

focus

A close-up photograph of a young person with curly hair, smiling and holding a wooden stick and a black cord. The person is wearing a dark shirt. The background is blurred, showing some outdoor elements.

THE MAGAZINE OF AUSTRALIA'S OVERSEAS AID PROGRAM

VOLUME 23 NUMBER 1 » JUNE-SEPT 2008

PACIFIC PROGRESS

youth > sport > climate change > volunteers

Millennium Development Goals

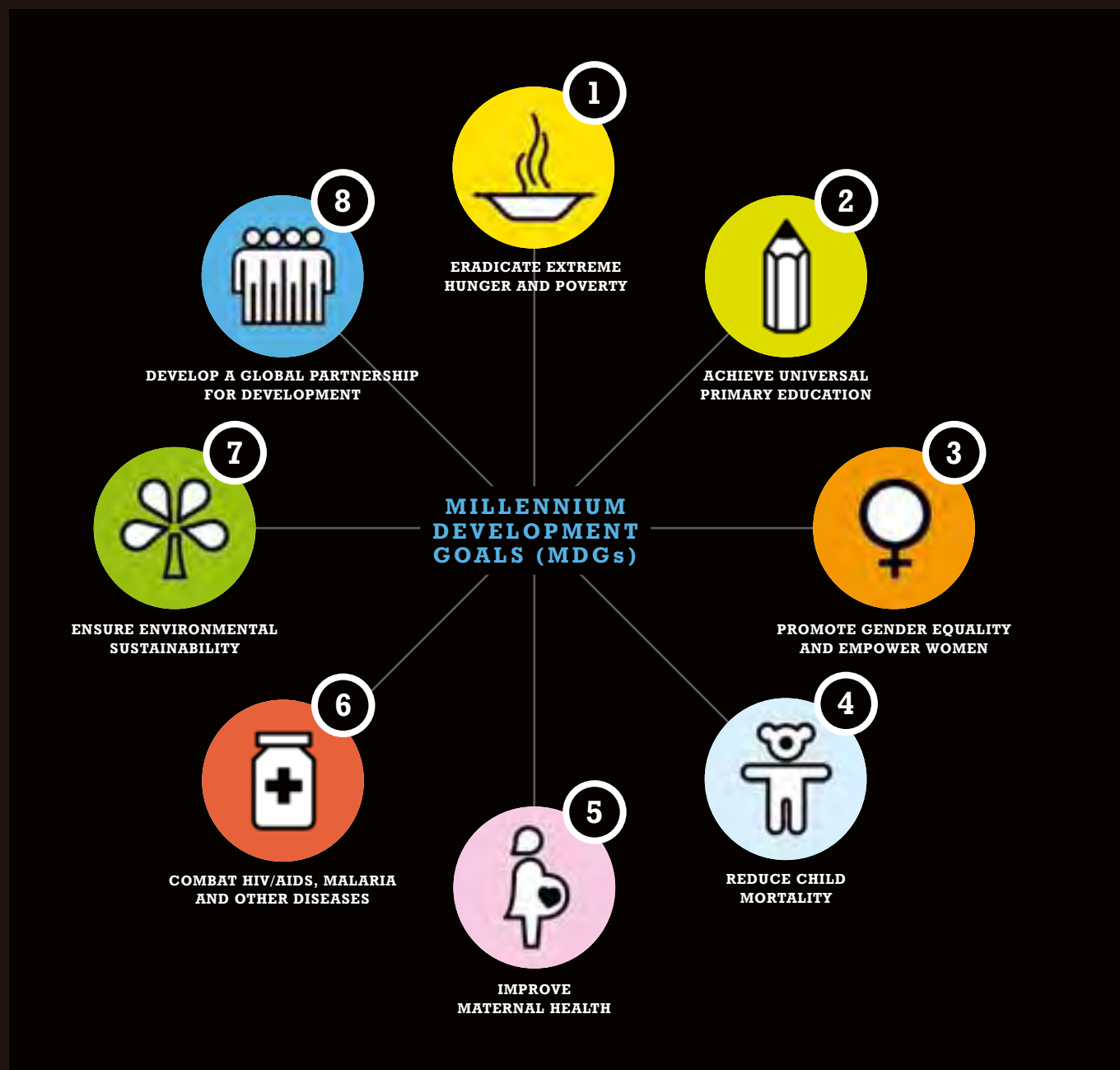
The eight Millennium Development Goals are a blueprint agreed by all the world's leading development institutions.

For further information see www.un.org/millenniumgoals

Although the Asia-Pacific region as a whole is on track to reduce extreme poverty by half, due in part to rapid economic growth in countries such as China and Vietnam, there are still 640 million people in the region living on less than \$1 a day. They form the majority of the so called 'bottom billion' – the poorest people who have been left behind by globalisation, or are trapped in poverty in fragile states.

And while many countries in the region can point to some success in achieving Millennium Development Goals none is on course to achieve them all. It is particularly worrying that Papua New Guinea, for example, is not on target to meet any.

We as Australians need to change this and do much more to reduce global poverty. The Millennium Development Goals offer a framework for action. We need to use it.



Contents



4



7



15



23



Government aid in focus The Australian aid program is committed to reducing poverty and achieving sustainable development in the Asia Pacific, Africa and the Middle East. Australian businesses and people play a major role in delivering the aid program. Australian expertise, Australian experience and Australian resources are used to tackle poverty. And by investing in development Australia is investing in its future. In 2008–09 Australia plans to spend \$3.7 billion on development assistance. The aid program focuses on promoting regional peace, stability and economic development. Countries with whom Australia is working include Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Samoa, Nauru, Tonga, Kiribati, Tuvalu (the Pacific region); Indonesia, East Timor, Vietnam, Philippines, China, Mongolia, Cambodia, Thailand, Lao PDR, Burma (East Asia); Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Pakistan, Maldives, Bhutan (South Asia); and Africa and the Middle East.

COVER: Papua New Guinea. Young people in the Pacific want to contribute to a bright and sustainable economic future. Photo: Debra Plueckhahn

- 2 In brief**
- 4 Pacific progress**
 - Value of education
 - Sea change
 - On the roads
 - Seeing the light
 - Pacific economic survey
- 12 Youth status**
 - East Timor: Search for work and understanding
- 14 It's a giving thing**
 - Photo essay: young Australian volunteers
- 18 Volunteer snapshot**
 - Speaking with hands
- 20 Sport and development**
 - Out on the fields
- 23 Sanitation 2008**
 - Pressure on
 - World's worst toilets
- 25 GLOBAL EDUCATION**
 - Resources for schools
- 26 VIEWPOINT**
 - Living in a minefield
- 28 GENDER and CLIMATE CHANGE**
 - Pacific workshop
- 29 BUSINESS**
 - In the private sector
- 29 MICROFINANCE**
 - Working women
 - Fun in saving
 - Benefits in borrowing
- 32 HEALTH**
 - Open heart
 - Language of nursing

Sport and development

The Australian Government's overseas aid program is working hard to reduce poverty and improve living standards across the Asia Pacific.

RIGHT: Playing the world game. Young footballers in Vanuatu hone their skills. There is a wealth of sporting talent in the Pacific. The idea of sport as an effective development tool is fast gaining ground. See page 20. Photo: Rob Maccoll



INBRIEF



Port Moresby declaration

While in Papua New Guinea, the Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, signed the Port Moresby Declaration which symbolises Australia's new approach to the Pacific region and the start of negotiations for Pacific Partnerships for Development. The Prime Minister's recent visit heralds a bright future of cooperation between Australia and the Pacific. Photo: AusAID

For further information on Australia's aid program in the Pacific <www.ausaid.gov.au/PortMoresbyDeclaration>

Education



The Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance, Bob McMullan (*right*), and the Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs, Duncan Kerr, in Samoa visiting the Robert Louis Stevenson School. They also met some of the young students at the Senese Special Needs School. Education is the basic building block for progress. Without an educated workforce, skilled in modern communications, developing countries are at a serious economic disadvantage. See *Pacific Progress* page 4. Photo: AusAID

Climate change

Although they have been the least responsible for its cause, it is the poorest nations that will find it hardest to cope with the effects of climate change. The Australian Government has signed the Kyoto Protocol and is doing more to help vulnerable island nations to protect against environmental damage and adapt to climate changes. See pages 8 and 28.



‘We are determined to raise the quality of the aid program. By 2015 we will lift overseas aid to 0.5 per cent of gross national income, and we will help developing countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals in our region’

Bob McMullan, the Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance

Sanitation 2008



In developing countries about half the population doesn't have adequate sanitation. That's one third of the world's population.

The International Year of Sanitation 2008 logo depicts two important sides of basic sanitation – clean water for washing hands, and a toilet.

About 2.6 billion people living in developing countries are vulnerable to a wide range of preventable illnesses because of unsafe water and inadequate sanitation. Poor hygiene is the cause of an estimated 1.5 million children under the age of five dying in the Asia-Pacific region every year.

The Australian Government will increase funding to improve access to clean water and sanitation by \$100 million in 2009–10 and \$200 million in 2010–11.

MDG 7 Ensure environmental sustainability and halve the number of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015.

Leadership awards



Najwa Shihab, an anchorwoman on prime-time evening news in Indonesia, with Stephen Smith, the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Mrs Shihab is one of six inaugural Allison Sudradjat Scholars announced at the Australian Leadership Awards ceremony earlier this year. The awards give the opportunity to an impressive cohort of scholars to take part in leadership development activities in addition to their chosen courses of study. Photo: AUSPIC <www.aid.gov.au/scholarships>

Relief in sight



As AusAID's touring photographic exhibition **Relief in Sight** reaches the east coast of Australia it continues to strike a chord. The display of 68 compelling images capturing the impact of natural disasters and other humanitarian emergencies has almost travelled around the entire continent. Hundreds of thousands of people have seen the exhibition which is raising awareness of the humanitarian work carried out on behalf of Australians. Photos: Julie Goode





PACIFIC PROGRESS

With an increasing aid budget, the aid program is directing greater resources to building sustainable economic growth in the Pacific and East Timor. The accent is on improving skill levels and promoting business and rural development while also encouraging good environmental practices, political reform and better economic governance.

LEFT: Solomon Islands. Completing construction on the country's public health laboratory. Photo: Rob Maccoll
ABOVE: Well-managed fisheries could provide sizeable and reliable incomes for Pacific island nations – much more than the US\$60–\$70 million per annum they collectively receive at present. Fish are the region's biggest natural resource. Photo: Gordon Anderson

Doing more with more

There is no shortage of areas in which AusAID can spend extra funds but education and health score highly. 'We're convinced raising educational and training opportunities for people in our region is one of the most effective uses of aid,' says AusAID's Principal Education Adviser, Steve Passingham. 'People with even a basic level of literacy and numeracy have a better chance of finding employment and contributing to their community. They also tend to have better health and nutrition because they can access information.'

Receiving an education can be life-changing. For individuals it's the key to a better future and the not unreasonable expectation of a job with prospects. For nations and communities, raising education levels has far-reaching economic and social benefits.

By expanding education and training opportunities in the Pacific, the aid program is helping to build a well-skilled workforce. This will help people to get ahead and countries in the region to have better prospects for sustained economic development.



Australia is working with partner governments to help remove obstacles to economic growth. It wants to create an environment within partner countries whereby education and training opportunities can be improved.

Away from poverty

In the Pacific, one of the impediments to development is access to land. Land departments in most Pacific countries are poor with shortages of skilled administrators, planners, surveyors and other professionals. Land laws are often weak and have gaps while courts and police don't have the resources to enforce them. This makes it risky for local and overseas businesses to invest. Another challenge is the fact that most land is under customary forms of communal ownership. This is not in itself a barrier to development but creating the right laws and institutions to make use of communally-owned land, while protecting traditional rights and interests, is something that most Pacific governments are just starting to tackle.

'Several countries in the region are only now seriously looking at addressing land issues,' says Peter O'Connor, AusAID's Director, Pacific Land Program. 'We are looking at how Australia might provide support if countries in the region request it,

but the solutions to these issues must be developed and driven by Pacific governments and communities.'

As well as a readiness to help Pacific island nations address land tenure, the Australian Government is supporting efforts to instil good governance. By working alongside partner governments Australia is helping to implement better laws and regulations that will protect investors and allow businesses to operate openly and freely. 'This is a crucial area. When there is less red tape and more standardised streamlined procedures, doing business in the Pacific will become a much more attractive proposition,' says Nick Cumpston, head of AusAID's program in Vanuatu. 'We want to free up the region so it can pull away economically.'

Rising populations

Development experts agree that in order to encourage stability and reduce poverty, economic growth must occur across the whole Pacific region. It must

also be environmentally sustainable and 'employment intensive'. Burgeoning youth populations, in such countries as Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and East Timor are a concern because the instability created by under-occupied and disaffected youth can deter the very investment that leads to gainful employment.

'Countries with rapidly rising populations do face some serious issues,' says AusAID's Director Economics, Ben Power. 'It's easy to see how large groups of young people can slip into disaffection – or worse, militancy – if they have nothing useful to do. We must help create meaningful productive work and give everybody the chance not only to succeed in their own lives but also to contribute to their nation's wealth.'

Again it goes back to education and skills training. 'It's really about investing in people,' says Power. 'People are the region's greatest resource. The aid program is putting great store in developing regional partnerships, encouraging exchange

ABOVE: A young family in the hills above Dili. East Timor has a large population to support. Photo: Penny Tweedie



Value of education

There is a strong link between poverty and low levels of education. Poorer countries tend to have a smaller proportion of well-educated people and a less skilled workforce. The Australian Government recognises that education is fundamental to reducing poverty and eliminating inequality. This is why the aid program is making it possible for more boys and girls to attend school.

For a girl it is especially important. For when a girl receives an education it not only profoundly influences her life but also the lives of her future children. As a rule, educated females tend to have fewer but healthier babies, and insist, as they grow up, that they also regularly attend school.

In this way education helps to break down intergenerational cycles of disadvantage.

‘We must make it possible for every little girl to go to school. If we do that, everything about the life of that little girl changes for the better. Just a few years in school, not much by Western standards, makes all the difference. Suddenly she is 50 per cent less likely to be HIV-positive and 50 per cent less likely to give birth to a low birth-weight baby. All of the right aspirational hooks for her life are planted, the benefits of which extend not only to her family but also to the whole community.’

James Morris, former Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), Focus 2007: vol 22 no 2

ABOVE: Studying hard at Lautoka School, Sefamaia Ledua, Fiji. Photo: Rob Maccoll
LEFT: What does the future hold? Waiting at the market in Port Vila, Vanuatu.
Photo: Lorrie Graham

SAMOA: Participation in village-based conservation projects is starting to make a difference in the fight against climate change.

Sea change



A coral reef rehabilitation project in Savaia-Lefaga Village has won regional recognition and is now the model for other village-based conservation projects throughout the Pacific.

With support from the AusAID-funded national fisheries project, the Savaia community has successfully developed a village fisheries management plan for its marine reserve. Fish stocks are expanding and precious coral reefs are being protected. Training to increase village skills and knowledge is also part of the plan.

The Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance, Bob McMullan, and the Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs, Duncan Kerr, saw the project while on their recent visit to Samoa.

‘Savaia is a great example of what local communities can achieve,’ says Mr McMullan. ‘For a very small amount of money and support, villages around the coast in Samoa can work on rescuing the damaged coral reef near where they live. As a result, they can improve fish stocks and, at the same time, protect the livelihood of the local community.’

Given Samoa’s vulnerability to rising sea levels, flooding, coastal erosion and fragile ecosystems, Samoans are closely watching the consequences of climate change.

While in Samoa, Mr McMullan and Mr Kerr announced a two-year \$400,000 funding grant to support community adaptation activities to counteract the impacts of climate change.

‘Along with other developed countries which have contributed to the problem, Australia has an obligation to help Pacific nations respond to climate change,’ says Mr McMullan.

ABOVE: Village mayor Malama Tiitii, the Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance, Bob McMullan, village elder Tusani Faalofala Reti Simanu, the Australian High Commissioner to Samoa, Matt Anderson, another village elder and, in front, the Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs, Duncan Kerr. Photo: AusAID



programs between local, national and international institutions, and raising training and learning opportunities across the board. You might look at it as sharing experiences, learning from each other and growing together in mutual cooperation.’

Citizens do what they can to keep their communities going but national governments have a catalytic role to play in laying down the preconditions for private sector involvement and enterprise. Without sound government it is difficult to attract private sector investment. Furthermore, populations – particularly those that pay taxes – look to their governments to supply basic services such as healthcare, rubbish collections, clean water, road upkeep, and schooling. And it’s in the process of providing these services that governments also generate training and employment opportunities. Such jobs need to be filled by skilled people – medical professionals, water and sanitation technicians, road builders, teachers, and so on. Once trained, employees are also able to share their skills with others.

The Australia–Pacific Technical College, which offers skills and trades training at post secondary school and vocational level, is turning out work ready graduates in such areas as hospitality and tourism, electrical engineering, automotive mechanics, and health and community services. The college, which is largely funded by Australian aid, is contributing in important ways to a larger, better skilled workforce to underpin economic growth in the Pacific.



Infrastructure

Building up people’s skills is critical but so too is building and maintaining infrastructure. The lack of reliable transport, electricity, water and sanitation, communication systems and other shared physical capital is a serious problem. Roads, bridges, telecommunications and power make it possible for people to reach markets and trade. Moreover, the delivery of water, education and health services rely on such assets (see *Pacific Economic Survey*).

Australia is allocating large resources to projects that seek to build and maintain rural roads, education and health infrastructure, and provide electricity to rural areas.

In Papua New Guinea, Australian aid is behind the country’s economic backbone – the Highlands Highway (see *On the roads*).

Rural development

While the trend to move from the countryside to the main towns and cities in search of work shows no sign of slowing, the highest levels of poverty



On the roads

PAPUA NEW GUINEA: Keeping main roads open and in good order is a must if economic activity and communities are to thrive.

Better roads mean better links to markets and services. This is particularly so in Papua New Guinea where the population and many industries are spread across often remote and otherwise inaccessible terrain. In some regions there are still stretches of land and isolated communities that can only be reached by helicopter.

Highlands Highway – the country's main road link between the highlands and eastern coast – are vital so rural communities can reach markets. We must maintain them.'

The main roads also transport goods to the country's principal port, Lae, for shipment to international markets. And while the New Britain Highway between Bialla and Kimbe is maintained, smallholder producers and local communities will continue to benefit from the lucrative oil palm business.

The commercial advantage of a well-looked after road system is clear. But there are also spin offs. Road maintenance projects are providing much needed opportunities for local employment. Several communities are benefiting directly from contracts to undertake care and rehabilitation work, such as clearing vegetation, and improving and constructing drains.

ABOVE: Papua New Guinea. Part of the road maintenance team on the Highlands Highway. 'AusAID has a strong focus on including women in all development activities. About 30 per cent of people involved in the road works project are women, giving them the opportunity to increase their income,' says Parulu Kwarara. Photo: AusAID

Like arteries pumping oxygenated blood around the body, main roads are pumping economic life blood around the nation in the form of goods and vital services.

Because Australia recognises the importance of connecting communities for trade and delivering such services as health and education, it's helping Papua New Guinea maintain 4,000 kilometres of high priority roads, including the Highlands Highway.

'The majority of Papua New Guineans live in rural areas and are farmers – they depend on subsistence, semi-subsistence and cash-crop production for their livelihoods,' says Parulu Kwarara, an AusAID senior program officer. 'Roads like the

in the Pacific are still found in rural areas. Most of the world's poor live in small rural villages where services tend not to run and modern amenities are few and far between. Communities are made up of subsistence farmers and those who almost wholly depend on natural resources, such as forests and fisheries, to get by.

Integrating the rural poor into the mainstream economy through increases in productivity, improvements in market access, and adding value to labour and primary production are all priorities for the aid program. So too is increasing off farm employment and rural enterprise development. 'Country regions are seriously lacking in infrastructure, business support services, knowledge and skills. These need urgent attention for rural growth to take place,' says AusAID's principal adviser on rural development, Geoff Fox. 'We want to help set in place the circumstances whereby people can start local businesses and find skills training in their own districts.'

In this way vibrant regional centres will grow up which will fuel local

economies, attract better services and entice people to stay in their areas. 'We don't want people to feel compelled to leave their homes in search of unskilled work in overcrowded cities. Far better that job skills are made available in rural areas and economic activity can flourish in the countryside too – through the management of sustainable natural resources and good ideas for viable businesses.'

ABOVE LEFT: The Australia-Pacific Technical College. At the School of Tourism and Hospitality in Vanuatu students are learning cooking and restaurant etiquette – skills which will stand them in good stead for future employment. Photo: Rob Maccoll
ABOVE: Introducing aviation policies that allow competition and new players into the market will result in cheaper fares, greater travel between island nations and more tourists. Another way of improving air services is to invest in airport infrastructure. Photo: Rob Maccoll

Seeing the light



It's late evening and the darkness wraps round a remote village in Papua New Guinea. But inside at least one dwelling an electric light shines brightly. Two children are happily reading and their father, a teacher, is preparing lesson plans. The scene is made possible by a new solar photovoltaic system. Before it arrived, there was only a kerosene lamp or the fire, and no reading.

This is the human face of providing affordable energy to poor communities which are not linked to an electricity grid. On a broad scale individual benefits translate into major gains. All the research shows that when communities are given access to electricity, the rate of literacy advances, infant mortality is reduced and family incomes rise.

A study of families in Bangladesh between 1991 and 1996 revealed exactly this. During the five years they were given electricity, literacy advanced by 15 per cent, infant mortality fell sharply (with 15 more infants surviving out of every 1,000 births), and average family incomes rose by two-thirds. Studies in Vietnam and the Philippines show similar dramatic improvements in the wellbeing of families with access to low-cost electrical light and power.

A solar photovoltaic system provides a small amount of electricity (between 50 and 100 watts) but enough usually to meet the needs of a single family or shopkeeper. It's simply a solar panel on a pole with a wire running to a battery in a cabinet below. The system allows for four light points and two sockets which can support a fridge, a radio and on some slightly bigger systems, a television.

Helping to set up low cost energy solutions that are also not harsh on the environment is one of the important ways to help developing countries move forward. Sustainable energy improves lives.

Australia has committed \$1.5 million to the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP) that will focus on Pacific island nations. This program will help to improve access to reliable, clean and affordable energy sources, such as solar energy, across the Pacific.

For more information <www.REEEP.org>

ABOVE: Bangladesh. No electricity here. Preparing the evening meal on an open fire before darkness falls. Photo: GMB Akash/Panos Pictures



Modern communication is bringing the region nearer and recent performance shows that faster growth is not only possible but that, as it occurs, it will create jobs, reduce poverty and provide resources for such services as health and education.

The Pacific is an isolated region known for its physical beauty and cultural diversity – a large expanse of sea scattered with small island nations. It has never been synonymous with economic growth, mainly because of its remoteness, small scale and the fact that it is expensive and difficult to reach.

Yet this is changing. A new report, *Pacific Economic Survey 2008*, suggests modern communication is bringing the region nearer and recent performance shows that faster growth is not only possible but it is occurring. This upturn will create jobs, reduce poverty and provide resources for such services as health and education.

Higher growth will also help the region to get back on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Signs of change

A few years ago in the Pacific, the mobile phone sector was dominated by monopoly providers and its aviation sector was in crisis. Today, in countries that have introduced competition, there has been a dramatic turnaround.

Every second or third person now owns a mobile and many have access to the internet while flights to many destinations are more frequent and airfares are cheaper. These changes alone are helping to boost growth, especially in tourism.

The key is competition.

Although each country has its own set of slightly different economic challenges, whatever economic policies the Pacific and East Timor adopt, it is certain their success will depend heavily on political and social stability and sound infrastructure, especially in the aviation, shipping and telecommunication sectors.

'If these three sectors are working well, previously isolated people will be connected and have the chance to grow businesses together, which creates jobs and other opportunities,' says Mark McGillivray, AusAID's Chief Economist. 'The more reliable the services, the more attractive the prospect of investing in business becomes. Trade and tourism increases. People have the choice to study and conduct businesses online, even

Pacific Economic Survey Connecting the region



FAR LEFT: (From left) The Governor of the Reserve Bank of Vanuatu, Odo Tevi, with the Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance, Bob McMullan, and the Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs, Duncan Kerr, at the launch of the *Pacific Economic Survey 2008*. Photo: Dan McGarry/Pacific Institute of Public Policy
LEFT: Fiji. As access to the internet in the Pacific increases it is opening up a whole new world of knowledge and opportunity, including online education for students. Photo: Rob Maccoll



though they may live on a remote Pacific island. They can also stay in touch with others in larger centres. There are gains all round.'

While geographic isolation has been an impediment to economic growth, recent reforms show that it needn't be a problem. There is plenty of evidence to show that well-managed resources, sound economic policies, political stability, good governance and investing in people and skills, can make a big difference to the region. 'Coupled with efficient and affordable telecommunications, aviation and

shipping services, opportunities for growth are definitely possible,' says McGillivray.

For more information about the *Pacific Economic Survey 2008* and how to order copies go to <www.pacificsurvey.org>

ABOVE: East Timor. Construction workers at Dili wharf. Investment in upgrading infrastructure of Pacific ports is a necessary next step. Port Moresby comes closest to achieving the World Bank's best practice standards for port management and can clear exports within three days. Photo: Lorrie Graham



Dili, East Timor: Every week cabinet maker Eduardo Belo Soares places dozens of orders with timber growers around the country. It's a simple, efficient, no fuss process and a far cry from the days when Mr Soares had to get out on the road to organise his timber supplies face to face. Business used to be much slower and far more cumbersome. But these days, now that he has a mobile phone, it's booming. Even though mobile calls are still expensive in East Timor, the convenience and efficiencies the mobile phone offers make it hugely worthwhile for his business. 'I'm so happy I don't have to leave home to order my wood. The journeys used to be very long and difficult, and I lost a lot of business while I was away,' says Mr Soares, who now even advertises his furniture using SMS phone messaging.

Photo: Lorrie Graham

East Timor

Since independence on 20 May 2002, East Timor has been working steadily to establish a fair government, a viable economy and a productive society. But for a country with a rapidly rising, largely unskilled population, and the highest poverty levels in Asia, the challenges are enormous.

Australia has remained steadfast in its support. Through the difficult years of democratic transition, it has helped the fledgling nation tackle problems associated with poverty, lack of economic opportunities and unresolved social and political tensions.

In the capital Dili, Australians are working with the Government of East Timor to help devise a sound national budget and realise plans for development. Australian aid is helping to implement new legislation and train more judges, prosecutors and public defenders. With the United Nations, Australia has helped to train police to improve law and order and to set up systems so that 60,000 people in 77 rural communities can have clean water. Australia's assistance has led to better health services and the production of higher yielding varieties of food crops.

Although there's promise of future wealth generated by oil and gas reserves in the Timor Sea, development in East Timor will take decades, not years. Change doesn't happen overnight, especially in a country where life expectancy is 56 years, the adult literacy rate is just 58 per cent and one child in 10 is likely to die before the age of five.



Six years after winning independence, East Timor is still an unsettled place.

YOUTH STATUS

Search for work and understanding

Reporting from Dili for ABC television's *Foreign Correspondent*, journalist Trevor Bormann commented, 'This is fertile recruiting ground for the gangs. There's not much to do here, almost half of young people don't have a job and the UN and aid agencies provide about the only work anyway. It's hardly surprising that seven out of ten young men find their way to the various clubs and gangs.'

In 2006 roughly 6,000 homes were destroyed when so-called 'westerners' of East Timor clashed with 'easterners'. The rival gangs played a big role.

Much of the trouble is over land rights. 'Neighbours can simply burn

each other out here and nothing much can be done about it. That's because the land tenure situation is a mess, there's traditional title, title from Portuguese times, from Indonesian occupation, but in the end once you get a place you just hang on to it,' says Bormann. At least until someone decides otherwise.

East Timor is a country torn by politics, family feuds and an east versus west rivalry interlaced with inter-gang rivalry in which martial arts are prominent.

United Nations Deputy Head of Mission, Finn Reske-Neilsen, says 'If martial arts groups would just be martial arts groups that would do

their sport and practise their martial arts I don't think there would be any problem. In fact, it would be very, very constructive and therein lies perhaps the challenge of helping to move these groups into channelling their energies into something constructive rather than engaging in warfare amongst themselves.'

With limited opportunities for education, training and skilled work, it is not surprising that young people turn to gangs for their sense of identity. What they're really searching for, say social commentators, are jobs and a sense of purpose.

Development agency Plan International Australia began its



TOP LEFT: Not much going on. Teenagers wish there were more training opportunities and jobs. Young people want to contribute to their nation's development. Photo: Penny Tweedie

ABOVE: Young people from East Timor's eastern and western districts participate in activities designed to encourage peace and reconciliation between youth groups. Photo: Plan International Australia

TOP RIGHT: More grains. Australian aid supports the Seeds of Life project which is testing production of higher yielding varieties of grain on 800 farms around the country. Food security is a major issue.

ABOVE CENTRE: Mending a broken water pipe on the side of the road in Liquica. Australian aid is helping to deliver clean water to many rural communities but maintaining systems is crucial. Photos: Penny Tweedie

The population of East Timor is one million. About 75 per cent is under 30 years and half the population is under 15 years.

Engaging Youth Program in 2006 to help build life skills. The program is funded by grants from AusAID and donations from the Australian public.

Brigida, 20, from the western district of Aileu and Rico, 23, from Lautem in the east are typical participants. The program runs debates, sporting contests, community events, and music and drama shows. Although varied, each activity shares one common purpose – peace and reconciliation between youth groups.

For Brigida, however, the opportunity to meet with other young people and join in recreational activities has served to broaden her horizons. 'We've been able to make friends and to know the culture of another district,' she says, 'but what's even more important is we've come up with some ideas which may ease the current situation for us in East Timor and help our future.' Many of the ideas are based on sporting and recreational activities which go along way to building confidence, leadership and a positive outlook for youth.

Rico agrees. He says the best way to reduce conflict between young people is to bring in more youth activities. 'I'd like to see more sport and cultural events. I hope the program can cover all levels of youth – that's all age groups from all the districts. Working and playing together is a great way to dissolve differences.'

Plan International Australia, in partnership with Plan East Timor, is also implementing a youth livelihoods project. This supports young people in local community work programs, provides vocational training and gives

participants a chance to establish small micro-enterprises.

Initially 800 young people from Lautem district will be offered short-term community-based cash-for-work employment. From this group 300 go on to vocational training and the chance to learn about developing a small business. Graduates then have the opportunity to form collectives and, with support and mentoring from Plan staff, establish a small micro-enterprise business.

As the project matures Plan International Australia, in partnership with Plan East Timor, will reach out to many more young people. It is working closely with local training providers and the district government.

'The Engaging Youth Program is giving East Timor's young people a practical way to build the nation's future. While our program currently is not big enough to support all youth in East Timor, we have made a long-term commitment to continue growing the program and lending our assistance,' says Ian Wishart, National Executive Director of Plan International Australia.

Plan International Australia has been working in East Timor since 2001 supporting communities in early childhood care and development, child protection, water and sanitation and, more recently, youth participation and youth livelihood projects. For more information visit <www.plan.org.au>

AusAID is a major supporter of Plan International Australia. It has contributed to the Engaging Youth Program as part of the AusAID NGO Cooperation Program and has also provided funds to the youth livelihoods project in Lautem district.

For more information on 'East Timor: Gangland Dili', *Foreign Correspondent*, Trevor Bormann broadcast: 11 March 2008 see <www.abc.net.au/foreign/content>



IT'S A GIVING THING

In all sorts of ways and in a range of developing countries across the Asia-Pacific region, young Australians are making a valuable contribution to overseas development. They're sharing skills, culture and knowledge – and also laying firm foundations for lasting friendships and understanding. The Australian Government has proudly supported Australian volunteers overseas since the 1960s.



2



3



4



6

Whether you're a teacher, a technician, a communication or agricultural expert, there's bound to be a need and a niche for you.



5

YOUNG VOLUNTEERS AT WORK



[1] Michelle England, Speech Pathologist, Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed, Bangladesh

Michelle is teaching trainee speech therapists how to help patients with disabilities to communicate and swallow. 'It's so rewarding being part of a student's journey from unsure novice to a confident professional.'

[2] Rebecca Wells, Rehabilitation Program Officer, Child and Family Services, Philippines

Not everyone can cope with working in the confronting area of women and child abuse yet Rebecca is inspired by the passion and dedication of her colleagues, and believes that the work they are achieving together will have lasting benefits.

[3] Sue Ibbs, Physiotherapist, Honiara General Hospital, Solomon Islands

Playing for laughs and making progress. Physiotherapist Sue Ibbs with colleague Kim Williams helps a child with disabilities develop gross motor skills. Photo: Debra Plueckhahn

[4] Aimee McVeigh, Advocacy and Communications Officer, Alternative Law Research and Development Centre, Philippines

Aimee is developing the centre's website. She is also sharing her skills with local staff so that in future they will be able to update and improve their own website without needing to call for outside help.

[5] Cate Heinrich, Assistant Communication Officer, UNICEF Bangladesh

Words can be powerful weapons and no-one knows this better than Cate Heinrich. Cate is helping to draw attention to the plight of the Bangladeshi people – in particular, the issues affecting children. She's writing articles for international news agencies and passing on her writing skills to colleagues. She's also helping to teach local children.

[6] Nicholas Best, all rounder, Unang Hakbang Foundation, Philippines

'So far I've taught out-of-school children how to bake pies, I've filled in as a football coach, and I've helped coordinate a month-long recreational program for over 500 disadvantaged children.'

[7] Emma Burdziejko, Audiometrist, Various hospitals and medical centres, Pacific region

Audiometrist Emma Burdziejko tests the severity of Sisco Cain's hearing deficiency at Nauru General Hospital. Emma is a member of one of the volunteer Australian medical teams that regularly visit the Pacific. Medical teams conduct clinics, offer diagnoses and treatments, and generally share their medical skills. The Pacific Tertiary Health Program is delivered by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and is supported by AusAID. Photo: Lorrie Graham

[8] Martin Blakemore, Development Officer, Disabled People's Association, Fiji

There's a lot to do in the areas of strategic planning and governance in many organisations in the Pacific. Martin Blakemore is pleased he can share his skills where they are needed. Photo: Debra Plueckhahn

Interested in volunteering?

For more information on AusAID-funded programs:

Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development (AYAD)
Freecall: 1800 225 592
T: (08) 8364 8500
e-mail: ayad@austraining.com.au
www.ayad.com.au

Australian Business Volunteers (ABV)
T: (02) 6285 1686
e-mail: info@abv.org.au
www.abv.org.au

Australian Volunteers International (AVI)
T: (03) 9279 1788
e-mail: info@australianvolunteers.com
www.australianvolunteers.com

Volunteers for International Development from Australia (VIDA)
T: (08) 8364 8500
e-mail: vida@austraining.com.au
www.vidavolunteers.com.au

Photos from AusAID's volunteers programs
<www.ausaid.gov.au/partner/volunteer.cfm>

VOLUNTEER SNAPSHOT

Speaking with hands

Fiji Sign Language

Kate Nelson has spent the past three years working as a volunteer with the Fiji Association of the Deaf. She's been creating the country's first sign language dictionary and helping to establish an interpreters' course. Along with local research assistants, Apenisa Matairavula and Samisoni Weleilakeba, Kate has put together 2,000 signs. It's been a big undertaking.

In the long run the dictionary, which is funded by AusAID, will help to improve the range and quality of education. There's around 2,000 deaf or hearing-impaired people in Fiji but just two primary schools which cater for their needs. Interpreters have only been in high schools for the last two years.

'I think it's very significant that we've named the language and we now have a book that maybe we can use to lobby government,' says Kate. 'We'd like wider recognition of Fiji Sign Language and acknowledgment that it's the language of the deaf.'

For more information on volunteers see
<www.ausaid.gov.au/partner/volunteer.cfm>



ABOVE: Boys busy chatting.

FAR LEFT: Teacher and President of the Fiji Association of the Deaf, Tomasi Taberanibou, instructs the class on how to use the Fiji Sign Language Dictionary. There are over 2,000 'signs' depicted in photographs. 'We used eight people to represent the different races, men and women equally, from the different geographical areas of Fiji,' says Kate, who is also hearing impaired.

LEFT: Research assistants Apenisa Matairavula (*left*) Samisoni Weleilakeba (*right*) with Kate Nelson.

Photos: Rob Maccoll

The Australian Government is providing \$30 million in emergency assistance to countries affected by steep rises in the prices of essential food supplies. The \$30 million contribution is in response to the emergency appeal of the World Food Programme (WFP). Extra funding is necessary to address critical gaps in WFP food aid operations as a result of rising food and fuel prices.

Writing against poverty and hunger

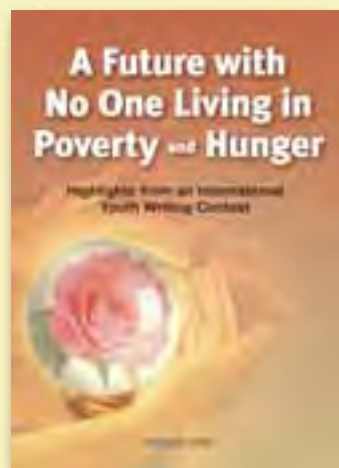
Youth writing contest

Last year the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) challenged youth around the world to share their ideas on how to tackle global poverty and hunger.

The response generated a multitude of ideas and recommendations expressed in essays, poems and commentaries. Hundreds of young people from varied economic and social backgrounds and representing 39 countries took up the challenge.

'I do not pretend to hold the solution to eradicating hunger in my young hands... But, as an individual, I am confident in my ability to make a difference.'

Ashley Eberhart, age 16, United States of America, winner of the youth writing contest



The youth writing contest was part of IFPRI's 2020 Vision for Food, Agriculture and the Environment initiative. It was organised in conjunction with the international conference 'Taking Action for the World's Poor and Hungry People', which was held in Beijing. A booklet containing the winning and other selected entries includes such topics as malnutrition, governance and corruption, education, agriculture and agricultural technologies, and international aid. Copies can be obtained from <www.ifpri.org/pubs/books/oc56.asp>

LEFT: Nepal. Contributions to the writing contest were inspiring. Photo: IFPRI
RIGHT: The booklet. 'We, the youth of the developed world, have a mammoth responsibility, the moral challenge of our time: To eradicate poverty and promote equality for all,' says Grace Loukides, age 16, from Australia, whose contribution is one of the selected entries.

Save the children

AusAID is implementing a new child protection policy.



visitors are also responsible for a small but significant proportion. Child sex offenders deliberately move to developing countries to avoid the West's tougher laws and more rigorous screening processes. They go for holidays or manage to insinuate themselves into jobs in some of the world's poorest countries, solely so that they can gain access to children. In poorer countries surveillance is weaker and prosecution is harder to enforce.

In view of these circumstances, AusAID is particularly vigilant of its operations. It is keenly aware of its responsibility to ensure that it, and other aid organisations that it funds, take exhaustive steps not to engage anyone who poses a risk to children's safety or wellbeing.

'It is the first time a national government has introduced a policy covering the protection of children in its overseas operations,' says Karen Flanagan of Child Wise, which helped develop the policy. 'It is already attracting substantial international interest.'

For more information about AusAID's child protection policy and the child protection compliance standards, contact AusAID's child protection officer, Vijaya Ratnam-Raman, on cpo@ausaid.gov.au or (02) 6206 4753.

Childhood is supposed to be a happy carefree time, but for many children around the world it is characterised by violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. In 2002, about 150 million girls and 73 million boys under 18 experienced forced sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual violence. Every year around 1.2 million children are trafficked into exploitative work, many of them into commercial sexual exploitation.

While those who perpetrate child abuse are often local people it is of grave concern that international

Bright spark

In Vanuatu, Rina Alau works as an electrician on the outskirts of the capital, Port Vila. In 1999 she was awarded a gender equity scholarship from AusAID to study electrical engineering at the Vanuatu Institute of Technology. As soon as she graduated, in 2001, she began her first job and hasn't been out of work since.

Alau is the only female electrician in her workplace and the only person in her family to take on a non-traditional trade. 'My brothers and sister are proud of what I'm doing and are encouraging their children to follow me. It is very hard to get a job in Vanuatu, especially for young people if they don't have qualifications.'

Like many of her contemporaries, Alau is increasingly conscious of the

importance of education and skills training. She hopes by doing well in her chosen career she can be a role model. 'I want to show other women that they can be electricians too.'



ABOVE: Vanuatu. Rina Alau making connections. Photo: Harold Obed/AusAID

SPORT AND DEVELOPMENT



The United Nations recognises the power and value of sport as a tool for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

ABOVE: Throw it to me! Girls enjoy the physical and social benefits of playing sport, Seraswati College, Fiji. Photo: Rob Maccoll.

ABOVE RIGHT: Where's the table? Kiribati. **RIGHT:** Learning to coach children, Vanuatu. Photos: Australian Sports Commission

FAR RIGHT: Vanuatu. Enthusiasm for playing football never wanes. Photo: Rob Maccoll

There is a broad consensus that regular physical activity is essential for the physical, mental, psychological and social development of children and adolescents. Playing sport can boost children's health, improve concentration and learning, and help dissuade young people from crime.

The Australian Government takes the position that playing sport is not just an end in itself but also a means to help improve the lives of individuals, families and communities in developing countries. There is a range of inherent benefits, such as improving health, encouraging teamwork and helping to develop self discipline and other important life skills.

Sport is also a credible way of gaining attention. As it particularly appeals to young people it's often an excellent way to address a range of development challenges – for example, high rates of crime, drug and alcohol abuse, prevalence of HIV/AIDS, and pronounced gender inequality.

Benefits of sport

Sport and play activities

- > promote friendships and fair play
- > teach teamwork, discipline, respect and the coping skills necessary to ensure children develop into caring individuals
- > help to toughen and prepare children for the challenges of life and to dare to take on leadership roles in their communities.

www.unicef.org/sport





Out on the fields

The Australian Sports Outreach Program is motivating people to organise and play more sport and to enjoy the many benefits of physical activity. Tailored to meet the needs and sporting interests of local communities in Vanuatu, Samoa, Kiribati, Nauru and Fiji, the program is making a significant contribution to development in the Pacific.

In rural communities of Vanuatu's Penama and Tafea provinces, the Nabanga Sport Program is giving young people the chance to play sport properly – that's with quality coaching, using the correct equipment and following the rules. For a change it's not a case of 'that'll do'. This is real sport. It's challenging and fun. It's happening regularly and it's taking young people on a journey of personal development and accomplishment, the benefits of which spill into the whole community.

Village elders are right behind the program. They're not only encouraging young people to join teams but also to enrol in nationally accredited courses so that they can develop leadership skills and learn how to plan sporting events, coach and referee.

Sport is a good way of bringing young people together and diverting them from anti-social and high risk behaviours, such as excessive kava

drinking. It also brings them into easy contact with authority figures and role models so stronger mentoring relationships can grow.

'If the youth are busy playing sport, organising the draws and coaching the *pikinini* [children] they are using their time in a positive way. They are challenged and they also get to learn new skills, like organising an event, being part of a committee and taking on leadership roles,' says Alwyn Job, the National Coordinator of the Nabanga Sport Program.

One of the key aims is to build capacity so communities can eventually deliver their own sports programs. In this way everyone will be able to share in the enjoyment and community benefits.

The Australian Government, through AusAID, has committed \$5 million over five years (until July 2011) to roll out the Australian Sports Outreach Program across the Pacific.



By creating child friendly spaces and instilling some laughter and joy into activities it's possible to build stable relationships between adults and children, and among children themselves.

Another program – the Pacific Sports Ability Program which is coordinated through the Fiji Sports Association for the Disabled – delivers physical activities for children in 17 special education centres around the country. They attract over 1,000 children and offer opportunities to play a range of inclusive sports, such as wheelchair tennis, table tennis, archery and lawn bowls.

‘Before we had the Pacific Sports Ability Program, teachers weren’t giving disabled children a chance because they didn’t know what activities they could do,’ says Saimoni Nainoca, the Development Officer from the Fiji Sports Association for the Disabled. ‘Now I know, around the country when 1 p.m. comes each Friday, over 1,000 children with a disability are playing sports.’

The advantages are obvious but not least that, ‘When people see children with a disability playing sport, they know that they are capable of doing many more things.’

The Australian Sports Outreach Program is delivered by the Australian Sports Commission which is internationally recognised for its expertise in facilitating sports for development opportunities. The program is supported by AusAID.



The Australian Government, through AusAID, has committed \$5 million over five years (until July 2011) to roll out the Australian Sports Outreach Program across the Pacific.

ABOVE LEFT: Learning to bowl. The Pacific Sports Ability Program which is coordinated through the Fiji Sports Association for the Disabled, ensures everyone has the chance to be active.
ABOVE RIGHT: Vanuatu. Organised games can be a lot of fun.
LEFT: Vanuatu. One of the national accredited coaching courses in session.
Photos: Australian Sports Commission



SANITATION 2008

The United Nations General Assembly has named 2008 the International Year of Sanitation to draw attention to the plight of millions of people who do not have access to basic sanitation.

Pressure on

The aim is to make progress against Millennium Development Goal number seven and by 2015 to reduce by half the 2.6 billion people who do not have basic sanitation.

In Australia's region – the Asia Pacific – there are great stretches of land, mainly in rural areas, where there is not much infrastructure. Bitumen roads are scarce, houses are relatively impermanent structures of reed and bamboo, and people live without electricity. There is no piped water. Water must be carried from rivers or wells, and sanitation is basic.

'We in the West take it for granted that when we turn on a tap clean water gushes out and when we go to the toilet all we have to do is flush. Practically every home is plumbed into the mains water system,' says Marcus Howard, AusAID's Water Adviser. 'But this is far from the case in the developing world.'

Water and sanitation may not be popular topics but they have a catalytic effect on virtually all aspects of human development – agriculture, health, gender equality, energy, education and economic growth. For example, it's estimated that productivity is increased and health costs reduced by \$8 for every \$1 invested in improving water and sanitation – in short, achieving the target for the Millennium Development Goal number seven. Another example – more children are willing to go to school, especially girls, if there are safe toilets.

What's to do

The estimated recurrent investment of US\$8 billion per year for the Asia Pacific to achieve the water and sanitation Millennium Development



Goal is affordable. What's needed is the effort to guarantee these investments.

The Australian Government, in line with other international organisations, including the development banks and United Nations agencies, intends to increase aid for water and sanitation to \$100 million in 2009–10 and \$200 million in 2010–11.

Sanitation needs special attention – it's seriously lagging behind Millennium Development Goal targets. Australia recognises the imperative to work more effectively with partner governments.

'We're improving sanitation in our region. For example, a new rural water supply and sanitation program has just commenced in East Timor and we are contributing significantly to the Asian Development Bank's new Water Financing Partnership Facility,' says Howard. 'But it's obvious we need to do more. And we will.'

Australia will join with partners to raise human dignity, hygiene standards and health, and improve the lives of millions, as part of the global effort on water and sanitation.

'Clean water and sanitation are not only about hygiene and disease, they're about dignity, too. Relieving yourself in hazardous places means risking everything from urological disease to harassment and rape. Many examples show that self-esteem begins with having a safe and proper toilet facility.'

Willem-Alexander, the Prince of Orange

We want to raise awareness of the importance of sanitation and its impact on other Millennium Development Goals.

We want to encourage government and their partners to implement policies and take action aimed at meeting the sanitation target.

We want to mobilise communities, particularly women's groups, to change sanitation and hygiene practice through campaigns on sanitation and health education.

And we also want to encourage technical, social and financial innovation. We must focus our full attention on developing new technologies to dispose of and re-use

human waste and waste water. The rapid growth of the world's population means increased urbanisation, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

Let us not forget that more than half the world's population lives in cities, with over one billion people in slums. And in these areas, water supply and sanitation conditions are downright appalling.

An extract from the speech by the Prince of Orange at the global launch of the International Year of Sanitation 2008

ABOVE: Kiribati. Crowded housing, lack of clean water and poor sanitation present serious health threats, especially for children. Photo: Lorrie Graham



AFGHANISTAN: Saliha mourns the death of her three-year-old daughter, Halima, who died due to severe diarrhoea at a hospital in Kunar Province, eastern Afghanistan.

ABOVE: Residential area outside of the nation's capital, Kabul. Since the beginning of the armed conflict in 1980, Kabul's industry and infrastructure have almost totally broken down. Living standards are very low. Sanitation is a huge problem. Photo: Franco Pagetti/ICRC
RIGHT: Health workers talk to women and girls about hygiene. Photo: Jessica Barry/ICRC

World's worst toilets

The child had drunk contaminated water which Saliha's family collects from a nearby river and uses for all purposes, including drinking, cooking and washing.

The river is used daily by people performing their ablutions. Some urinate or defecate near the riverbanks.

It is not always a surprise for locals to see human faeces, sputum and even animal dung floating in the running water. There is a consensus among some residents in the village, and indeed many other rural communities across Afghanistan, that 'flowing water' is always clean, unless the colour, smell and taste is changed.

Yet Saliha's daughter is not the only one killed by the 'flowing' river water. Many other children also suffer various waterborne diseases. Preventable diseases such as diarrhoea, cholera, dysentery and

pneumonia kill about 600 under-five Afghan children every day, according to UNICEF.

The *State of the World's Toilets 2007* report says that about 92 per cent of Afghanistan's estimated 26.6 million population do not have access to proper sanitation. This has placed the country at the top of the list of 'the worst places in the world for sanitation'.

Open defecation is prevalent, causing social, health, environmental and development problems.

'UNICEF wants to pay greater attention to sanitation and the Afghanistani government has also realised the importance,' says Nadarajah Moorthy, head of the water and environmental sanitation unit with UNICEF in Kabul.

Poor waste management is one of the big problems

Officials estimate that the three million people living in Kabul produce at least 1,500 cubic metres of solid waste every day. However, due to lack of resources and limited capacity, the municipality can't deal with it all.

'When it rains, a lot of waste mixes with rainwater and often reaches drinking-water sources, which causes different diseases,' says Nasrullah Habibi, a sanitation specialist with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme in Kabul.

Bad toilet design is another problem

The traditional dry vault toilet system – a specially-shaped dry vault that separately collects solid and liquid waste and which is commonly used in Afghanistan – is also a major health and sanitation problem.

GLOBAL EDUCATION

One of the tasks ahead for UNICEF, in partnership with government bodies, is lifting public awareness about personal hygiene and sanitation.

Septic tanks and sewerage (whereby solid and liquid waste is collected near the home for disposal elsewhere) are two other widely used toilet systems, particularly in urban areas. Neither is 'safe' or 'eco-friendly', according to Dr Bindeshwar Pathak from the social service organisation, Sulabh International.

Sulabh has constructed five public toilets in Kabul city with biogas digesters for recycling human waste into biogas, which can be used for lighting and electricity generation.

Raising public awareness

Apart from the widespread lack of proper toilet systems, sanitation experts, such as UNICEF's Nadarjah Moorthy, are concerned about very poor hygiene practices among Afghans and their lack of knowledge.

'I would have protected my daughter from all unclean things and would never have given her the river water, if I had known that that would kill her,' says Saliha, the bereaved mother of three-year-old Halima.

One of the tasks ahead for UNICEF, in partnership with government bodies, is lifting public awareness about personal hygiene and sanitation.

Source: 'Afghanistan: Poor sanitation and bad toilets cause deaths and misery' (online news service), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, March 2008. Above text is slightly modified.

AusAID notes that dual vault, septic and sewerage systems are safe when used and maintained appropriately. For more information <www.wateraid.org.au> and <www.watercentre.org>



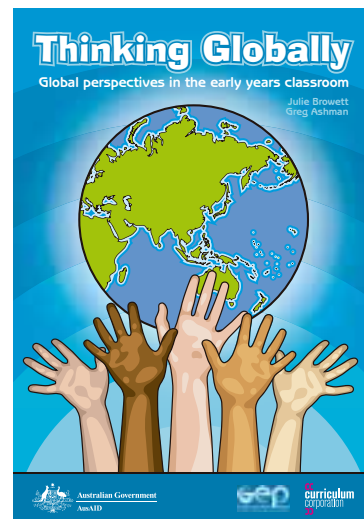
Assistance in Afghanistan

AusAID is committed to supporting the Afghanistan Ministry of Health to strengthen prevention and treatment services for diseases, such as diarrhoea, cholera, dysentery and pneumonia, which disproportionately affect children.

Resources for schools

'Our sense of responsibility to our land and our community, and our sense of being part of a continuum in history, are invisible. We float as individuals living individual moments in the history of time. We don't think about the fact that we're the ancestors of future generations.'

Severn Cullis-Suzuki, *Environmental Activist*



Thinking Globally: Global perspectives in the early years classroom

Thinking Globally considers how to foster a global perspective in primary school. Cross-curricula activities explore the concepts of linking with others, personal identity, dimensions of change, social justice, rights, peace building, and sustainable futures.

The book comes with a CD packed with ideas for teaching with a global perspective.



For the International Year of Sanitation 2008

Dying to Go...to the Toilet: The sanitation challenge

This resource for middle secondary students describes the problems brought about by the lack of basic sanitation. It describes how it affects people and the environment, and outlines action that can be taken to improve this fundamental human right for millions of people.

Teachers interested in professional development using these resources please go to the 'PD providers' tab at www.globaleducation.edna.edu.au

www.globaleducation.edna.edu.au

Living in a minefield

CAMBODIA: The powerful and thought-provoking film *Living in a Minefield* has not only changed the film-maker's approach to life but, as intended, it has also had a moving and far-reaching effect on its audiences. The film's screening, supported by AusAID, has brought much needed international attention to the impact of landmines on Cambodia's rural poor.

Film-maker Marit Gjertsen describes a very personal journey.



When I went to Cambodia, I went alone. I was there from 2002 to 2006, and for one of those years I lived in the tiny village of Somlot, in the mountains bordering Thailand.

When I first arrived in Somlot, I was prepared to face a society very different from my own, but I was not prepared for how it would change me.

From the beginning I felt very different. I was a 'rich' person and conscious I was almost taking from poor people. Confronting that level of poverty was very tough. I also had an uneasy feeling that the villagers were judging me by standards I didn't understand. I had no idea how to behave.

Most Cambodians may be poor but they have the most amazing ability to find ways to manage.

My head was boiling with questions: what is polite behaviour? How do I distinguish a servant from a manager? Perhaps I didn't need to yet I noted a difference in how Cambodians treat each other.

As a film director and as a foreigner I have power, but as a woman I must be subordinate. How do I cope with this? And how much should I pay the local crew?

Very quickly I had to learn how to operate in an unfamiliar setting but it was unsettling. I started to question my values and this began to tear me apart. There were times I remember lying on my sleeping mat crying because I had lost the ability to understand myself. I was absolutely lost.

As a journalist I used to think the most important thing in life was to be independent. Yet, alone in Cambodia, I simply could not manage on my own. I depended on people to help me.

And people did help me in every way they could. This experience has fundamentally changed me as a person. I still believe it is important to think independently but it is also important to dare to trust, and need, and depend on others.

I was surprised when villagers told me I was the first foreigner to spend the night in Somlot Village. Even visitors from aid agencies only ever came for the day – and always to give something to help the community.

On both counts this was not the case with me. I stayed, and I had nothing to give. I was there to learn from people and to convey their experiences to others.

ABOVE: Sound technician Both and film-maker Marit Gjertsen (far left) and scenes from Somlot.

Photos: Marit Gjertsen

EXTRACT FROM A FILM-MAKER'S JOURNAL

I'm totally dependent on my Cambodian team to help me to make the film – Both is my sound technician, Heng is my translator and local guide. They have worked for several years around landmines and know all about the injuries they cause. I have to trust that they will keep me safe. But my curiosity and my ambition to describe people's lives at close quarters forces us all to take chances. Almost every day we hear explosions in the jungle surrounding Somlot Village.

The feeling of being surrounded by an invisible enemy is difficult to shake and keeps me in a state of constant unease. I try to learn how to tell where it is safe, to know where to step. But when we ask there are never any clear answers. 'We cannot know for sure, we can't see the mines,' say the villagers.

The only way to be really safe is to leave. It dawns on me that this film cannot be made without risk. I continually weigh up the value of our work in making the film against the risk that one of us may be injured or killed.

Mines are the most cowardly weapons I can imagine. They threaten, injure and kill people for generations after the war is over. I made this film because I wanted to know – and show others – what it is like for Cambodians who live under this threat every day.

I want to film An Vi as she clears her new field in the jungle. An Vi, Both and Heng all stop me. An Vi goes to the field because she must. She has to provide for her family but for me, a person with choices, it's far too dangerous. So the message is clear: the poorer you are – the least options you have – the bigger the risks you have to take.

I'm gaining insights into the lives of the local people and what it costs to survive. Three thousand Cambodians have been injured or killed by mines while I have been working on my film. At the same time, thanks to the strength and courage of underprivileged farmers, acres of mine-covered jungle have been turned into fertile growing fields. Day after day they contain their fear to clear the land themselves. They see that there's no other option.

Marit Gjertsen grew up in northern Norway, studied documentary and television production and worked in the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation as a photographer and editor. Gjertsen is now teaching cross-cultural film-making at the University of Tromsø, in the Department of Anthropology. Her film, *Living in a Minefield*, may be ordered from <kjell@videomaker.no>

For more information <www.videomaker.no>



Landmine facts

Mine action is an important part of the overseas aid program and Australia is a leading contributor to international mine clearing efforts, survivor assistance, and mine-risk education programs.

Landmines and other explosive remnants of war are serious obstacles to sustainable development and economic growth in over 70 countries, including the world's poorest.

A record rarely exists of their location with the result that landmines continue to have tragic consequences long after the war or civil conflict is over. There are between 400,000 and 500,000 mine survivors across the globe today. While numbers of casualties continue to fall, every year approximately 5,000 new casualties are added. The majority are civilians. Many are children.

The on-going need to care for and rehabilitate landmine survivors causes considerable strain on local health-care systems and communities. Families

must also frequently bear the loss of productive workers and the economic consequence of contaminated land.

The aid program is supporting families in mine-affected communities right across the Asia Pacific, particularly Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Afghanistan. A great deal of effort is going into rebuilding communities through job creation and other economic development initiatives. In 2005 Australia pledged \$75 million over five years to reduce the scourge of landmines. This is in addition to \$100 million it has already provided over the previous decade.

LEFT: An Vi and children in front of the cameras. Photo: Marit Gjertsen



Landmine Survivors in Cambodia

The photographic exhibition, *Survivors*, tells the story of the Landmine Survivor Assistance Program, funded by the Australian Government through AusAID and managed by the Australian Red Cross. The program's goal is to reduce the vulnerability of landmine survivors by helping them to rebuild their lives socially, physically and economically.

www.redcross.org.au

LEFT: 'It took me two months to learn to walk,' says Soeun Rem, who used to help her father plant soy beans but now runs a shop in Pailin, started through an AusAID-funded micro-loan. Photo: Somira Sao

GENDER AND CLIMATE CHANGE



The Pacific forum is an example of Australia's aid program working collaboratively with United Nations agencies to address the Millennium Development Goals and to build a safer and more resilient Pacific region.

ABOVE: Kiribati. Because women are often collecting shellfish in the shallow waters they notice environmental changes to the shoreline. Their knowledge and experience is invaluable. Photo: Lorrie Graham

Pacific workshop

FIJI: Thirty-eight representatives from government agencies, civil society organisations and universities gathered in Suva for a Pacific forum. Topics under discussion were disaster risk management and adaptation to climate change, with particular reference to understanding the gender implications.

Vulnerability in the Pacific

Small island states, such as those in the Pacific Ocean, are particularly susceptible to the effects of global climate change. Extreme weather events – rising sea levels, increased intensity of cyclones, droughts and flooding – will damage coastal conditions, reduce the reliability of certain staple food sources and hinder the resilience of Pacific communities dependent on subsistence lifestyles.

Ensuring that Pacific communities are able to adapt to the effects of climate change requires a new level of preparedness. In the past, strategies for dealing with disasters were implemented separately to considerations of climate change programming. Increasingly, however, the fields of disaster risk management and climate change adaptation are converging.

What's gender got to do with it?

Although it may seem everybody would be equally exposed to hazards, such as cyclones and floods, this is not so. In the Indian Ocean Tsunami, three women to every one man died because women could not escape the waves, either because they were encumbered by their long skirts, were trying to hold on to children, or simply didn't know how to swim or climb trees. Women have less access to resources, economic advantage, social rights and environmental justice, all of which makes them more vulnerable to climate and disaster risk.

In the Pacific gender roles and knowledge are strictly defined and segregated. Yet women's knowledge and social practices could be used to build community resilience. During a drought in the small islands of the Federated States of Micronesia, local women, knowledgeable about island hydrology, found potable water by

digging a new well that reached the freshwater lens.

Pacific island men know more about fishing in deep ocean waters whereas women, because they often collect shellfish close to the waters edge, know the shoreline. Women's observations could add significant value to programs designed to protect against coastal erosion. Divisions of labour between men and women denote different experiences and understanding and, consequently, can offer a good entry point for gender sensitive programming. Forum participants agreed that more women should be involved in activities concerned with disaster risk management and climate change adaptation.

Traditional knowledge

A number of Pacific communities have developed different ways of coping with the threats of natural disasters and extreme weather events. For example, some Pacific communities know about a type of yam that is not very tasty but can stay in the ground for years and, unlike other root crops, is not damaged by flooding. Planting this yam prior to cyclone season can make a real difference to warding off hunger during difficult times. It goes without saying such knowledge is vital and proves how important it is to consult with communities.

It's clear in order to access the full range of knowledge to cope better with climate change effects and disasters, programmers need to inform and consult with everyone – that's women, children, the elderly and the disabled, as well as men.

The Pacific forum workshop was coorganised by AusAID and the United Nations Development Programme Pacific Centre.

The 2008–09 aid budget includes \$150 million over three years to assist countries in the Asia-Pacific region to assess and adapt to the likely impacts of climate change.

BUSINESS

In the private sector

AusAID is promoting female entrepreneurship and eliminating gender inequality across the Pacific.

Gender equality and women's empowerment reduces poverty and stimulates economic growth. A recent World Bank study suggests that a developing country can gain as much as 2 percentage points of gross domestic product each year by eliminating gender inequality.

AusAID's 'Pacific Women in Private Sector Development' program is building a positive approach to women's economic empowerment by removing the barriers that block women from getting ahead.

Initial studies suggest that would-be female entrepreneurs often lack the bargaining skills, social status and

access to the resources required to negotiate in business. Many women simply don't have the knowledge or experience to develop products, price competitively and market for export.

AusAID's assistance will include increasing women's access to finance, training and business support services.

When there are more women in the labour force earning a reasonable income, benefits flow to their children in improved standards of wellbeing and educational attainment. AusAID is adopting a 'smart economics' approach to development by promoting female entrepreneurship across the Pacific.

Giving women economic options steps up progress towards the Millennium Development Goals to eradicate poverty and hunger and to improve the status of women by 2015.



ABOVE: Vanuatu, outskirts of Port Vila. Enid Stevens, head of a women's savings and loan group takes a deposit from one of the members. In a recent AusAID commissioned survey women said access to microfinance services enabled them to start or grow their own businesses and be self employed. Photo: Rob Walker

MICROFINANCE

Working women

Given the resources, women jump at the chance to realise their economic potential.



Where they have the capacity, the opportunity and the skills to earn an income, women raise not only the quality of their own lives but also the lives of those around them. The ripple effect goes beyond the immediate family into the community. This is especially so when women have an equal say with their male partners about how to spend the family income.

Furthermore, women are liberated economically when they are able to own property, take out loans and build up assets. Suddenly they have the means – and the power – to break the poverty cycle. And they know it. It's why women work so hard to get ahead. They're driven to free their families from a hand to mouth existence, and to

When women receive education, training and have access to finance their lives can be turned around in the most encouraging and exciting ways.

ABOVE: East Timor: Women pull together to make the family business work. Rosa (front) and her daughters make rice parcels for their restaurant in Loes. Photo: Penny Tweedie

MICROFINANCE



put something aside for emergencies.

It's also why government policies supporting the efforts of women make sound economic sense. In Vietnam recent legislation allows the names of both men and women to appear on land tenure certificates, which means women are able to use their land titles to secure credit.

Micro-enterprise and microfinance activities, supported by donor countries including Australia, give women the training and start-up funds to establish successful small businesses. In some cases these entrepreneurial women become employers themselves.

Ma Ying is a good example. She was one of millions of workers laid off from unprofitable state enterprises in the 1990s as China moved rapidly to a market-economy. In 2002, she attended the Tianjin Women's Business Incubation Centre which receives funding from AusAID and

the United Nations Development Programme. The centre gave her training in such areas as business creation and marketing, and helped her to secure a microfinance loan.

Today Ma Ying's company is a top grade catering enterprise in Tianjin supplying 6,000 snacks in lunchboxes for seven schools and employing more than 40 laid-off workers. Ma Ying's success clearly demonstrates what women can achieve given opportunity, training and business support.

ABOVE LEFT: Vietnam. Ly Thi Du with one of her healthy pigs. More women are stepping forward to learn about new agricultural practices and animal husbandry through a rural development program jointly funded by AusAID and the Government of Vietnam. Women are as eager as their husbands to make their family farms more efficient and to help generate higher incomes. Photo: Elizabeth James/AusAID



Some 85 per cent of the population live in rural areas with little or no access to basic financial services – either because there are no conventional banks in these areas or people are denied access to them because they are too poor.

Fun in saving

SOLOMON ISLANDS: Young students in Kilusakwalo Village, Malaita Province, are watching their money grow.

Timothy Rongoad is a primary school teacher in the village of Kilusakwalo. With fellow teacher, Beverlyn Dau, he's started a club. Not a sports club or a gardening club, as anyone might expect, but a savings club.

'Understanding money and making it work for you is one of those lessons we all must learn and the earlier the better,' says Rongoad whose idea to start the savings club at school came from a visit to the local microfinance rural resource centre.

Teaching any child to save money is quite a challenge but imagine teaching the idea to children who are underprivileged and have nothing.

Yet, remarkably, the savings club is a great success. After just a year,

students have collectively saved the equivalent of over \$650 – an impressive feat considering that the average annual family income in Kilusakwalo is about \$1,507.

'We're very pleased with our progress,' says Rongoad. 'It's wonderful to see the students paying in their contributions and taking the project so seriously. Each child carefully checks the procedure so that there are no mistakes!'

Rongoad and Dau are both delighted and surprised the students are getting such a kick from watching their money grow.

ABOVE AND RIGHT: Children and teachers (Beverlyn Dau and Timothy Rongoad) of Kilusakwalo Primary School. Photos: Paula Jops

What is a credit union?

A credit union is a cooperative financial institution that is owned and controlled by its members.

Credit unions enable people to pool their financial resources to help themselves and each other. By bringing people together with similar needs financial services can be kept to a minimum and be offered at low cost. Credit unions are non-profit making. Interest generated from loans is used to cover administrative costs. Any surplus is returned to the members as services and discounted products.

There's usually a common bond between credit union members that establishes mutual accountability and minimises the risk of default on loans. This encourages active support and a responsible attitude from members.

For the rural poor, credit unions provide loans for almost anything, and because local management committees run them, they are able to offer regional and culturally specific products. Credit unions offer financial services to poor rural communities who are, by and large, denied access to established banks.



Kilusakwalo Microfinance Rural Resource Centre

The idea for the school savings club came from the Kilusakwalo Microfinance Rural Resource Centre, which is like a one-stop village shop. It's a place where locals can get information on a range of financial products that are specifically tailored to their community.

'We offer all sorts of advice and services – on credit unions, insurance, budgeting, as well as emergency or poverty relief schemes,' says David Maefunu, manager of the centre. 'Savings clubs are particularly popular because they're inexpensive to register and easy to operate, and membership is restricted to those who are geographically close to one another. More often than not, members are part of the same tight-knit community.'



Benefits in borrowing

SOLOMON ISLANDS: In Malaita Province they're enjoying the benefits of well-managed responsible loans.

Just down the road from the Kilusakwalo Microfinance Rural Resource Centre stands the Central Malaita Credit Union. It has around 3,000 members who use it to save money or to borrow at low rates of interest.

George has been a credit union member for nearly five years and has been saving regularly. Two years ago he sought a loan to set up a new market stall. Because he had a good savings record the credit union was able to lend him the equivalent of about \$60. 'Before the credit union I never had a savings account and didn't know how to get money for my business. Now I have a good business.'

The common bond between the members of the Central Malaita Credit Union is based on community and an increasingly strong desire to develop fisheries and agriculture in their area. As Philip D. Akote'e from the credit union's management committee says, 'The people of Central Malaita are tired of being spectators to their country's development. They see others benefiting while they are left behind. It's time we joined in.'

Last year the committee established the Central Malaita Development Trust – an umbrella organisation that encourages self-reliance in the community. By helping members to

The credit union provides loans and a safe place to store savings while the development trust provides opportunities for investment and the means to make money.

tap into the province's abundant natural resources – crops, livestock and fisheries – the trust is laying the foundation stones for economic growth. In many cases it's the first time local people have had a chance to improve their ability to earn a regular income.

The credit union provides loans and a safe place to store savings while the development trust provides opportunities for investment and the means to make money. For example, the trust has established a much needed storefront (cooperative) to sell goods such as rice, seeds and packaged sweets. It's also providing training facilities to produce copra and cocoa products.

The members of the Central Malaita Credit Union are finally having the chance to 'join in' their country's development. At the same time, they are improving the quality of their lives, their families' and that of the whole community.

CUFA (Credit Union Foundation Australia) supports over 300 credit unions and savings clubs in Solomon Islands through funding and technical assistance. In addition, it has supported the establishment of six microfinance rural resource centres in the provinces of Malaita and Isabel.

AusAID supports CUFA through the AusAID NGO Cooperation Program for its work in Cambodia and Solomon Islands.

ABOVE: Solomon Islands. Market day. Photo: Rob Maccoll



Open heart

PAPUA NEW GUINEA:
An international surgical
partnership – Operation Open
Heart – is teaching medical
skills and saving lives.

ABOVE: Janet Dandi with her baby son Ezekiel after his life-saving operation. RIGHT: 'We'll have reached our ultimate goal when we are not needed anymore. When surgery is carried out locally by locals – that is when we know we've succeeded,' says coordinator Russell Lee (right) who started Operation Open Heart 15 years ago when he was a cardio-thoracic intensive care nurse. Photos: Jacqueline Smart/AusAID

Baby Ezekiel Dandi's hospital tag says he weighs three-and-a-half kilos but he's not one of the newborns in Port Moresby General Hospital. Ezekiel is seven months old, underweight and fragile – and he's just undergone life saving heart surgery.

'He's been sick since he was born,' says his mother, Janet Dandi, looking at the white bandage around her son's chest. 'But thank God for Operation Open Heart. I could never afford this operation and I don't know how long he would have survived without it.'

Australian Russell Lee is the coordinator and driving force behind Operation Open Heart, an international medical partnership that has so far improved the health prospects of over 2,000 people. What started as a trial project 15 years ago in Lee's birthplace of Goroka has since

extended to Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, Uganda and, for the first time last year, Rwanda.

'Operation Open Heart has saved 532 lives in Papua New Guinea alone, but it has also provided invaluable training and mentoring to local medical staff. It's helping everyone to become more self-reliant,' says Lee.

In September 2007, a visiting team at Port Moresby General Hospital operated on 100 patients, ranging from three months of age to a 70-year-old man needing a pacemaker overhaul. 'The operating theatres were open 24 hours a day with two shifts of Australian and Papua New Guinean surgical teams working side by side for 10 days.'

Professor Nakapi Tefaurani, Head of Paediatrics at Port Moresby General Hospital, is delighted his staff



are picking up such a range of high standard medical skills.

'The improvement in surgical know-how and the quality of nursing care over the past 10 years is down to Operation Open Heart, and it's not only staff working in the cardiac area that are benefiting but also those in trauma, intensive care, and theatre.'

Local nurse Agnes Willyman is one of the biggest fans of both

Operation Open Heart has saved 532 lives in Papua New Guinea alone, but it has also provided invaluable training and mentoring to local medical staff. It's helping everyone to become more self-reliant.

Since 2000, AusAID has provided support for Operation Open Heart programs in the South Pacific. AusAID funding helps with pre-screening programs in rural areas to select candidates, enables local doctors to be included in visits to neighbouring countries to broaden their experience, and assists with accommodation for visiting surgical teams, disposable surgery items and insurance for vital medical equipment.

Operation Open Heart and the bilateral partnership between Australia and Papua New Guinea. In 1998 she received an Australian Development Scholarship to attend the University of Technology in Sydney. She now has a Masters in Nursing, specialising in infection control. Her skills are constantly in demand across Papua New Guinea.

'For me a turning point was when our staff realised they were capable of performing tasks that they had previously only watched in awe,' says Willyman. 'Operation Open Heart has helped us to reach our potential. I think it's great that our nurses can now go into rural hospitals and clinics and share their skills with confidence.'

Language of nursing

KIRIBATI: Teacher Pam Cordingley from Griffith University worked long days in the small nation's capital, Tarawa, to help prepare a bright group of I-Kiribati students to pass an English exam – all in the aid of nursing.

The English exam finishes off an intensive 14-week academic preparation program which is giving school-leavers the opportunity to study nursing at Griffith University, Queensland.

'There's a lot at stake and the students worked day and night. I've never seen young people apply themselves so thoroughly,' says Cordingley. 'The students' first language is I-Kiribati. English is taught at school but not to a very advanced level so understandably they needed a lot of help.'

But the great news is the relentless study has paid off. Cordingley's group of 25 students is now in Brisbane taking part in a 'nursing preparation program'. Once this is successfully completed they'll move on to a Diploma of Nursing course at TAFE. Those who really shine will also have

the opportunity to join a degree course at Griffith University.

Kiribati's economy faces considerable challenges common to other Pacific island states. Its small size, remoteness and geographical fragmentation are compounded by infertile soils, limited exploitable resources and lack of job opportunities. Further, Kiribati has a high rate of population growth. With 40 per cent of its people under the age of 20 there is serious concern about sustainability and future employment prospects.

'We expect quite a few of the students will take advantage of the global shortage in nursing skills,' says AusAID's development specialist Adam Blundell. 'It's a highly transportable profession and at the moment in extremely high demand.'

Some students after graduation will of course return to Kiribati but those who find employment in other countries will most likely send home remittances. The family culture is very strong. Offspring expect to help support their parents and siblings.

While they're getting used to the Australian way of life students are living with local Brisbane



families which is both reassuring and helpful. 'The homestays offer a family atmosphere and a measure of protection,' says Cordingley, 'but more than this, the students are improving their spoken English no end!'

ABOVE: Teacher Pam Cordingley with student Iumea Itinraoi. 'I want to be a nurse because my aim in life is to help people and to give them medicines when they need them.' Photo: Lorrie Graham

The new Kiribati–Australia Nursing Initiative is funded by AusAID. It plans to put three groups of 25 to 30 students through the nursing program over the next seven years. Its purpose is to expand educational and employment opportunities in the Pacific to help accelerate economic growth.



VOLUME 23 NUMBER 1 » JUNE–SEPT 2008

FOCUS IS THE MAGAZINE OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S OVERSEAS AID PROGRAM

Focus is published by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). It aims to increase community awareness and understanding of the Australian Government's overseas aid program, which is managed by AusAID.

The views expressed are not necessarily those of AusAID or the Australian Government.

Articles and photographs may be reproduced with permission from the Editor.

Enquiries, proposals for articles and feedback should be sent to:

Patricia Gibson
The Editor, *Focus*
Public Affairs Group
AusAID
GPO Box 887
Canberra ACT 2601

Tel +61 2 6206 4967
Fax +61 2 6206 4695
Email patricia.gibson@ausaid.gov.au

Design by GRi.D, Canberra
Printed by Pirion Pty Limited, Canberra

ISSN 0819-9973
Volume 23 Number 1 June–Sept 2008
© Commonwealth of Australia 2008

For more copies of *Focus* or other AusAID publications contact:
National Mailing and Marketing
PO Box 7077
Canberra BC ACT 2610

Tel +61 2 6269 1050
Fax +61 2 6260 2770
Email books@ausaid.gov.au



Australian Government
AusAID