. During Diagnosis, farmers characterise their farming systems, identify the particular problems they experience and select those they would most like to solve. During Experimentation and Evaluation, with the assistance of researchers, they decide which promising technologies to test, run their own experiments (often informal), evaluate the outcomes and modify the technologies to meet their specific needs. The main difference from previous R&D approaches is that FPR/PTD is based on active involvement of farmers throughout all three stages of technology development. The researchers provide access to information and promising



technologies but the farmers decide which problems they want to solve and which technologies to develop further.

FPR/PTD is gaining wide acceptance as a powerful approach for developing agricultural technologies for (and with) resource-poor farmers.

By acknowledging that farmers can solve their own problems and encouraging them to experiment and innovate with promising

*Sharing experiences – A farmer from Luang Phabang, Laos (Xing) and a researcher from the Lao Department of Livestock and Fisheries (Phonepaseuth Phengsarvanh) discuss ways of managing Stylosanthes guianensis for feeding penned goats.*

alternatives, FPR/PTD methods are generating agricultural technologies that have a much better chance of widespread adoption.



## FARM MANURE - THE KEY TO IMPROVING PRODUCTIVITY OF INFERTILE SOILS.

Sosamijan relies on manure to maintain good yields of vegetables, crops and forages on his upland farm in Sepaku, East Kalimantan, Indonesia. The cycle of

low crop yields > low income > little input > declining soil fertility  
> lower crop yields



Sosamijan (Sepaku II)

is vicious for resource-poor farmers. Livestock and, therefore, access to manure are often the only way to break the cycle. Growing forage legumes (such as *Stylosanthes guianensis* and *Gliricidia sepium*), which fix nitrogen from the air, will have a big impact on both Sosamijan's animal production and his crops. His cattle will eat the legumes but will not absorb all of the nitrogen. A lot of it will pass through the animals, resulting in higher-quality manure and improved soil fertility.



Sosamijan putting manure on his cropping area (Sepaku II).

### PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

The AusAID-funded Forages for Smallholders Project (FSP) is one example of putting the FPR/PTD approach into practice. The FSP is developing forage technologies with resource-poor farmers in upland areas of Southeast Asia. How do farmers react to this new approach? Initially they are wary, but once their confidence about working in partnership with development workers increases, they participate enthusiastically.

Xing lives with his family in Houay Hia village, Luang Phabang province, Laos. He practices shifting cultivation with upland rice on the steep hillsides and raises 10 goats and 2 cattle, which provide most of his income. "Like everyone in my village, I used to let my animals go to the fields to graze. Often they got lost many kilometres away, never to be found again, or they destroyed other farmers' crops, which cost us a lot of money." Xing and his neighbours decided they had to keep their animals closer to the village, but they did not have enough feed. Working in partnership with the provincial and district agriculture offices, the FSP met with a group of farmers from

the village, listened to their problems, shared information on animal nutrition and forage agronomy, and discussed alternative solutions. This year, twelve farmers started evaluating a small range of forage species which they had chosen to test near their houses so that they could feed their animals each night, encouraging them not to wander too far away. After only a few months of evaluation, Xing has chosen several species that he thinks are promising for this purpose (*Stylosanthes guianensis*, *Panicum maximum* and *Brachiaria brizantha*) and is now planting these on other parts of his land. "I would like much larger areas of these grasses but it takes a lot of time to plant, so I will expand the area slowly each year." The FSP is coordinating regular visits from the district rural development worker to understand the farmers' choices of forage technologies better and to assist them to achieve their planned expansion.

Mrs Lan is another farmer benefiting from FPR/PTD. The land on her small farm in Tuyen Quang province, Vietnam, is steep and susceptible to erosion. Several years ago a soil conservation project had planted a



Mrs Lan with the *Stylosanthes* hedgerows she has started planting on her farm in northern Vietnam

demonstration farm nearby using contour rows of the leguminous shrub, *Tephrosia candida*, for erosion control. Mrs Lan liked the look of these hedgerows, so she collected some seed of *Tephrosia* and established hedgerows on one of her steepest fields. However she found that the *Tephrosia* not only took up too much of her limited land area but also could not be used for anything but erosion control, as it is unpalatable to livestock.



## USING FORAGES TO BETTER MANAGE NATURAL RESOURCES

Planting forages along contours in sloping cropping areas is not yet common practice in Malitbog, Mindanao, Philippines, but some farmers are beginning to experiment with it. They have observed that by growing forages in this way, they reduce water run-off and soil erosion, which is a severe problem on sloping cropping lands. The farmers growing forages in this way say that they do this not only to reduce soil erosion but also because they need forages to feed their animals. Providing multiple benefits can be the key to encouraging sound natural resource management practices.

*Forages grown in hedge rows (Malitbog, Mindanao, Philippines)*



Through the provincial agriculture office, the FSP offered her six new forage species that might fit into hedgerows on her farm. She evaluated these and selected *Stylosanthes guianensis* to plant along 250m of hedgerows between her fruit trees. “The stylo keeps my soil from washing away like the *Tephrosia*, but after only three months I can also cut the stylo and feed it to my pigs.” Her neighbours now want to try the same technology as soon as they can obtain seed.

The FSP is working directly with more than 250 farmers like Xing and Lan in twenty upland areas of Indonesia, Laos, Philippines and Vietnam. The agricultural systems are diverse and complex, including combinations of shifting

cultivation, grasslands, plantations, intensive upland cropping and agroforestry. In all these systems, livestock are an integral part of the farming practices, playing a vital role in securing the livelihoods of resource-poor farmers and providing a “stepping-stone” out of subsistence agriculture. In remote upland areas there is little else apart from livestock that farmers can sell in the distant markets, as most crops need to be sold quickly or fetch too low a price per kilogram to justify being carried to market.

In the poorer upland areas of Southeast Asia, livestock can be the main source of cash income, whereas crops are largely grown for subsistence. However, livestock provide many other benefits, which are frequently substantial. Manure

is becoming an increasingly-essential input for maintaining crop yields, as other fertilisers are either too expensive or unavailable. In Phousi village, Xieng Khouang province, northern Laos, farmers have only been able to move away from labour-intensive and unsustainable shifting cultivation practices by increasing the fertility of their small areas of irrigated rice fields with cattle manure. In Gia Lai on the central highlands of Vietnam, there are now smallholder livestock farmers who make the majority of their income from selling manure to coffee producers.

Planted forages are beginning to have a direct effect on improving livestock production in these upland systems by providing more

## PLANTING FORAGES NEAR THE HOUSE – GOOD FOR ANIMALS, GOOD FOR FARMERS

feed and better-quality feed, especially at times of year when shortages are common. They can also reduce the amount of time needed to feed and look after animals, as farmers often choose to plant forages near the farmhouses or barns, freeing them to do other jobs. Erosion control, weed control and soil fertility improvement are other benefits from forages that are not yet widely used but are growing in importance.

These benefits have been well understood for a long time. What is different now? Smallholder farmers in Southeast Asia are increasingly experiencing a decline in the quality and availability of their traditional feed resources. In some cases the grazing lands have been reforested or converted to plantations and rainfed cropping, in others they have simply become degraded from overuse. Regardless of the cause, many farmers are recognising the need to manage their feed resources better and are taking the initiative to implement change.

FPR/PTD methods are only one part of the new approach to developing agricultural technologies. They do not replace on-station research (conceived and managed by researchers) or extension, but complement them, providing feedback from farmers about their reasons for judging one species as better than another.

The new approaches are powerless unless development workers can offer potentially useful, new technologies to farmers for them to evaluate. These technologies can originate from on-station research or from farmer innovations in other regions. The FSP has been able to offer farmers a broad range of forage technologies that have been developed elsewhere by CIAT



*(above) Mrs Lamidi putting cut grass into a feeding trough (Sepaku II, Indonesia)*

*(right) Cattle eating cut grass (Sepaku II, Indonesia)*



Mrs Lamidi planted a small area of grasses near her house in Sepaku II, East Kalimantan, Indonesia. Most afternoons she cuts forage to feed her cattle after they come back from grazing on poor-quality grasses. She feels that her cattle are growing better with the extra feed. She has another reason for feeling good about the forages she has planted: previously she had to ride her bicycle for 3 km or more to find areas where she could cut grass along roads and other communal areas. Now, when she has no time to take her cattle for grazing (such as on market days, during rice planting or when her children are sick), she can quickly cut forage for them behind her house. The cattle can stay in the shed all day without her having to feel guilty about not feeding them properly.



the CSIRO Division of Tropical Agriculture, and research organisations in the region. Examples are the use of *Stylosanthes guianensis* for leaf meal production, developed by the Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences and smallholder forage seed production technologies developed by the Department of Livestock Development in Thailand. To ensure that farmers were offered the best possible forage technologies, these were first evaluated for environmental adaptation in a regional network spanning all partner countries and environments. Sharing results of these evaluations has benefited all. This is the strength of a regional approach: common problems and shared solutions.

*Evaluating technologies – Yono, a farmer from East Kalimantan explains to an Indonesian researcher (Maimunah Tubulele) why he likes Brachiaria dictyoneura planted in intensively-managed plots*

The benefits of the FPR/PTD approach do not come without costs. They demand the strong commitment of the national agricultural organisations and substantial motivation from researchers and field workers who need to learn new skills and be willing to spend considerable amounts of time working closely with farmers. Le Hoa Binh from the National Institute of Animal Husbandry in Hanoi, Vietnam, put it this way: “The FSP has introduced us to a powerful approach for working with poor farmers. However, putting this approach into practice is time-consuming. If we really want to assist these poor farmers to solve their livestock feeding problems, we need to commit ourselves to working closely with them over a number of years, not months.”

## WORKING FROM WITHIN

If the FSP was simply working with individual farmers, the benefits would be experienced only by those few farmers. Instead, the FSP is working in partnership with national agricultural organisations. By supporting researchers, such as Maimunah Tuhulele from the Indonesian Directorate General of Livestock Services, with on-going field experience and training in both the new approach and technical knowledge, the FSP is fostering change in the way these organisations will work with resource-poor farmers in the future.

An enthusiastic advocate of the new approaches, Eduedo Magboo, from the Philippines R&D organisation, PCARRD, summed up the experience of many development workers as follows: “This approach







has opened a new paradigm for community-based development programs. With this approach we are clearly focussing on the needs of our clients. The basic premise is that we must trust our farmers and believe that they are capable of analysing their problems and adopt the best possible solutions. The role of development workers is to provide farmers with potential solutions. It is the farmers who decide what to test and what to adopt.”

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Munadi lives in the same area as Dullah (see first page). When he first arrived in the village from Java twenty years ago, he could grow crops on the surrounding fields. Since then, *alang-alang* had spread and brought with it fire and wild pigs which destroyed all his efforts at cropping. In 1995, Suharto, the leader of the local cattle raisers’ cooperative, made contact with the FSP asking for help. Munadi participated in meetings which included over 30 other farmers,

*By the time these children have grown up, large areas of green forages may be a common sight in Sepaku.*

discussing problems facing livestock raisers in the area, and supported the cooperative’s decision to evaluate new forages. He helped to plant and maintain a communal forage nursery, before deciding to try planting forages on his own land. This year he has planted more than 0.25 ha of the grasses *Brachiaria decumbens* and *Brachiaria brizantha* after having tried small areas of these species (and a few more he did not like so much) last year. They are resistant to fire, not eaten by the pigs and can push back the invading *alang-alang* grassland.

It is the middle of the dry season now, and these two grasses are still green while the *alang-alang* grassland is already yellow and dry. The prospects of getting through the dry season without having to see his cattle starve are good. Next year Munadi plans to expand his forage area.



*Munadi looking to the future (Sepaku II, Indonesia).*

# SUPPLYING WATER AND LEARNING ABOUT DEVELOPMENT

**Harwood Lockton, Senior  
Lecturer in Geography,  
Avondale College**

*An Australian student and a  
Hmong villager working together.*



## FOCUS

26

*Development education is ultimately about changing attitudes. But changing attitudes is not easy. Traditionally development education has tried to change attitudes through videos, role plays, talks and appeal to reason - the program at Avondale College achieved it through real life.*

For the past seven years Avondale College, a private university-level institution near Newcastle in New South Wales, has run a “hands on”

approach to development education. Its “Fly and Upgrade” projects in the South Pacific have involved undergraduates in short term volunteer work. The students live in a village for a fortnight and work alongside the villagers in the upgrading of their local mission school. These projects have been invaluable in broadening the horizons of these students. Coming away with an appreciation of the dynamic of a different way of life to their own.

In July 1997 this “hands on” approach took a new direction with a volunteer team from Avondale

working on a genuine development project in northern Thailand. This involved a four-way partnership between a Thai village, Avondale College, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) and AusAID. AusAID funded this project through the Agency Program Subsidy Scheme (APSS) which is part of ADRA/Australia’s Thailand funding program. The project’s aim was to establish a permanent water supply system in seven villages.

ADRA/Australia arranged for the Avondale team to assist the villagers in Bantoongsai - a Hmong



*(Above) The tank being constructed.*

*(Right) Two of the Australian students at the nearly completed water tank.*



tribal village, near the Mekong town of Chiang Khong. This project laid eight kilometres of PVC pipeline from a permanent stream to a new concrete tank, and constructed a distribution system in the village to each of the 75 houses. The villagers laid the pipeline in June and the Avondale team spent two weeks in June/July working with the villagers to construct the tank and lay the distributor pipes. The students contributed their labour, not expertise. The Australian students' role was to participate as assistants to the villagers.

The Avondale students paid their own air and transport costs while ADRA/Australia assisted with some of their in-country costs. The project used AusAID finance for

the supply of materials. The team of ten students and three volunteer staff came from a variety of disciplines. They learnt much about a developing society and especially the position of marginalised tribal peoples. There was an appreciation of and respect for the hard work, tenacity and arduous life of the Hmong. Upon returning to Australia some of the

team have expressed interest in working as longer-term volunteers in development work in South East Asia.

This was a successful project demonstrating the real meaning of development cooperation. The result is a permanent water supply for the Hmong and a life-time experience for the Australian students.



# DEVELOPMENT

# STATISTICS

## AUSTRALIAN GOVT AID EXPENDITURE BY COUNTRY/REGION 1995/96 & 1996/97 (A\$M)

COUNTRY/REGION	1995/96	1996/97	COUNTRY/REGION	1995/96	1996/97
<b>PAPUA NEW GUINEA Total:</b>	<b>336.669</b>	<b>320.893</b>	SAO TOME & PRINCIPE	0.139	
<b>SOUTH PACIFIC (Excl. PNG) Total:</b>	<b>130.587</b>	<b>125.241</b>	SENEGAL		0.374
COOK ISLANDS	1.888	1.611	SEYCHELLES	0.857	0.885
FIJI	21.769	21.477	SIERRA LEONE	1.085	0.021
KIRIBATI	6.894	5.721	SOUTH AFRICA	11.208	10.023
MARSHALL ISLANDS	0.608	0.714	SUDAN	6.146	8.353
MICRONESIA, Federated States of	1.646	1.305	SWAZILAND	0.624	0.406
NAURU	2.944	2.988	TANZANIA	2.799	4.121
NEW CALEDONIA	1.239	1.305	UGANDA	1.929	3.106
NIUE	0.856	0.861	CONGO, Democratic Republic of the		0.040
PALAU	0.276	0.346	ZAMBIA	2.067	2.229
POLYNESIA, French	0.472	0.459	ZIMBABWE	7.960	5.984
SOLOMON ISLANDS	11.576	10.956	Unspecified Africa	0.020	0.173
TOKELAU	0.051	0.050	Regional Southern Africa	3.039	4.370
TONGA	11.703	11.508	Other Africa	0.154	0.006
TUVALU	3.948	2.880	<b>NORTH AFRICA/MIDDLE EAST Total:</b>	<b>16.652</b>	<b>19.472</b>
VANUATU	15.293	13.820	EGYPT	7.184	12.060
SAMOA, Independent State of	12.266	12.174	IRAN	0.001	
Oceania Unallocated	0.053	1.387	IRAQ	0.750	
Multi-Country South Pacific	6.182	5.646	ISRAEL	0.140	0.070
USP Activities	5.258	4.724	JORDAN	0.122	0.101
South Pacific Regional/Orgns	25.254	24.834	LEBANON	0.416	0.175
ACPAC: AusAID Pacific Regional Team	0.413	0.474	OMAN	0.005	
<b>SOUTH EAST ASIA Total:</b>	<b>399.098</b>	<b>327.805</b>	PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES	3.475	2.855
INDONESIA	129.876	104.195	SYRIA	0.015	0.530
MALAYSIA	22.976	8.946	YEMEN	4.271	0.072
PHILIPPINES	74.161	56.543	Middle East Unallocated	0.273	3.609
SINGAPORE	0.089	0.034	<b>REST OF THE WORLD Total:</b>	<b>29.509</b>	<b>53.726</b>
THAILAND	37.010	25.282	<i>Americas</i>		
VIETNAM	63.383	65.272	ARGENTINA	0.010	0.020
Regional ASEAN-Aust Economic			BRAZIL	0.049	0.030
Coopn Program	3.440	4.346	CHILE	0.050	0.090
Regional S E ASIA / APEC	1.924	2.404	COLOMBIA	0.186	0.139
Unspecified Asia	0.813	0.404	ECUADOR	0.089	0.042
S E ASIA Unallocated	3.973	1.299	GUYANA	0.105	0.067
CAMBODIA	31.736	33.998	VENEZUELA	0.040	0.020
LAOS	19.650	20.499	BARBADOS	0.032	0.060
BURMA (MYANMAR)	1.660	2.540	CUBA	0.027	0.026
Greater Mekong Sub-Basin	5.656	0.747	DOMINICA	0.074	0.059
BURMA/BANGLADESH	1.750		EL SALVADOR	0.154	0.100
THAI/BURMA	1.000	0.800	GUATEMALA	0.117	0.120
INDO-CHINA Regional		0.497	HONDURAS	0.032	
<b>NORTH ASIA Total:</b>	<b>68.577</b>	<b>62.201</b>	JAMAICA	0.060	

# DEVELOPMENT

## STATISTICS

COUNTRY/REGION	1995/96	1996/97	COUNTRY/REGION	1995/96	1996/97
CHINA	62.167	54.706	MEXICO	0.274	0.220
HONG KONG	0.280	0.130	NICARAGUA	0.174	0.179
KOREA, Democratic Republic of (North)	3.113	4.558	ST KITTS & NEVIS		0.015
KOREA, Republic of (South)	0.155		ST LUCIA		0.052
MONGOLIA	2.852	2.806	Regional Central & South America	0.734	0.179
TAIWAN	0.008		<i>Europe</i> ALBANIA	0.065	0.004
<b>SOUTH ASIA Total:</b>	<b>95.946</b>	<b>88.606</b>	ARMENIA	0.031	0.004
AFGHANISTAN	4.797	4.673	FORMER YUGOSLAVIA	5.387	1.005
BANGLADESH	33.565	29.556	BOSNIA	0.090	0.008
BHUTAN	0.829	0.671	BULGARIA		0.004
INDIA	24.303	23.635	CROATIA	0.171	0.051
MALDIVES	2.704	3.291	CYPRUS	0.010	
NEPAL	7.252	8.701	CZECH REPUBLIC		0.030
PAKISTAN	11.182	4.555	ESTONIA		0.009
SRI LANKA	11.315	13.524	FYR MACEDONIA	0.142	0.051
<b>SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA Total:</b>	<b>101.503</b>	<b>87.169</b>	GEORGIA	0.031	0.004
ANGOLA	3.863	2.082	TURKEY	0.361	
BENIN	0.623	1.437	HUNGARY		0.021
BOTSWANA	1.612	0.831	LATVIA		0.009
BURKINA FASO	0.133		LITHUANIA		0.008
BURUNDI/RWANDA (Great Lakes)	0.382	6.611	MALTA	0.028	0.002
CAMEROON	0.849	0.678	MOLDOVA		0.004
CAPE VERDE	0.108	0.440	POLAND		0.021
COMOROS	0.034	0.114	ROMANIA		0.021
ERITREA	4.728	2.480	RUSSIA		0.089
ETHIOPIA	17.597	7.954	SLOVENIA	0.194	0.021
GAMBIA	0.074	0.638	SLOVAKIA		0.017
GHANA	0.334	0.896	UKRAINE		0.017
GUINEA	0.722		<i>Central Asia</i> AZERBAIJAN	0.022	0.020
GUINEA-BISSAU	0.686		KAZAKHSTAN	0.189	0.216
IVORY COAST (Cote D'Ivoire)	2.104		KYRGYSTAN	0.111	0.124
KENYA	2.637	3.054	TAJIKISTAN		0.014
LESOTHO	0.484	0.433	UZBEKISTAN	0.031	0.119
MADAGASCAR		0.913	Rest of the World	6.106	23.265
MALAWI	1.593	1.252	World Unspecified	4.191	19.748
MAURITANIA	0.388	0.468	AUSTRALIA (Expenditure in Aust)	10.108	7.402
MAURITIUS	2.872	2.550	<b>CROSS COUNTRY SUPPORT:</b>	<b>19.900</b>	<b>7.098</b>
MOZAMBIQUE	11.429	12.004	<b>OTHER MULTILATERAL ASSISTANCE:</b>	<b>70.702</b>	<b>99.386</b>
NAMIBIA	2.120	1.678	<b>SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS:</b>	<b>242.082</b>	<b>204.662</b>
NIGER	0.039	0.565	<b>CORPORATE SERVICES:</b>	<b>55.947</b>	<b>50.209</b>
NIGERIA	0.870		<b>TOTAL AID EXPENDITURE:</b>	<b>1.567.172</b>	<b>1446.469</b>
RWANDA	7.194		<i>Source: AusAID</i>		

# DEVELOPMENT

## ISSUES BRIEF

### BETTER AID FOR A BETTER FUTURE

*Address to Parliament by The Hon Alexander Downer MP  
Minister for Foreign Affairs on 18 November 1997*

I am pleased to table the Government's Response to the Simons Committee's Review of Australia's Overseas Aid Program. In doing this I am outlining future directions for Australia's overseas aid and fulfilling my requirement to make an Annual Report to Parliament on the Aid Program.

Mass poverty is the single most important economic and social issue on our planet today. Some 1.3 billion people, nearly a quarter of the world's population, continue to live in extreme poverty, trying to survive on less than \$1 a day. Over half of these poor are in the Asia Pacific. Even in countries which have been developing rapidly, the vast majority of people are incomparably worse off than ourselves. The average income of people living in Indonesia is a mere 6 per cent of that in Australia, people in China earn only 3 per cent of what we do. The enduring challenge for most of these countries is to provide their people with such basics as food, clean water and education for their children. Meeting this challenge has proven to be no easy task.

If there were any doubts about the fragility of the development process and the need for Australia to provide effective assistance, these would have been dispelled over the past two months. Recent events such as the severe drought in Papua New Guinea, forest fires in Indonesia and the South East Asian currency realignments bring home the diverse and urgent problems faced by our nearest neighbours.

On my most recent visit to Papua New Guinea, earlier this month, I

saw at first hand the devastating effects of the worst drought in perhaps one hundred years. Expert assessments - funded by Australia's aid program - show that as many as half a million people, in a population of only four million, are affected.

With my colleagues, the Minister for Defence, Mr McLachlan, and my Parliamentary Secretary, Mrs Kathy Sullivan, I flew by RAAF Caribou to Pumani in Milne Bay Province. We wanted to see for ourselves the work funded by our aid program. Stowed in the aircraft were 150 sacks of rice. When we set down, the plight of the people of Papua New Guinea was clear.

These people had not seen rain in many months. There was no fruit on the trees. Vines were brown and withered. The soil had turned to dust. Water supplies were a long distance from homes, and were polluted. Children had the distended bellies we know is a sign of malnutrition.

Australia has reacted rapidly and generously to the prospect of this human suffering on our doorstep. Ten Australian Defence Force aircraft are now ferrying essential foods into the most inaccessible areas of Papua New Guinea, to feed the worst affected people. Several Australian NGOs are also assisting with drought relief.

Both the Prime Minister and I have reassured the Government and the people of Papua New Guinea that Australians will stand by them in their hour of need. If the rains fail, and the next growing season is lost, that need will be immense.

The Australian aid program has played a vital role in nearly every

major humanitarian emergency in the world over the last thirty years. But by far the greatest focus of our aid efforts has been on the basic building blocks for sustainable development. Since the establishment of the Colombo Plan in the early 1950s, our aid program has touched the lives of millions of people in developing countries, many of whom are our immediate neighbours. This is a record of which Australia can be proud. It is a record I am committed to continuing.

For some time I have been concerned that the aid program has been in danger of losing focus on its core developmental role. For this reason, an independent review of Australia's aid program was foreshadowed in our pre-election platform, "*A Confident Australia*" - and in June last year I instituted such a review. The Review Committee headed by Paul Simons, and including Gaye Hart and Cliff Walsh, produced an excellent report. This report, and the public comments on its recommendations, have played a key role in determining the future directions of Australia's aid program.

### OBJECTIVE OF THE AID PROGRAM

The Simons Committee confirmed my concern that the aid program had become burdened down by a range of competing interests. A clear development objective for the aid program is needed. The aid program can not and should not be a vehicle for other purposes, such as short-term commercial goals.

The Government has determined that the objective of the Australian overseas aid program will be, "**to advance Australia's national interest by assisting developing countries to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development.**" This objective is consistent with the course set in the Government's White Paper on Foreign and Trade Policy.

I know that some people in the community think that there is a choice between dealing with problems at home or providing assistance overseas. This is a misunderstanding and it is self-defeating. The promotion of



sustainable development overseas and the pursuit of Australia's long-term national interest are inextricably linked.

Those who say Australia should not have an overseas aid program are nothing more than political opportunists whose world view extends no further than their front gate. Let us remember, it was the member for Oxley who called for Australia to disband its aid program and then almost immediately after called for increased support for the people of North Korea. She cannot have it both ways. The fact is the provision of well-targeted aid gives Australia another strong means of playing a leading role in our developing region.

Economic growth and rising incomes in developing countries foster stability and expand trade and investment opportunities for Australia. The aid program generates considerable goodwill in the region and provides an important foundation for broader bilateral relations.

The aid program is an important instrument for addressing the non-military threats to Australian security. The effects of poverty extend beyond national boundaries. Pandemics, illegal migration, refugee flows, global environment problems, narcotics and transnational crime are often directly related to poverty.

Our aid program, by promoting human rights and addressing the needs of the world's most disadvantaged, is a clear statement of Australian values. I have great faith in the generosity of Australians and our commitment to giving others, much worse off than ourselves, a fair go. We are a country founded on equality and opportunity; we are strengthened by our cultural diversity. These principles extend beyond our shores and will be clearly reflected in our aid program.

## PRINCIPLES OF OUR AID PROGRAM

In addition to the objective, six key principles will underpin Australia's aid program.

First, our aid will be **focused on partnerships**. Our program will be determined and implemented in

partnership with developing countries. This will guarantee that it remains focused on meeting their priority needs.

Second, we will be **responsive to urgent needs and development trends**. Our aid program will provide rapid relief to victims of natural disasters and emergencies and take account of changing pressures in developing countries.

Third, our aid will provide **practical assistance**. It will be realistic in assessing what can and cannot be achieved and will concentrate on practical efforts that can alleviate poverty and promote sustainable development.

Fourth, there will be **greater targeting**. Australia's aid program cannot afford to be all things to all people – greater definition and targeting is essential. Clear priorities have been identified, and our efforts will be assessed against these priorities.

Fifth, our aid program will remain **identifiably Australian** – it is a reflection of Australian values and is a projection of these values abroad.

Finally, the program will be **outward looking**. It will be open to new ideas and approaches. It will seek to draw on the best ideas in Australia and overseas.

## PRIORITIES FOR AUSTRALIA'S AID

Each one of these principles is designed to bring about a more relevant, higher quality aid program. Using the principles and new objective as a guide, I have developed a set of core priorities for Australia's aid program.

### *Partnerships With Developing Countries*

Our partnerships with developing countries form the backbone of Australia's aid program. Detailed country strategies will be prepared for all major programs. These strategies will detail how our aid will alleviate poverty and address sustainable development in each country. Efforts will focus on promoting economic growth, investing in human capital and protecting the most vulnerable groups in society.

## *Sectoral Priorities*

Our aid will concentrate on five key sectors – health, education, infrastructure, rural development and governance – which have been identified as crucial for sustainable development. They are also sectors in which Australia is well placed to assist.

Australia's aid program has been operating effectively in four of the five sectors for many years and we will continue to ensure that our assistance is well-targeted and effective.

Governance will be a new focus for the aid program. Effective governance means competent management of a country's resources in a manner that is open, transparent, accountable, equitable and responsive to people's needs.

We will have a particular focus on ensuring that sound fiscal monetary and trade policies are instituted to create an environment for private sector development. I have asked AusAID to develop a policy paper on promoting private sector development through our aid program. We will also undertake practical activities to promote civil and political rights in developing countries. Economies will not achieve their potential unless government is transparent, legal systems are fair, and information flows freely.

## CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Australia's aid program will place a strong emphasis on ensuring that men and women have equal access to resources and opportunities. Women's needs and perspectives will be considered in the planning and delivery of all Australian aid activities. The aid program will also ensure that the possible impact on the environment is considered in the design and implementation of all projects. We will also play a role in addressing global environment issues such as climate change and biodiversity, which have strong links to the alleviation of poverty.

### *Geographic Focus*

Australia's aid program will continue to concentrate on the Asia Pacific region. Papua New Guinea, the Pacific and East Asia will all be high priorities for Australian assistance. Australia will also

continue to concentrate selectively on development needs in South Asia, Africa and the Middle East. In order for the program to maximise its impact, Australian aid dollars will have a focus on the poorest regions in the countries of the Asia Pacific, for example, in eastern Indonesia and southern Philippines. Australia will also respond flexibly to humanitarian and emergency relief situations – wherever they arise.

## **INTERNATIONAL AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

While programs delivered directly from Australia to partner countries will remain the focus of Australia's aid program, we will also play a key role in fostering links with Australian community organisations and be involved in multilateral efforts to tackle poverty.

Non-government organisations and multilateral institutions play a vital role in development. They complement Australia's bilateral aid efforts by extending the reach and efficiency of the program. They will continue to receive significant support. However, consistent with a more targeted aid program, the Government is taking a more strategic approach to their funding. Future support for multilateral agencies will take account of the extent to which each agency's mandate contributes to the meeting of Australia's aid objective, and the efficiency and effectiveness of the agency. NGOs will be expected to demonstrate tangible community support for their development activities. The Government now requires NGOs seeking funding from AusAID to have a recognised development expenditure of at least \$30 000 annually. This is part of a rigorous accreditation process to ensure Government funds are channelled through NGOs that have substantial community support and are of sufficient size and professionalism to be able to deliver aid programs overseas. The appropriateness of the \$30 000 threshold will be kept under review, in consultation with the NGO community.

## ***Grants And Loans***

The Australian aid program currently provides bilateral assistance only in the form of grants, regardless of the country, sector and project involved. Grants are not the only way to deliver aid. I believe that, if introduced, the right sort of soft loans would be a useful instrument for aid delivery. Such loans should not be an imitation of Labor's discredited DIFF scheme, which the Simons Committee considered flawed as both aid and industry assistance. I notice that even the Labor Party, which made such a fuss at the time of its abolition, has now decided that a DIFF-style scheme should not be part of the aid program.

Loans should be driven by recipient needs, rather than Australian industry wishes. They should be integrated with our bilateral aid efforts, not run as a separate scheme. They should require competitive tendering, not be driven by individual company proposals. The loan projects should also be designed, monitored and evaluated to ensure development quality.

Any decision to introduce a loan scheme would, however, have significant funding implications. While recognising their advantages, soft loans should not squeeze out other high-priority aid activities. Consequently, introducing soft loans into the program will depend on future aid budget outcomes.

## ***Refocusing Aid Management***

A permanent advisory committee will be established shortly to advise me on aid and development issues. Such a committee will enable me to hear directly from the broader community about Australia's aid efforts.

AusAID is undertaking a major review of its operations and structures. Significant reforms will be introduced shortly, which focus on improving aid quality.

## ***Australian Identity***

Australia's aid program must be identifiably Australian. The simplest and most effective method

of guaranteeing this is to use Australians in the delivery of the aid program.

Approximately one-third of Australia's aid program is currently tied to Australian goods and services. Nevertheless, around three-quarters of the total aid program is in fact spent on Australian goods and services. While we will make some minor adjustments in the current tying arrangements to increase the quality of the aid program, it is essential that it remain identifiably Australian.

## **CONCLUSION**

The volume of aid spending will always be a difficult issue. Australia provides significant amounts of overseas aid, consistently spending more than the international donor average. Future levels of aid funding, like all aspects of government expenditure, will be subject to budget considerations. We will continue to support the UN's 0.7 per cent ODA/GNP target and endeavour to maintain our aid at the highest level, consistent with the needs of partner countries and our own economic circumstances and capacity to assist.

And while there will always be debates over the size of the aid program, it is important that we make the most of the aid dollar. With over \$1.4 billion invested annually in Australia's aid efforts, the Australian community and our developing country partners have the right to demand excellence in our aid program. I believe that Australians can be proud of our development efforts. The new principles and priorities outlined today will result in a better-targeted and focused aid program and a better, more productive world around us.

Full text versions of the Review of Australia's Overseas Aid Program, and the Government's Response are available from AusAID's Internet site at [www.ausaid.gov.au](http://www.ausaid.gov.au) or from AusAID's distributors Bibliotech (see inside back cover for their contact details).

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