

focus



THE MAGAZINE OF AUSTRALIA'S OVERSEAS AID PROGRAM

VOLUME 24 NUMBER 2 » JUNE-SEPT 2009

- Focus on women
- UNICEF partnership
- Six young volunteers abroad

About AusAID

The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) manages Australia's overseas aid program.

The aid program

The Australian Government, through AusAID, provides official development assistance to countries mainly in Australia's own region, the Asia-Pacific, but increasingly also in Africa. Development assistance is delivered as part of well-planned, long-term sustainable programs across a range of sectors—health, education, infrastructure, gender equality, law and order, rural development and the environment.

At times of emergency, however, AusAID has both the flexibility and expertise to respond swiftly and effectively. The agency has a proud record of delivering humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations caught in conflict zones or natural disasters, such as cyclones, floods and earthquakes.

Reasons for giving aid

Australia is committed to helping developing countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set out below. These aim to alleviate world poverty by 2015.

Millennium Development Goals



1 END EXTREME POVERTY & HUNGER



2 UNIVERSAL EDUCATION



3 GENDER EQUALITY



4 CHILD HEALTH



5 MATERNAL HEALTH



6 COMBAT DISEASE



7 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY



8 GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

Poverty is one of the greatest challenges of our time. We know that poverty not only blights the lives of individuals but contributes to national instability and conflict.

Australia's development assistance focus on poverty is guided by the MDGs and Australia's objective to assist developing countries to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development in line with our national interests.

Australia's standing as a good international citizen is critical to promoting and advancing Australia's foreign policy and national interests.

A strong and effective aid program advances Australia's reputation and our influence in the international community.

It is strongly in Australia's national interest to support stability and economic development in our region and throughout the world through assistance to the people and governments of developing countries.

The way AusAID works

AusAID competitively contracts aid delivery work to Australian and international companies and non-government organisations (NGOs). These bodies work in partnership with local people to implement projects and, most importantly, to help transfer skills. This approach maximises the chances of activities continuing long after the contract has expired and the Australians and others have gone home.

Size of the aid program

In 2009–10 Australia plans to spend \$3.8 billion on official development assistance. This is 0.34 per cent of our gross national income (GNI). The Australian Government is working towards a target of 0.5 per cent of GNI by 2015.

Calendar of theme days



June to September

4 June	International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression
5 June	UNEP World Environment Day
12 June	International Day Against Child Labour
June 20	World Refugee Day
June 26	International Day in Support of Victims of Trauma
11 July	World Population Day
1–8 August	World Breast Feeding Week
12 August	United Nations International Youth Day

October to December

5 October	UNESCO World Teachers Day
11–17 October	Anti-poverty Week
15 October	International Day of Rural Women
16 October	World Food Day
17 October	International Day for Eradication of Poverty
24 Oct–1 Nov	Children's Week (Australia)
24 Nov–1 Dec	AIDS Awareness Week
1 December	World AIDS Day
3 December	International Day of Disabled Persons

ABOVE: Children at the AusAID-supported kindergarten, Yayasan Putri Hati Kudus, Vila Verde, Dili. Photo: David Haigh, AusAID

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Government aid in focus: Australia's overseas aid program is committed to reducing poverty and advancing the Millennium Development Goals in the Asia-Pacific, Africa and the Middle East.

COVER: A woman and her baby at Engela District Hospital, Namibia. In Namibia, children represent over 40 per cent of the country's 2 million people. HIV infection rates among pregnant women now average 20 per cent, with rates as high as 42 per cent in some regions. More than half of new HIV infections are among youth under the age of 25. UNICEF supports a range of programs to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV and care for orphaned and vulnerable children. AusAID recently signed a four-year, \$93.6 million partnership with UNICEF to support its global role in advancing the Millennium Development Goals, particularly related to women and children. Photo: © UNICEF/NYHQ2008-0782/Isaac

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BUDGET 2009-10

Australia's commitment to overseas aid

The 2009–10 Budget maintained the Australian Government's commitment to increase overseas aid to 0.5 per cent of gross national income (GNI) by 2015.

Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Stephen Smith, Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance Bob McMullan and Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs Duncan Kerr said the 2009–10 Budget underlines the Government's ongoing commitment to increase Australia's Official Development Assistance (ODA) to 0.5 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI) by 2015–16.

Australia will provide an estimated \$3,818 million in ODA in 2009–10, of which \$3,334 million will be managed by AusAID.

The ODA/GNI ratio is forecast to increase to 0.34 per cent in 2009–10, up from 0.33 per cent in 2008–09, and is expected to reach 0.40 per cent in 2012–13.

New Budget measures are directed towards responding to the needs of developing countries and communities adversely affected by the global recession and continuing food insecurity. New initiatives will also support longer-term development and capacity building efforts.

These measures reflect the Government's view that it is in Australia's interests to help support economic growth and stability, particularly in our nearest neighbours. This is particularly the case amid a global recession that brings its own economic and security risks.

Food security through rural development

The Government will invest \$464.2 million over four years, with \$38.7 million in 2009–10, to support increases in food production globally and strengthen the ability of countries in the Asia-Pacific region and Africa to address food insecurity.

Addressing food insecurity is a long-term challenge requiring major investment. The Food Security through Rural Development measure will help lift agricultural productivity in developing countries and improve the functioning of markets in ways that increase job opportunities and incomes for the rural poor. It will also support social protection mechanisms to enable vulnerable people to better deal with natural and economic shocks.

Economic infrastructure

Poor infrastructure is a major constraint on economic development. The global recession has already seen infrastructure projects in the Asia-Pacific region put on hold due to lack of finance.

Of the 3.8 billion people in the Asia-Pacific region, over half do not have access to sanitation and an estimated one billion people still lack electricity. The Government will invest \$454.2 million over four years, with \$11.9 million in 2009–10, to fund high priority infrastructure needs in developing countries.

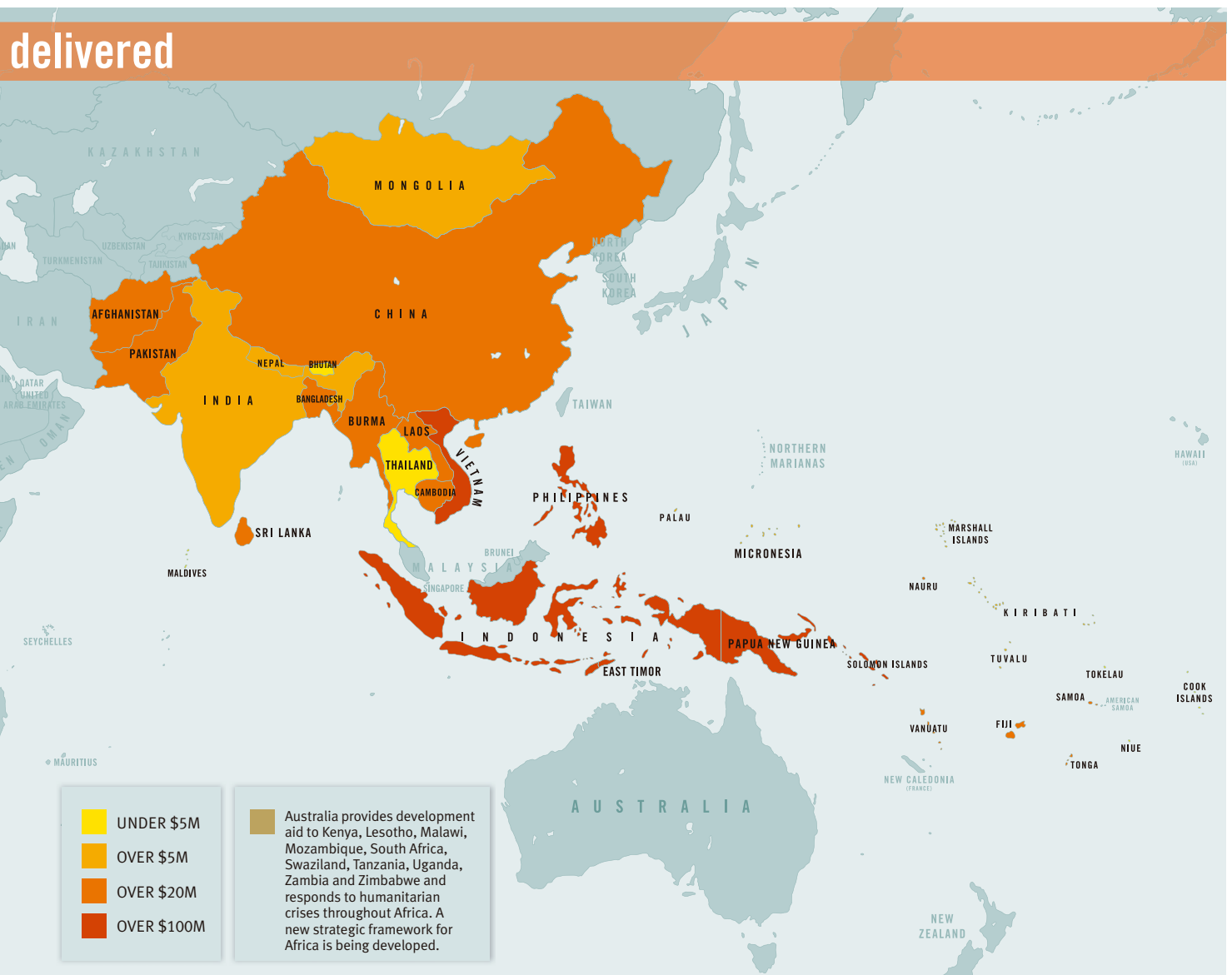
Where Australian aid is



Making faster development progress in the Pacific

Through the Pacific Partnerships for Development, Australia will provide increased development assistance in response to commitments by Pacific nations to improve economic and financial management, to better manage essential infrastructure and achieve better outcomes in basic health and education.

The Government will increase Australia's aid to the Pacific and Papua New Guinea in 2009–10 to \$1,090.9 million. Two important components of this increased assistance will be new budget measures on performance-linked aid and accountability and responsiveness of government.



Enhancing Australia's engagement in other regions

The 2009–10 Budget will enhance Australia's international engagement and support a more active role in responding to international challenges by boosting development cooperation in regions beyond the Asia–Pacific.

Australian ODA to Africa will increase to an estimated \$163.9 million in 2009–10. This funding will help make progress towards the Millennium Development Goals in African countries, with a particular emphasis on the high priority areas of maternal and child health, food security and water and sanitation. It will also support an increased number

of scholarships. The Government is also committed to helping rebuild a democratic Zimbabwe.

Australian ODA to South Asia will increase to around \$149.9 million in 2009–10, with a particular emphasis on improved health and education.

Australia will increase its non-military development efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan, providing over \$650 million over four years in non-military ODA. Improving development and stability in these two countries is critical to Australia's national security interests.

Australia will cancel debt owed by Indonesia in parallel with Government of Indonesia investment in programs combating tuberculosis.

Multilateral efforts to stimulate economic growth in response to the global recession

With weakened global financial markets, major development banks like the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) will need to help developing countries minimise the adverse impacts of the global recession and reduce poverty.

Australia will contribute US\$197.6 million over 10 years to the ADB and has allocated another US\$5.6 billion to be used in the unlikely event that the ADB is unable to meet its financial obligations. Founded in 1966, the ADB has never drawn on its callable capital.

Favourable report card for Australian aid program

The targeting and effectiveness of Australia's overseas aid program has been praised by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in its latest four-yearly review.

The chair of the OECD Development Assistance Committee, Eckhard Deutscher, presented the review's findings to Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Stephen Smith at Parliament House, Canberra, saying: "About 86 per cent of Australian aid is disbursed bilaterally with a high concentration on the Asia and Pacific regions. It is important that Australia maintains this focus, especially since the Pacific lags behind in achieving the Millennium Development Goals."

Mr Deutscher welcomed Australia's strategic focus on the region, including

assistance to East Timor and the Solomon Islands, and acknowledged the Pacific Partnerships for Development as a key feature of the aid program.

The review encouraged Australia to actively share its experience in key areas such as working and achieving results in states in fragile contexts and in small island states, integrating gender and capacity development, decentralising the aid system, and delegated cooperation arrangements in the Pacific. "There is a clear demand for this," he said, "and the donor community is looking forward to learning from Australia's experience."

Mr Deutscher congratulated Australia for its aid program, "and for the impressive improvements you have made." He encouraged a scale-up in the aid program to ensure its effectiveness and a focus on development results.

"This is especially important in these times of crisis," he said, "because the financial and economic crisis has made one thing clear again: its global nature has left no doubt of the degree of interdependence in today's globalised world. In this world, our future can only be a global future, and this has to include developing countries."

A friend in deed

When the devastating Black Saturday bushfires raged through Victoria killing 173 Australians it prompted an outpouring of international humanitarian concern, with some of the nation's aid recipients acting swiftly to return the favour.

On a construction site in Nauru, 42 workers made a joint decision to give a significant portion of a week's income to the bushfire appeal. They donated more than \$800 to the Australian Red Cross, along with contributions from the site managers and contractor.

The workers met with the Australian Consul General to Nauru, Mr George Fraser, who thanked them for their generosity and solidarity with the Australian people in these difficult times.

The construction workers are engaged on the redevelopment of the Nauru secondary school, an \$8 million AusAID-funded project due to be completed in 2010. They comprise a mix of skilled tradespeople including



The Nauru Secondary School construction workers and RCS representatives with Consul General George Fraser (middle row, seventh from left). Photo: AusAID

electricians, plumbers, carpenters, block layers, machine operators, concreters, scaffolders, painters and tilers and inexperienced site workers being trained in asbestos removal,

demolition, carpentry, concreting and bricklaying.

The project is managed by Melbourne-based company Reeves Construction Services (RCS) using

an innovative construction management approach that employs local workers and provides hands-on mentoring and skills training. This ensures that income flows to local workers, develops long-term skills and fosters a sense of ownership of the project in the community.

Upon completion the Nauruan community will have a secondary school equipped with general classrooms as well as science, music, art, sports, hospitality, sewing, metalwork and woodwork facilities.

The people of Papua New Guinea also dipped deeply into their pockets. In the towns and villages, thousands of people collected 118,000 kina, or about AUD\$66,000, and donated it to the PNG Red Cross Victorian bushfire appeal.

Another country happy to give aid to the bushfire victims was Indonesia. "Australia's success is also Indonesia's success and its misery is also Indonesia's misery," said Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who committed \$1 million towards rebuilding Victorian schools and sent a forensic team to help identify the dead.

ON A CONSTRUCTION SITE IN NAURU, 42 WORKERS MADE A JOINT DECISION TO GIVE A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF A WEEK'S INCOME TO THE BUSHFIRE APPEAL. THEY DONATED MORE THAN \$800 TO THE AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS, ALONG WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE SITE MANAGERS AND CONTRACTOR.

The Indonesian forensic team had in fact been trained by Australians and they appreciated the opportunity to return the favour and provide their help to Australians.

More earthquake reconstruction assistance for China



Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Stephen Smith announced a further \$275,000 for earthquake reconstruction in Dujiangyan, China in March. Photo: AusAID

Following a recent visit to the earthquake affected city of Dujiangyan in Sichuan Province, China to see the reconstruction effort first hand, Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Stephen Smith announced a further \$275,000 to assist earthquake reconstruction.

"Australia continues to help China recover from this terrible tragedy," Mr Smith said. "The scale of the devastation is enormous."

"This new assistance builds on the \$2.75 million the Australian Government contributed last year to

earthquake relief, and the additional \$8.75 million donated by Australian state and territory governments, companies and individuals," he said.

The additional \$275,000 will support six projects in Sichuan and neighbouring Gansu Provinces and will involve refurbishing 80 health clinics, providing safe water for 1,200 families, reconstructing dining halls and classrooms for two schools and repairing and expanding a health clinic providing services to 12,000 people in 14 villages.

\$20 million for Pacific climate change study

Climate change has the potential to affect some of the poorest and most vulnerable nations with challenges that include sea level rise, more intense storms and floods, water shortages and impacts on water and food security.

The Australian Government has allocated \$20 million to fund the Pacific Climate Change Science Program. This will help Australia's neighbours in the Pacific and East Timor better understand how climate change will impact on them.

The program will involve working with Pacific Island nations to help them track climate trends, investigate regional climate drivers, provide regional climate projections, and improve understanding of ocean processes, ocean acidification and sea level rise.

The Pacific Climate Change Science Program will be managed by the Department of Climate Change in collaboration with AusAID. It will be delivered by the Bureau of Meteorology and the CSIRO through their research partnership in the Centre for Australian Weather and Climate Research.

Improving the lives of landmine survivors

On the United Nations International Day for Mine Awareness and Action on 4 April the Minister for Foreign Affairs Stephen Smith announced that Australia would provide \$2.4 million for prosthetics and the rehabilitation of Iraqi landmine survivors and other victims of conflict.

"This assistance through the United Nations Development Program builds on Australia's existing support for mine clearance activities across Iraq, through which more than 9.4 million square metres of land has been cleared. It will continue to prevent injuries from landmines and other explosive

remnants of war and help and support survivors," Mr Smith said.

Australia will also donate 10 Australian-made landmine detectors to the United Nations in Nepal to help clear 45 minefields across the country and reduce the risk of death and disability.

This brings the Government's assistance for mine action in 2008–09 to more than \$17 million, including for projects in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Iraq, Laos, Lebanon and Vietnam.

Australia supports women's health in developing countries

The Minister for Foreign Affairs Stephen Smith has announced changes to the Family Planning Guidelines for Australia's overseas development assistance program to allow Australian aid to support the same range of family planning services for women in developing countries that is currently available to women in Australia.

The United Nations estimates that universal family planning could save the lives of as many as 175,000 women each year. "It is a tragedy that globally there are an estimated 42 million terminations performed each year," Mr Smith said. "Almost half of these are estimated to be medically unsafe. Around 68,000 women die each year as a result of unsafe abortions and approximately 220,000 children lose their mothers in this way."

Mr Smith said that since the introduction of the Family Planning Guidelines in 1996, the funding for family planning activities from the aid budget had declined from 0.44 per cent or \$6.9 million in 1995–96 to only 0.07 per cent or \$2.3 million in 2006–07 and that the Australian Government was committed to reversing this trend.

He went on to announce that additional funding of up to \$15 million over four years would be delivered through United Nations agencies

and NGOs for family planning and reproductive health activities to assist in reducing maternal deaths and improving child and maternal health as part of Australia's commitment to advance the Millennium Development Goals.

New website for Pacific Islanders



LEFT TO RIGHT: Wests Tigers player Willie Mataka and Developing Markets CEO Leon Isaacs at the launch demonstrating how the website works.
Photo: AusAID

A new website is helping Pacific Islanders working in Australia and New Zealand to find the most cost-effective way of sending money home to their families.

Compared with other regions around the world, the cost of sending money home to the Pacific is much higher. Whilst the global money transfer fee is normally about 10 per cent of the amount remitted, in the Australia–Pacific Island region this can cost anywhere from 13 per cent to 30 per cent when the transaction fees, foreign exchange commissions, messaging fees and pick-up charges are taken into account. This means the cost of sending \$200 to the Pacific can be up to \$60, compared with \$20 in other parts of the world.

The www.sendmoneypacific.org website, funded jointly by the Australian and New Zealand Governments

through AusAID and NZAID and managed by Developing Markets Associates Ltd, allows workers to compare money transfer services and choose which service meets their needs in terms of cost, speed and convenience.

The website provides information on transferring money to Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. It also provides a news service, financial information and notice boards for Pacific Islander communities in Australia and New Zealand. Information from the website will be available in local languages and distributed to community groups.

Tackling HIV in the Asia-Pacific

There are five million people living with HIV in the Asia-Pacific region and in Asia it is the single largest cause of death from disease among people between the ages of 15 and 44 years. HIV prevalence reached 1.6 per cent in rural Papua New Guinea in 2008 and 2.4 per cent in the Indonesian provinces of Papua and West Papua in 2006.

On 7 April, World Health Day, the Australian Government released its new strategy for international development assistance in HIV—*Intensifying the response: halting the spread of HIV*. This sets priorities that will guide Australia's international development assistance to tackle this growing epidemic in our region.

The priorities involve working with our regional neighbours to target HIV prevention, treatment and funding and reviewing laws and policies to ensure people know their HIV status, receive treatment and can access condoms and clean needles.

AusAID-ACFID partnership to strengthen aid cooperation



Signing the agreement: Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance Bob McMullan and the Hon. Margaret Reid AO, with former ACFID Executive Director Paul O'Callaghan and Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector Senator Ursula Stephens. Photo: AusAID

The Australian Government has entered a partnership with the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), the peak national body of Australian non-government organisations (NGOs) working in the field of international aid and development.

The AusAID-ACFID partnership agreement was signed by the Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance Bob McMullan and ACFID President the Hon. Margaret Reid AO on 24 March this year. It aims to better coordinate and maximise Australia's efforts to reduce world poverty and suffering.

The agreement commits the partners to the shared principles

of international best practice, development effectiveness, reducing poverty, building capacity, sustainability, gender, disability, participation and good governance, and involvement of the Australian public.

"By working together Australia's efforts are stronger and we can work more strategically with the governments and people of developing nations in our region and with other donor countries," Mr McMullan said.

"The partnership will support global efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and build capacity in partner countries in areas that are critical to development and of key interest to Australia."

Pacific Islands Forum is coming to Cairns

Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd will chair this year's Pacific Islands Forum leaders' meeting in Cairns, Queensland from 4–7 August, as Lucy Horodny reports.

This is the first time since 1994 that Australia has hosted the annual meeting of Pacific leaders, which rotates to a different member country each year.

Up until 1 May 2009 the Forum comprised 16 independent and self-governing Pacific states: Australia, the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. On 1 May 2009 Fiji's membership was suspended because its military government did not meet a Forum deadline to set a date for democratic elections this year.

Pacific Partnerships for Development

Australia's interests lie in a stable, prosperous and growing Pacific neighbourhood.

Since Prime Minister Rudd's signing of the Port Moresby Declaration in March 2008 Australia has strengthened its engagement with Pacific island nations through a number of Pacific Partnerships for Development.

These provide a framework for Australia and Pacific island nations to commit jointly to shared development goals, including economic growth and more rapid progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.

The Pacific Partnerships for Development are a core component of Australia's development assistance program to the Pacific, which in 2008–09 was almost \$1 billion.

They pay special attention to improving economic infrastructure, enhancing private sector development and achieving better outcomes in health and education.

To date, partnerships have been signed with Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Kiribati and Samoa.

History of the Pacific Islands Forum

The Pacific Islands Forum was established as part of the program of decolonisation in the Pacific. In 1947, the six colonial governments in the South Pacific established the South Pacific Commission, which discussed developmental—but not political—matters.

From the mid-1960s, Ratu Mara, the head of Fiji's colonial legislature, agitated for a mechanism for island countries to address common issues from a regional perspective and to give their collective views greater weight in the international community. Australia was sympathetic to this idea and, along with the Cook Islands, Fiji, Nauru, New Zealand, Samoa and Tonga, established the South Pacific Forum, which first met in Wellington, New Zealand in 1971. The organisation's name was changed in 2000 to the Pacific Islands Forum to better represent its membership, which now includes states from both the southern and northern Pacific.

Aside from political matters, Forum meetings have focused heavily on regional trade and economic issues. More recently, good governance and security have become part of the Forum's agenda.

by Roger Wheatley

AusAID, Port Moresby

The Australian Government is encouraging economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region through the Enterprise Challenge Fund.

Two businesses in Papua New Guinea (PNG), Port Moresby-based Paradise Spices Ltd and Lae-based Mainland Holdings Ltd, have been awarded funding from the Enterprise Challenge Fund (ECF).

Paradise Spices—\$170,000

Paradise Spices is a family run company that has been involved in the agriculture sector in PNG since 1987 and exporting vanilla beans for 10 years. The company's Managing Director, Micky Puritau, said the \$170,000 funding it receives will enable Paradise Spices to establish a solvent extraction facility at its Port Moresby site to produce pure vanilla extract, vanilla oleoresin (a naturally occurring mixture of resin and essential oil) and other spices.

He said the facility would be the first of its kind in PNG and that it would create a larger and more reliable market for the farmers.

Part of the plan for the project is to gain international quality standard certification. Once achieved, it is expected that this will lead to greater export opportunities.

Mainland Holdings—\$453,745

Mainland Holdings is a well established national agribusiness company in PNG with 37 years of experience working with smallholder farmers.

Mainland will use the \$453,745 funding it receives to establish a processing plant to convert fresh

Growing vanilla markets



green vanilla pods, mainly from the Menyamya area in Morobe Province, into desiccated, fermented and dried products to international standards. This will greatly increase the demand for processed vanilla products from PNG.

Mainland's General Manager, Graham Pollock, said, "As part of this project we will offer technical support services to vanilla bean growers and provide them with advice on crop management, disease control and overall management of their supply operation. This will help to raise the product quality levels which have undermined the PNG vanilla industry."

Among other benefits from this project, and like Paradise Spices, Mainland anticipates there will be a reliable market for a large number of rural suppliers and a significant increase in earning potential for producers as a result of the overall higher average bean quality, reduced waste and the purchase of lower quality beans for processing that previously could not be sold.

"This is a great outcome for these businesses but more importantly it's good news for agriculture and economic growth in PNG," said AusAID's Minister-Counsellor in PNG, Bill Costello.

"The funding awarded to these two companies doesn't just mean growth for the businesses involved—it also means increased opportunities for their suppliers.

"Providing access to employment and markets and encouraging the growth of small businesses is vital in order to achieve a meaningful and sustainable reduction in poverty.

"Through the ECF, the Australian Government is helping the private sector to play its part in alleviating poverty across our region."

About the program

The Enterprise Challenge Fund is a \$20.5 million Australian Government program administered by AusAID that is designed to strengthen the private sector, encourage economic growth and reduce

poverty in the region. Open to all firms, it is competitive and promotes private sector investment in initiatives that extend services or provide employment and other benefits to poor communities.

Grants of between \$100,000 and \$1.5 million are available to businesses that are prepared to at least match the government grant. The preference is for commercially sustainable projects that directly benefit the poor through improved incomes, access to vital goods and services or new jobs.

The ECF operates in nine countries, including Cambodia, Laos, East Timor, the Philippines and PNG and in selected provinces in Indonesia, Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

Grants predominantly support the agribusiness, tourism and retail financial services sectors.

There were nine successful grant recipients in this round of regional funding, including the two PNG winners. The others are based in Vanuatu, Cambodia, Fiji, Laos and the Solomon Islands. They include a premium grade cocoa export venture, a project expanding shipping and infrastructure facilities and a tourism venture.

"Everybody knows there is no path out of poverty without economic growth," Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance Bob McMullan said when he announced the grants in April. "The Enterprise Challenge Fund is an attempt to make this growth work for the poorest people in our neighbourhood."

PHOTO: Micky Puritau, Paradise Spices Managing Director and Jane Jason, Mainland Holdings Vanilla Extension Officer—ECF funding means that the businesses can grow along with the income of the small farmers supplying them.
Photo: AusAID



blueprint

for a better world

the millennium development goals and you

An interactive exhibition on tackling poverty in the world

Supported by





www.blueprintforabetterworld.org

Blueprint for a better world

by Jodi Gatfield

Communications Officer, AusAID

A new travelling exhibition is showing Australians what they can do to help alleviate global poverty.

At the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000, 189 world leaders committed their nations to meeting eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that aim to end poverty by 2015.

Now, in 2009, almost two thirds of the way through the target period, we are still a very long way from achieving those goals, with nearly 1 billion of the world's people still living on less than \$1.25 a day. This situation could worsen dramatically as the effects of the global recession take hold.

AusAID is partnering with Caritas Australia in a national touring exhibition, *Blueprint for a Better World: the Millennium Development Goals and You*, to demonstrate to the people of urban, rural and regional Australia why we need to reduce world poverty now.

The *Blueprint for a Better World: the Millennium Development Goals and You* exhibition was initially developed by Caritas Australia as a month-long, purpose-built display at Customs House, Circular Quay to coincide with World Youth Day celebrations in July 2008. The partnership with AusAID has enabled it to be developed into a free touring exhibition that is travelling around Australia to raise awareness of the critical importance of the MDGs.

The project showcases the Australian Government's commitment to providing aid to less fortunate nations and overcoming global poverty. It also increases the community's awareness of the way that AusAID collaborates with non-government organisations

(NGOs) and demonstrates the contribution the Australian NGOs make to the wider community.

As well as artworks and photographs, the exhibition uses videos and interactive displays to encourage individuals, families, communities and politicians to take action and write down the contribution that they personally intend to make to help alleviate global poverty.

These pledges become part of the exhibition, underscoring the positive difference one person or a whole community can make in developing a blueprint for a better world. School children who visit the exhibition are given educational material to challenge and delve into what the MDGs are and how they affect us all.

Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance Bob McMullan endorsed this approach at the launch of the exhibition in Brisbane on 27 February this year when he said, "I am a big supporter of using the arts as a way of drawing attention to development issues. The arts inspire people. Pictures can often bring a depth that words cannot.

"The global financial crisis will figure heavily in the news for a long time, so having the exhibition travelling around the country will remind people about the MDGs."

The eight MDGs aim to alleviate hunger and poverty, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal

health, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability and develop a global partnership for development.

"While people in our communities will be hurt by the crisis, others in developing countries will find their circumstances even more perilous," Mr McMullan said. "For an individual this means continuing to live in poor circumstances, without much chance of going to school, having enough to eat or being healthy. It means not having much opportunity to get a good job or make plans for the future and not being able to protect oneself against HIV or other diseases. In general, it means living a precarious sort of life.

"It's not in anyone's interest for this level of poverty to continue. We need very broad public support if we are to keep up the momentum on MDGs and poverty reduction."

The exhibition is touring to 28 regions, including metropolitan and regional areas, across Australia until October 2010. More information is available at www.blueprintforabetterworld.org.

On 16 to 18 October you can Stand Up for the MDGs with millions of people worldwide (see www.standagainstpoverty.org).

OPPOSITE: Contrast of content and context: the location of the *Blueprint for a Better World: MDGs and You* exhibition next to the magnificent old Cathedral of St Stephen in Brisbane was a vivid reminder of the difference in fortunes between the West and the developing world. Photo: Jodi Gatfield, AusAID



ABOVE LEFT: Even though numbers are falling, every year nearly 10 million children die before their fifth birthday from preventable diseases.

ABOVE RIGHT: Visitors use the pledge towers to write down their own personal contributions to ending global poverty.

CENTRE: The exhibition provides tangible examples of actions people can take to help address the Millennium Development Goals and alleviate poverty.

BOTTOM LEFT: A tippy-tap is a simple hand-washing device used in many African countries. Nearly 1 billion people do not have clean and sufficient water supplies and 2.5 billion do not have access to sanitation.

BOTTOM RIGHT: 15 litres of water is the minimum required for a person's daily survival—drinking, cooking, hygiene and personal use. The average amount of water used by a person in a developed country like Australia is 30 times this—450 litres of water per person per day. Many people in the world do not have access to even 15 litres of water a day. Photos: Jodi Gatfield, AusAID



MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The eight Millennium Development Goals aim to alleviate world poverty by 2015.

-  1 END EXTREME POVERTY & HUNGER
-  2 UNIVERSAL EDUCATION
-  3 GENDER EQUALITY
-  4 CHILD HEALTH
-  5 MATERNAL HEALTH
-  6 COMBAT DISEASE
-  7 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
-  8 GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

Facing the challenge of the global recession

by Dr Mark McGillivray
Chief Economist, AusAID

AusAID is assessing the impacts of the global recession on developing countries and has established a taskforce to coordinate the Australian aid program's response.

As the world reels under the challenges of the worst economic crisis in at least 60 years, the impacts of this crisis are not isolated to developed countries such as Australia. In developing countries, the crisis threatens to play out as a human tragedy owing to its impacts on poverty, health and related outcomes.

The global recession has occurred in an environment where many governments already find it difficult to finance the programs that are necessary to create jobs, deliver core services and infrastructure and provide safety nets.

Developing countries will be affected by declines in many areas that are key drivers of economic growth. These include foreign direct investment, export revenue, tourism, international finance, remittances and trust fund revenues. The increased economic volatility due to the crisis will also make macroeconomic management much more difficult.

While the impacts will vary in nature and severity among emerging and developing countries, recent forecasts tell us that overall economic growth in developing countries will fall from 6.1 per cent in 2008 to 1.6 per cent in 2009. The second of these numbers falls to around zero per cent if China and India are taken out of the calculations. In fact, many individual developing countries will record negative economic growth in 2009.

The World Bank estimates that in 2009 alone the global recession will trap an extra 55 million people below the extreme poverty line of \$1.25 per day. Over the coming months it is more than likely that this estimate

will be revised upwards as additional information becomes available. Some other recent estimates predict that as many as 90 million extra people will in 2009 be living in extreme poverty as a direct result of the global recession.

The World Bank estimates that from 2009 to 2015, an average of 200,000 to 400,000 more children a year may die if the crisis persists. That's an extra 1.4 to 2.8 million children who may die as a result of the crisis.

Women are likely to be among the hardest hit as their employment options are often most vulnerable; they are more likely to be unemployed or laid off; they tend to have lower access to social safety nets; and they have unequal access and control over economic resources. Children are also vulnerable as their access to health care and schooling is affected.

There is also a risk that the governments of some developing economies will tend towards nationalist economic policy stances. This could cause added social unrest and possibly even conflict within countries.

How will the Asia-Pacific fare?

With economies in Asia ranging from the giants of China and India through to the low income countries of Laos and Nepal, there are quite marked differences in the way the crisis is playing out country to country. The most vulnerable countries include Bangladesh, Indonesia, Philippines, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Timor Leste and Mongolia.

Economic growth is expected to fall in East Asian developing countries from 6.6 per cent in 2008 to 3.6 per cent in 2009. The fall in South East Asia between these years is expected to be even larger, from 4.3 per cent to 0.7 per cent. Over the same period, growth in South Asia is expected to fall from 6.8 per cent to 4.8 per cent. The Asian Development Bank estimates that these declines in growth will result in 63 million more people being trapped in extreme poverty in Asia in 2009.

All developing countries in the Pacific will feel the impact of the crisis, although to differing extents. Economic growth in the region is expected to fall from 5.1 per cent in 2008 to 3.0 per cent in 2009. The largest economy, Papua New Guinea (PNG), is expected to fare better during the crisis than the rest of the region.

As an exporter of commodities, PNG has benefited significantly from the commodity price boom of preceding years. With commodity prices falling as a result of the global recession, future prospects have weakened. However, PNG still remains better positioned than smaller island states to deal with the impacts of the crisis.

Even in better times, most Pacific island countries have significant areas of economic vulnerability. They are small economies with most growth coming from export related sectors including tourism, commodity exports as well as remittance earnings from Pacific islanders working overseas. Because of their size, they have limited capacity to deal with the challenges that are thrown up by any crisis.

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focus on **WOMEN**



AUSTRALIA IS BUILDING EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS TO ADDRESS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, REDUCE MATERNAL AND CHILD MORTALITY AND PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT.



OPPOSITE: Women performing at a ceremony in PNG. Photo: AusAID

by Melissa Stutsel & Amy Haddad
AusAID*

Helping women to stay safe

The Australian Government will use a new report on violence against women in Melanesia and East Timor to build effective partnerships to address the issue of violence against women in our region.

Violence against women is a serious global problem, affecting all countries, including Australia. This violence causes immeasurable trauma to women, their families and their communities and is an abuse of basic human rights. Its impacts include escalating costs for health care and social services, policing and the justice system and the restriction of women's participation in political, social and economic life.

In every country where violence against women is high, cultural and economic factors play a critical role in promoting and condoning violence as a legitimate way to resolve conflict. The poor status of women is a major obstacle to reducing violence against them.

In Melanesia and East Timor, violence against women is severe and pervasive and significantly constrains development. If the Millennium Development Goals are to be achieved, a comprehensive and effective response to violence against women in the region is urgently required.

AusAID's Office of Development Effectiveness has studied the way violence against women and girls is addressed in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and East Timor.

The study used a participatory approach that involved more than 700 individuals, including representatives from government and civil society, and was supported by local researchers in each of the four Melanesian countries. This allowed the researchers to



assess the effectiveness of local and international approaches from multiple perspectives.

The results of the study are published in a regional report entitled *Violence against Women in Melanesia and East Timor: Building on Global and Regional Promising Approaches* together with supplements for each of the countries studied.

The report was written by world expert on researching violence against women, Dr Mary Ellsberg, and Melanesian expert, Dr Christine Bradley, together with Andrew Egan and Amy Haddad from the Office of Development Effectiveness. It provides insight into the current situation in

ABOVE: In Vanuatu, the introduction of domestic violence protection orders is a promising approach. In the Port Vila vegetable markets a young woman reads about her rights.

ABOVE RIGHT: In Fiji, counselling has proved effective. Fiji Women's Crisis Centre counsellor Shobna Devi, right, and project officer Wilma Eileen demonstrate a typical counselling scenario.

ABOVE FAR RIGHT: Shamima Ali, Director, outside the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, Suva. The Centre provides practical support to domestic violence survivors and campaigns to end the silence around the issue.

* Melissa Stutsel is AusAID's Adviser on Ending Violence Against Women. Amy Haddad is an Evaluation Officer with AusAID's Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE) and one of the authors of the ODE report.

“AUSAID’S OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS HAS STUDIED THE WAY VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IS ADDRESSED IN FIJI, PAPUA NEW GUINEA, THE SOLOMON ISLANDS, VANUATU AND EAST TIMOR.”



these countries, including the barriers women face trying to escape violence. Most importantly, the report highlights examples of promising practices already taking place and presents a framework for action for addressing violence against women in the region.

Framework for action

The framework for action proposed in the report is based on three strategies that have been successful internationally in reducing violence against women: increasing women’s access to justice; increasing women’s access to support services; and preventing violence against women.

Improving access to justice

Across the region, law reform has often been a major part of addressing violence against women. This has involved passing laws and policies that discourage violence, prosecuting offenders, helping women to protect themselves and their children from

violence and providing information to women about their rights.

One promising approach is in Papua New Guinea, where the Government has developed the Justice Sector Gender Strategy for 2005–2010. This aims to strengthen coordination between agencies and increase women’s access to the justice system.

Another example is from Vanuatu, where domestic violence protection orders (DVPOs) have been introduced. A domestic violence survivor from Port Vila is quoted in the report as saying, “The DVPO enabled me to return to my children ... my husband had to leave the house temporarily to allow me to return home. I think the DVPO was a rude awakening for him.”

Supporting women

Increasing women’s access to support when violence occurs is a critical part of the framework for action. It involves providing safe havens and support services for survivors of violence

and providing long-term support for organisations that provide this support.

Many inspiring local initiatives have started at the grassroots or community level. One of these is in East Timor, where the Alola Foundation empowers women through three-day, village-based workshops that assist them to form income-producing cooperatives to improve their economic independence.

Another strong support service is the Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre which provides crisis counselling, legal, medical and other practical support services for women and children survivors of domestic violence. The Centre also plays a public advocacy and community education role aimed at countering the culture of silence around domestic violence.

In the Solomon Islands, the Christian Care Centre, founded by the sisters of the Church of Melanesia, is a safe haven for abused women and girls. It provides counselling and activities for women and girls living at the centre and conducts community awareness programs.

Preventing violence

Prevention must be a key part of any strategy to eliminate violence against women. This involves providing communities with the information, resources and skills that are necessary to take action against violence. It also means equipping communities to deal with the effects of violence on women, families and communities.

The report recommends a coordinated effort at all levels to raise awareness, change community attitudes about violence and improve women's status in society. In particular, involving men in prevention, support and awareness raising has proved successful in implementing social change and reducing violence against women.

An example is the Vanuatu Women's Centre which has enlisted men who hold leadership positions in their communities, particularly police officers and village chiefs, to speak out against violence against women as male advocates, including in locally based Committees Against Violence Against Women (CAVAWs).

The success of this promising approach is illustrated by the words of one male advocate who said, "Before I became a male advocate, I had violence in my home despite the fact that I am a police officer and should be upholding the law. I was always violent towards my wife and our life at home was not a happy one. I now treat my wife with more respect and my perceptions and

views towards women have changed. Our CAVAWs would refer all women victims to me for counselling and advice. If they choose, I also counsel their husbands and it has really helped so many couples restore peace and unity in their homes."

Partnership approach

Ending violence against women is crucial to achieving gender equality and delivering positive development outcomes. As signatories to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Fiji, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, East Timor and Australia have all committed to work to achieve equality between men and women and to promote women's human rights. A more comprehensive and effective response to violence against women is also urgently required if the Millennium Development Goals are to be achieved.

The Australian Government takes the problem of violence against women seriously. In line with the participatory approach that was used in undertaking this research, the Government will continue to work in partnership with key stakeholders, including partner governments, civil society groups and international organisations, using this report as a positive platform to build effective partnerships to address violence against women in the region.

Men's role in ending the violence

Engaging with men to prevent violence against women was one of the key recommendations of the ODE report, *Violence Against Women in Melanesia and East Timor: Building on Global and Regional Promising Approaches*. As an initial response, AusAID has partnered with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Pacific Centre to send a Pacific and East Timorese delegation of 14 men and women from non-government organisations to Rio de Janeiro for a major symposium on gender equality. Here is what Tura Lewai, a male youth representative from the Pacific and East Timorese delegation, had to say about his experience there.

“ At the Global Symposium on Engaging Men and Boys in Gender Equality that I attended in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 30 March to 4 April 2009, more than 450 men and women from 80 different countries lifted their hands up and said, 'We will not tolerate violence against women and children.' It was empowering to see and hear men standing up for women's rights and a life free from violence.

Living in a world where manhood is based on power and domination, it was impressive to see and hear how men from all over the world are starting to transform what it is to be a man. I felt so empowered beyond measure, for I knew and felt that my work was cut out for me back home in Fiji. I feel that when empowering women and girls, you are empowering the whole family, and when that is achieved, the empowerment of the nation is realised.

While I was at the symposium I had the privilege of helping to draft the Rio Call for Action, a document calling for action from states, the UN, communities and the private sector. This document will form the basis of the work I intend to do in Fiji and the Pacific, starting with the Pacific Youth Festival, a gathering of 1,400 young men and women from 22 countries, that will be held in Suva in July. ”



Violence Against Women in Melanesia and East Timor: Building on Global and Regional Promising Approaches

In Melanesia and East Timor, severe and pervasive violence against women causes escalating costs and restricts women's participation in political, social and economic life. You can see the full AusAID Office of Development Effectiveness report on this topic at www.ode.usaid.gov.au/.

Saving the lives of women and children

by Carolyn Hardy

Chief Executive, UNICEF Australia

UNICEF Australia and AusAID have entered a new four-year partnership aimed at reducing the number of women and children who die in poverty.

In Australia there is hope, if not informed optimism, that we will evade most of the pain of the global recession. At the least, it is appearing that our economy is better placed than most to weather the storm.

The reverse is true in some of the world's poorest nations. Already rocked by food and fuel prices late last year, the crisis has brewed a perfect economic storm that has hit investment, trade, tourism, remittances and possibly even aid.

There are now fears the crisis will create new poverty traps that will ensnare people not just for an economic cycle but for generations.

A discussion paper focusing on the impact of the financial crisis on children commissioned by UNICEF warns that developing nations must sustain, or even increase, social spending and funding for child protection in order not to condemn several future generations to poverty.

It also says that dampened economic growth could lead to falls in agricultural investment and productivity, triggering a new spike in food prices. Sharp rises in food and fuel prices in late 2008 forced an estimated 100 million people into hunger.

Forecasts suggest there could be over 50 million more people unemployed globally in 2009. The ranks of the "working poor"—people working and living on less than US\$2 a day—could also swell by well over 200 million.

The reality is that unless governments act now, more children



will drop out of school and be forced into work, rates of malnutrition will rise, neo-natal and child health will decline and a new "lost generation" will be created.

It is why the recent move by G20 leaders to earmark US\$50 billion for low income countries is heartening.

It was also heartening that unlike past international forums that have had poverty high on their agenda—in which the likes of Bono and Sir Bob Geldof have hectored world leaders—this time Australia played a leading role.

Historically Australia has been a laggard in terms of the percentage of gross national income that it allocated to overseas aid. And this is despite the fact that the greatest number of poor—people living on less than \$1.25 a

ABOVE: An infant is weighed as part of a routine medical examination at the main hospital in the coastal town of Vilanculos, Mozambique. The hospital was severely damaged by Cyclone Favio and tents bearing the UNICEF logo were used as temporary wards. Cyclone Favio pounded the coast with drenching rains and winds of over 200 km per hour. While few deaths or injuries were reported, an estimated 150,000 people were affected in nearby provinces and 50,000 people were left homeless. The disaster came on the heels of severe flooding that had already displaced as many as 140,000 people—half of them children—along the Zambezi River. AusAID recently signed a four-year, \$93.6 million partnership with UNICEF to support its global role in advancing the Millennium Development Goals, particularly related to saving the lives of women and children. Photo: © UNICEF/NYHQ2007-0215/Delvigne-Jean

day—are in the Asia-Pacific region. Our poor aid contribution historically meant Australia's ability to play a significant leadership role in the global response to poverty had been greatly diminished. Our road to redemption was actually started by the former Prime Minister, John Howard, in 2005 while he attended the UN World Summit in New York. Mr Howard announced a \$1 billion increase in our aid budget over five years.

The Rudd Government built upon this with its commitment to boost overseas aid to 0.5 per cent of gross national income by 2015. More importantly, amid the financial meltdown, the government has recommitted itself to this pledge as recently as May this year in the 2009–10 Budget.

Under a Partnership Framework signed with UNICEF, AusAID will provide \$93.6 million over four years to advance its global role in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and particularly those relating to women and children.

UNICEF Australia and AusAID conducted a joint briefing of parliamentarians in March to highlight some of the challenges to improving maternal and child health. This is the one Millennium Development Goal which is lagging the most.

UNICEF's flagship report, *State of the World's Children 2009*, revealed that women in developing nations are 300 times more likely to die during pregnancy or childbirth than women in Australia and other developed countries. This alarming disparity represents one of the greatest indicators of the gulf between rich and poor in our world today.

Alarming, a mother in Timor-Leste has a one in 35 chance of dying in childbirth or from pregnancy-related complications compared to Australian women who face a one in 13,300 risk.

Every year more than half a million women die as a result of pregnancy or childbirth complications. For every death, another 20 women suffer illnesses or injury, often with severe and

lasting consequences. A child born into poverty is almost 14 times more likely to die in their first month than if they were born in a developed economy.

Most maternal deaths are caused by obstetric complications, anaemia (exacerbated by malaria), HIV and other conditions that increase the risk of haemorrhage. Yet most of these conditions are preventable or treatable. Up to 80 per cent of maternal deaths could be averted if women had access to maternity and basic healthcare services.

That the conditions women face are confronting is highlighted by a medical clinic in Papua New Guinea which has no running water. Not only do women in labour have to walk several miles to get to the clinic but they are also required to carry with them two buckets of water.

UNICEF projects aim to deliver a "continuum of care", a concept that transcends the traditional emphasis on single, disease-specific interventions. This holistic approach seeks to foster a model of primary health care that embraces every stage of maternal, newborn and child health.

Saving the lives of mothers and their newborns requires more than just medical intervention. Educating girls is pivotal to improving maternal and neonatal health and also benefits families and societies. And often other basic life essentials such as clean water and adequate nutrition are critical factors in improving the health of mothers and children.

Yet this work can only be done through donations from both governments and individuals. At a time when aid funding has never been more critical it is heartening to see the Australian government playing an important role in combating poverty.

Our leaders and decision-makers must not only be conscious of the economic pain at home but the plight of our neighbours in the region. For the poorest, the economic crisis looms as a matter of life and death.



ABOVE: A woman carries her baby in a sling pouch on her back in the Dorti camp on the outskirts of El Geneina, capital of West Darfur. About 8,000 displaced people live in the UNICEF-supported camp. UNICEF, in collaboration with other relief groups and with government and local authorities, is providing shelter materials, emergency health services, expanded access to safe water and sanitation, support for education, and protection services for traumatised children and victims of gender-based violence. Photo: © UNICEF/NYHQ2004-0897/Noorani



TOP RIGHT: Bindu Modi sleeps in bed with her newborn twins at her home in Purulia District in West Bengal State. She delivered the babies at a primary health centre, but her delivery was complicated due to pre-eclampsia toxemia and post-partum haemorrhage. Referred to the district hospital, she returned home instead, and is now suffering from anaemia and swelling of the extremities. Photo: © UNICEF/NYHQ2005-2410/Khemka

ABOVE RIGHT: Shiela Uibey, 25, who is nine months pregnant, walks to collect water in Pathadeori Village in Seoni District in Madhya Pradesh State. She fetches water up to ten times a day and seldom has time to rest. Proper rest is essential for optimal weight gain during pregnancy, as well as for healthy infant birth weight. Photo: © UNICEF/NYHQ2006-2815/Khemka

In India, maternal health remains perilous. The high maternal mortality ratio (an estimated 450 per 100,000 live births) reflects continued discrimination against women, also evidenced by limited antenatal and safe delivery services. Only one third of deliveries take place in health institutions and only 43 per cent of births are attended by health professionals.

Child survival and welfare are intimately tied to women's health. India's infant mortality rate is 56 per 1,000 live births, with almost half of infant deaths occurring in the first week of life. Some 30 per cent of babies are born underweight (below 2,500 grams), putting them at higher risk of mortality and disease.

Most women cannot choose when and how many children they will bear, and pressure to

have sons often drives repeated pregnancies. Early pregnancy, pregnancies that are too close together and large family size also contribute to high maternal and infant deaths. While some states have made significant progress, at least 117,000 women die needlessly every year during childbirth, while many more deaths, at home or en route to care facilities, go unrecorded.

Globally, 536,000 women die annually from pregnancy and childbirth complications. Most of these deaths are in the developing world, especially in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

In India, UNICEF supports government community outreach and education programs on maternal health issues, trains female health providers, provides access to ante- and post-natal care and ensures access to contraceptives.



My visit to the Hamlin Fistula Hospital, Ethiopia

by Lucy Horodny

Communications Officer, AusAID

“ARMED WITH SOME GIFTS—AN AUSAID PEN AND OUR *RELIEF IN SIGHT* BOOK—I ENTER THE WARD WHERE DR CATHERINE HAMLIN IS INCLINED IN HER TRADEMARK POSITION OVER A PATIENT, SMILING AND SPEAKING QUIETLY.”

As my taxi pulls up at the hospital gate, I see a driveway lined with women draped in colourful shawls, all waiting for the chance to get their lives back.

I am here to meet Australian gynaecologist, obstetrician and pioneer fistula surgeon, Dr Catherine Hamlin, co-founder with her late husband, Dr Reginald Hamlin, of the Hamlin Fistula Hospital in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

As I survey the majestically green grounds with their plantings of roses, Australian natives and large weeping trees, I reflect that this hospital could only have been initiated by someone with vision, determination and a healthy touch of Ethiopian patience.

Armed with some gifts—an AusAID pen and our *Relief in Sight* book—I enter the ward where Dr Catherine Hamlin is inclined in her trademark position over a patient, smiling and speaking quietly. As I walk towards her she greets me with, “Have we met before?” An unusually tall woman now in her eighties, she looks just as I remember her in Canberra nearly ten years ago when I attended one of her many talks.

We sit in the nurses quarter overlooking the main ward for half an hour where Catherine tells me about the sixth fistula hospital opening shortly in Metu, southern Ethiopia, and the College of Midwives, just outside Addis Ababa. We discover that we share a passion for Ethiopia’s rugged and sometimes inhospitable landscape—a stunning ancient land where 85 per cent of the population live in rural villages



and it can be a two or three days’ walk to the nearest road and even further to medical care.

“In the West, you see, fistulas became a thing of the past by the early 20th century as medical intervention, including caesarean sections, were increasingly used to save mothers and babies,” Catherine explains.

She tells me that in developing countries, pregnancy and childbirth are still highly risky. With no medical assistance to help deliver her baby, a mother with a small or malformed pelvis or badly positioned child may be in labour for five or more days without help. As a result of all this suffering, the woman’s bladder or intestines can be damaged and a hole or fistula may develop. The result can be non-stop bladder leakage or even worse, faecal leakage.



ABOVE TOP: Fistula surgery is restoring thousands of women’s lives each year. Dr Catherine Hamlin with a patient at the Hamlin Fistula Hospital.

ABOVE: After delivering a baby the midwife helps mothers with breastfeeding and baby health.

Photos: Lucy Horodny

FACING PAGE: A woman “waiting for the chance to get her life back.” Photo: Kate Holt, AusAID

This condition makes her an outcast from society, rejected by her husband and family because of her objectionable smell and often relegated to a shed well away from everyone. She may suffer quietly for months, years or even decades before becoming aware of the help and treatment available at one of the five Hamlin Fistula Hospitals spread around Ethiopia. Her biggest challenge is to get herself to one of these places for the life-changing operation.

The Hamlin Hospital's fistula surgery achieves a success rate of more than 93 per cent. However, a small percentage of patients cannot be completely cured and require catheters and ongoing medical monitoring.

They receive this at the "Village of Joy" or Desta Mender, a self-help village near Addis Ababa, where the women learn to grow food and maintain an independent life.

I ask Catherine what her wish for the future might be. "Oh that's easy," she says, smiling, "To close the fistula clinics and turn them into ordinary hospitals because we don't need to treat these fistulas any more." On this note we say our farewells.

As my taxi passes through the gates and turns left towards Addis Ababa, I reflect on the remarkable work of this Australian doctor who has put her heart and soul into Ethiopia for the past 50 years. I am happy knowing that AusAID is helping these women get their lives back.



ABOVE: Dr Catherine Hamlin with trainee midwives.
Photo: Lucy Horodny

The birth of midwives

The Hamlin College of Midwives will make a huge difference to women's health in Ethiopia, writes Lucy Horodny.



Honorary Dean Annette Bennett is a driving force behind the Hamlin College of Midwives plan.
Photo: Lucy Horodny

In Sweden, the government put a midwife in every town in 1876 and halved the maternal death rate within six months.

In New York, the world's first fistula hospital closed its doors in 1895 due to lack of need.

In England, fistulas were eradicated by 1920.

In developing countries today, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that two million women suffer from untreated fistula and another 100,000 develop the condition each year.

In Ethiopia, 94 per cent of births occur in the home without any medical care. Often the women have undersized pelvises due to hard work and a lack of calories and so have difficulty delivering a baby normally. With few clinics and midwives, over 80 languages, poor

transport systems, a wet season that impedes all transport and communities unconvinced of the benefits of midwives and clinics, the risk of death and fistulas for women in childbirth is enormous.

According to Annette Bennett, Dean of the Hamlin College of Midwives, training and deploying midwives will make a significant difference to the health and survival of mothers and babies in Ethiopia.

A comprehensive plan

WHO estimates that globally around 6 million mothers, newborns and children die each year.

The pioneering work of two Australian doctors, Catherine and Reg Hamlin, over the past 50 years has culminated in a comprehensive plan to provide trained midwives across the Ethiopian countryside.

Implementing the plan will significantly reduce the number of women who die in childbirth in Ethiopia. This directly supports Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 3, 4 and 5 of promoting gender equality, reducing child mortality and improving maternal health, and is part of Australia's commitment to helping Africa achieve the MDGs.

Five mini-fistula hospitals and 25 clinics

Currently, the Hamlin Fistula Hospital in Addis Ababa is supported by four regional mini-fistula hospitals, with a fifth one due to open in 2009.

By September 2010 the first intake of midwives will be deployed into the regional clinics. The plan is to build 25 midwife clinics, with five clinics located within a 60 kilometre radius of each hospital.

In choosing sites for the 25 clinics, the College is consulting with regional health officers to identify areas of greatest need. The selection team test drives the roads from the clinic to the hospital to check roadworthiness and the time taken in an emergency. Where roads are not suitable for an ambulance, other transport options such as trolleys on the back of motorbikes are being investigated.

Each hospital will act as a base for supervision and support for its five clinics. The clinics will be equipped with a standard birthing kit, a satellite phone and an ambulance for emergency deliveries.

Performance of the clinics and patient statistics will be monitored and fed back into continual improvements.

Recruitment

Currently, the College has 25 students and expects an intake of 20 per year in the future, with capacity for a total of 60 at any one time.

The college actively recruits Year 12 science students from around each regional fistula hospital. These students are familiar with the local languages

and villages. They have very good English skills, necessary because they will rely heavily on English text books.

The young women are interviewed and tested regarding their suitability for the work.

Midwife training

The Hamlin College of Midwives was established in 2007. It offers a three-year Bachelor in Midwifery degree that is accredited by the Ministry of Education and part of WHO's internationally-recognised competencies. The first group of students will graduate in September 2010.

Students learn to assess medical conditions, growth rates and foetal position and when to intervene to reposition the baby or give medication during a pregnancy, often preventing the need for a doctor's intervention. They study sociology, psychology, infection control, pharmacology, paediatrics, emergency care and birthing repair.

The degree equips the students with the skills to assist a normal delivery. In the event of complications they are trained to recognise the need for urgent medical attention and get the patient to hospital.

Upon graduation

After completing their degree, the midwives will be deployed in pairs to the antenatal centres in their home regions where their knowledge of the local people means their work is more likely to be trusted and accepted.

Many previous attempts at deploying midwives around Ethiopia have failed due to lack of mentoring, lack of colleague support, lack of equipment and supplies, poor match of language used in the area and inadequate pay to encourage ongoing interest in the work.

A critical factor in ensuring success is training and development for medical staff to keep up with the latest technologies and evidence-based practices. This typifies the modern approach taken by the College to ensure success.

The right person in the right place

The deployment strategy is thorough and exhaustive. It involves choosing the right person from a community and locating them in the appropriate community—their own.

In most developing countries, births are attended by traditional birthing assistants (TBAs) who don't have the medical training to handle emergencies. The Hamlin strategy involves the graduate midwives working alongside the TBAs and imparting some of their knowledge to them over time. This is designed to increase community acceptance of the midwives and the new medical approach to birthing. It is envisaged that reduced death rates will progressively move the community towards increased trust in midwives.

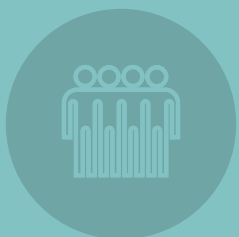


Lighting a candle

Lighting a candle is a new AusAID-funded documentary due to be screened in Australia in September 2009. It highlights the visionary work in Ethiopia of two Australian doctors—Dr Catherine Hamlin and her late husband Dr Reg Hamlin. Their 50-year vision has created the Hamlin Fistula Hospital in Addis Ababa, five regional mini-hospitals, the Hamlin College of Midwives and the Desta Mender self-help rural village.

Australia has supported the Hamlin Fistula Hospital in Addis Ababa since 1984 and helped to extend its services to rural locations. In January 2009, Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Stephen Smith announced additional funding of \$2.3 million to expand the Hamlin College of Midwives and support 25 rural maternal health clinics in Ethiopia. By 2010, the college expects to train and deploy about 20 midwives per year with a total student body of 60 midwives at any one time.

ABOVE: Fistula Hospital nurse. Photo: Kate Holt, AusAID





focus on

VOLUNTEERS

EVERY YEAR, HUNDREDS OF YOUNG AUSTRALIANS VOLUNTEER THEIR SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AS YOUTH AMBASSADORS FOR DEVELOPMENT.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Some of the destinations for Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development: Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea; Banda Aceh, Indonesia (Alice Moffett pictured); the flood-prone villages of Bangladesh; and Dhaka, Bangladesh's kaleidoscopic capital. Photos: AusAID

by Cathy Reid

Broadcast Media Manager, AusAID

No ordinary journey

Six young Australians are making a difference abroad.



Wading calf-deep in mud, swerving to avoid potholes in a battered old truck and walking through tropical forests teeming with exotic lizards and monkeys are some of the ways Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development (AYADs) get to work each day.

The AYAD program is an Australian Government initiative, fully funded through AusAID, which supports young Australians who want to live and work in a developing country.

Every year, the program places hundreds of young Australians on short-term volunteer assignments in countries across the Asia-Pacific to work in a range of areas such as education, environment, gender, governance, health, infrastructure, rural development and trades.

These young Australian volunteers share their skills and knowledge and forge friendships in the process. They

play an important role in Australia's aid program, working hand-in-hand with partner organisations.

They come from all walks of life and bring different experiences to their roles. Whether carpenters, engineers, nurses or administrators, they all have an impact on the people and places they work and come back changed by what they have experienced.

From rebuilding homes in a Bangladeshi village to counselling street kids in Vietnam's night market, young Australians are taking up the challenge to help make our world a better place.

On Sunday 23 August at 2 pm, the Ten Network is due to screen an AusAID-funded documentary, *No ordinary journey*, chronicling the experiences of six Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development. Here are some snapshots from their inspirational journey.

Pierre Johannessen

Fundraising and Public Relations
Habitat for Humanity, Bangladesh

Canberra's Pierre Johannessen put his love of kids and basketball to good use in Bangladesh, organising tournaments to raise money for struggling communities.

"Many people in Bangladesh only earn one dollar a day. It's a tough place to be in, and with the rising cost of rice, many families can't even afford the most basic of staples," Pierre said. "I found that sport is a great way to reach out to people.

"We used the proceeds of basketball tournaments to run skills camps at orphanages. Along with other Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development we also prepared survival packs for local slums, with basic things like rice and clean water."

Pierre's volunteer role in Bangladesh was in fundraising and public affairs with Habitat for Humanity, an organisation which builds homes and hope for poverty-stricken families throughout the world.

"Habitat for Humanity helps people rebuild their homes and their lives," Pierre said. "Not only does a house provide shelter and security, it boosts everything from health to status in the community. I've seen first hand what a difference a home makes for a family.

"In Bangladesh you're faced daily with the onslaught of just how much need there is—dealing with poverty, disease, sickness and the sheer number of people who need help.

“SOMETIMES ALL A KID NEEDS IS THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE FUN FOR A DAY, NOT TO HAVE TO WORK OR BEG FOR FOOD OR BE ASHAMED OF WHO THEY ARE. ”



“The country is situated in probably the worst area for natural disasters and is constantly under threat of floods and cyclones.”

Pierre is back in Canberra now, but his volunteer work is continuing. He has registered the basketball fundraising organisation he started in Bangladesh, Big Bang Ballers, as a charity.

“Sometimes all a kid needs is the

opportunity to have fun for a day, not to have to work or beg for food or be ashamed of who they are. Our aim is to develop and inspire individuals, and in turn communities, to develop a sense of self-worth, accomplishment and pride in who they are,” Pierre said.

“The name ‘Big Bangs’ comes from the theory of the creation of the universe—no matter how empty a

situation may seem, there is always enough there for a single spark to ignite an entire universe.”

OPPOSITE: Kylee and Christian travelled to work on dirt roads like this one at Alotau, Milne Bay Province, PNG. Photo Cathy Reid, AusAID

ABOVE: Pierre’s basketball clinics proved a hit with Bangladesh orphans and other children.

Photos: Pierre Johannessen



Alice Moffett
Public Relations, GreenHand Field School, Indonesia

Alice Moffett from Adelaide's Fleurieu Peninsula took her passion for the environment all the way to Banda Aceh in Indonesia as a volunteer public relations officer with permaculture organisation GreenHand Field School (GFS), which was established after the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004.

"The tsunami devastated the coastline of Aceh. It destroyed many of the food crops, taking away topsoil and causing a major salinity problem. Only now are farmers able to begin harvesting crops like rice," Alice said.

"The Field School manages programs to train the people of Aceh in organic garden design, wastewater management, composting, sustainable farming practices and improving environmental conditions so they can once again grow successful home gardens and crops for food security."

The Permaculture Training Centre is in the tropical hills of Lhoong. "The first time I went there I was absolutely amazed by the scenery. It's 90 minutes from Banda Aceh on a road which is still being rebuilt. Everywhere you look you can see the evidence of the tsunami—the original road that has now been consumed by the sea, the bridges that have been destroyed, and the remnants of homes.

"There's not a single resident of Banda Aceh who was not affected by the tsunami. Just the other night I was sitting on my doorstep chatting to my next door neighbour who told of how the black wave came, and how her mother, sister and brother ran to safety and her father was lost. It's hard to comprehend the depth of the loss.

"But there is a strong sense of purpose, resilience and a resolve to get on with life. People are also very grateful of the support they received from countries like Australia.

"The rebuilding has been amazing and the villages have popped back up. GreenHand are helping communities to re-green their villages, re-establish gardens and plant vegetables to enhance food security.

"They have a fantastic education centre where people can come and learn about permaculture techniques and then they can take that knowledge back to their villages."

When she has finished her assignment Alice is hoping to continue working in the same field, believing that, "environmental issues are global and no matter where I am, sustainability will be important."

**Kylee St George and
Christian James**
Nurse Educators, St Barnabas School
of Nursing, Alotau, PNG



Graduation for nursing students from the St Barnabas School of Nursing in Alotau, PNG, is a day never to be forgotten for Brisbane's Christian James and Darwin's Kylee St George.

The two AYADS spent nine months volunteering as nurse educators in the Milne Bay Province working with students and helping out at the Alotau General Hospital.

"Many experiences in life are often great, as well as tremendously difficult, but few are as truly breathtaking and amazing as my time in PNG," said Kylee. "During my AYAD experience I laughed, cried, grieved for loss of friends and celebrated new life and great achievement."

The wards were overcrowded and the patients arrived continuously, some by ambulance, some in the back of utes and some on foot, often travelling for days to get there.

"People die here every day from preventable and treatable illnesses like tuberculosis and malaria. There aren't enough doctors, medications or testing facilities and there's not enough health education," Kylee said.

Christian agrees. "It can tear your heart out when you see five-year-olds dying of things we wouldn't die of back home in Australia. Even when you see people my age dying of things which are treatable, it really hurts."



Tina Macumber
Development Officer, Samoa
International Cricket Association



Former Victorian cricketer Tina Macumber is the driving force behind the unlikely nation of Samoa becoming a cricket powerhouse in the Pacific.

Tina volunteered with the Samoa International Cricket Association and did such an amazing job she has since been appointed General Manager.

"I have found so many people in Samoa who love the game as much as I do," Tina said. "Together we are going to make cricket as big as rugby is in this country."

Sport has an important role in a developing country and Tina is playing her part, with the backing of the Samoan Cricket Board. She works alongside the man known as "Mr Cricket," Seb Kohlhasse.

"TINA VOLUNTEERED WITH THE SAMOA INTERNATIONAL CRICKET ASSOCIATION AND DID SUCH AN AMAZING JOB SHE HAS SINCE BEEN APPOINTED GENERAL MANAGER."

"Tina has brought so much to Samoan cricket, especially when it comes to organisation, which has been basically lacking in our sport in this country," Seb said. "We are all enthusiastic but didn't really have a lot of direction. Tina has a wealth of experience to share with us."

Tina is uncovering plenty of potential through school clinics.



But they have seen success stories too, like the young boy Christian saved after he was nearly electrocuted. "He'd climbed up a tree to pick fruit but had accidentally grabbed onto a power line and was blown out of the tree," Christian said. "I was at football training and we heard the bang."

By the time Christian got there the lifeless boy had been loaded into the back of a 4WD. "I grabbed one of my team mates and we both jumped in the back of the car and did CPR on the way to the hospital until he started breathing again. From that moment on it didn't matter what else I did while I was in PNG, my time had been worthwhile."

One of the highlights for Kylee was campaigning to increase awareness about HIV/AIDS. "The nursing students helped me organise a huge event for

World AIDS Day," she said. "We did an education forum in the market square and had the biggest march Alotau has ever seen. We had condom displays and we made it into the national paper. It was an amazing day and it was so good to be involved."

Their main role at the nursing school was teaching and supervising ward rounds, but Kylee and Christian also worked hard to improve facilities for the students, successfully applying for grants to set up a clinical laboratory and obtain computers.

"The lab will provide somewhere to practise skills and internet access will make a huge difference because the students have such limited resources," Kylee said.

She also developed a step-by-step guide to basic nursing techniques. "I decided to make a procedures manual my priority because I wanted to leave something behind that would continue to be useful."

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Alice Moffett, Indonesia. Photo: Cathy Reid, AusAID; Kylee St George, PNG; Photo: Matthew Fallon, The Production Hub; Alotau village, PNG. Photo: Cathy Reid, AusAID; Tina Macumber, Samoa. Photo: Cathy Reid, AusAID; Christian James, PNG. Photo: Christian James



“Working with school kids has been a highlight, seeing the raw talent just waiting to be nurtured,” she said. “The appreciation shown from both students and teachers has been amazing. I will never forget the end of one clinic at Samoa Primary, where all the children turned to our development team and sang the most beautiful thank-you song. It brought a tear to my eye.”

She is also keen to develop women’s cricket. “My passion is providing the incentive and opportunity for women to play cricket. We have a core group of interested players and are building towards 2010 when we will enter a Samoan team in the first East-Asia Pacific Women’s Cricket Trophy.”

Tina has become quite a celebrity and makes regular appearances on local television and radio sports shows. “All the media coverage we’re getting is great promotion so I’ll get my mug on telly as much as I can if we can push cricket here in Samoa.

“It’s also a great opportunity to show where Australian aid money is going and how it is being spent on qualified young Australians working in developing countries. I hope it will encourage others to apply for an AYAD assignment of their own so they can make a difference in some way.”



Tam Tran Therapist, Blue Dragon Children’s Foundation, Vietnam

Patiently gaining the confidence, trust and friendship of disadvantaged children and street kids was crucial to Tam Tran’s role as a therapist with the Blue Dragon Children’s Foundation in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Tam travelled from Melbourne to spend 12 months volunteering for this organisation which runs a drop-in centre and provides meals and health care, as well as education and career opportunities for disadvantaged children.

“Blue Dragon provides a safe place where the children feel like they belong,” he said. “The work we do is about building confidence and self esteem. We encourage the kids to return to school and we cover the fees. We believe that education is one of the keys to breaking the poverty cycle.”

For Tam, going to Vietnam also provided an opportunity to reconnect with his roots. “I was born in Saigon but my parents fled to Australia on a boat from Vietnam when I was four, so returning was about understanding my heritage and my culture. I’ve always wanted to give something back to the country of my birth.”

Tam’s expertise was welcomed by Blue Dragon founder Michael Brosowski, also an Australian. “Here at Blue Dragon we deal with all sorts of cases—kids who’ve been imprisoned, kids who are infected with HIV/AIDS, kids who are drug addicts,” Michael



said. “We needed a professional social worker to help and Tam has been that and much more. He’s made an amazing contribution to our program.”

One of the children Tam and his team worked with was a six-year-old with cerebral palsy, called Tan. “Tan is a gorgeous kid with a cheeky smile,” Tam said. “He’s very intelligent but has never been to school or learned to walk because he’s been confined to a rundown fishing boat while his mum and dad work at the markets.

“Tan would tell me stories of how he would try to catch fish so his family would have something to eat, and how often the fish would drag him across the small boat because they were stronger than him!

“We’ve been bringing him to our drop-in centre and giving him physical therapy so he can learn to walk. He is the most amazing, vibrant boy and is now ready to go to school.”

TOP LEFT: Cricket flourishes in Apia, Samoa.
Photo: Cathy Reid, AusAID

TOP RIGHT: Markets in Hanoi, Vietnam. Photo:
Cathy Reid, AusAID

BELOW: Tam Tran with six-year-old Hai, Vietnam.
Photo: Tam Tran

Facing the challenge of the global recession Cont. from page 13

How will Australia's aid program fare?

Australia's economic growth is linked to the economic and political health of our neighbours and trading partners. A secure and stable region is an investment that reduces the risk of more costly interventions related to humanitarian aid and peacekeeping efforts. AusAID is working on a number of fronts in its response to the impact of the global recession on developing countries in our region.

We are working with other parts of the Australian government to assess and monitor the impacts of the crisis on our immediate developing region. This information is helping us to better

shape Australia's response through the aid program.

We are also reviewing existing programs in light of economic analysis to find ways to support partner countries in their responses.

We are working with international agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to ensure a coordinated response by the international community in the Pacific.

We are also helping to improve understanding of the impact of the crisis by drawing on the lessons the region learnt during the Asian economic crisis in 1997. The message is to protect expenditure on health and education including school feeding programs to encourage parents to

keep their children in school. It is also important that countries keep their markets open as one of the most effective ways to restore growth quickly and return to progress in reducing poverty.

AusAID is working to assess the impacts of the crisis on all its aid programs and has set up a Taskforce led by Jacqui De Lacy, Assistant Director General of the Sustainable Development Group to coordinate the Agency's response.

Details of how particular countries are likely to be affected are on the AusAID website at www.ausaid.gov.au/makediff/gec.cfm.

GLOBAL EDUCATION

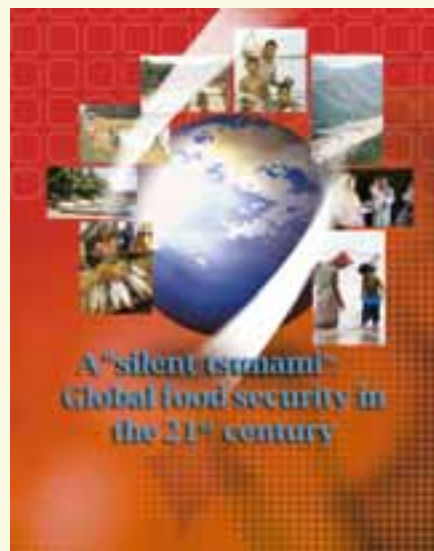
Food security a silent tsunami

Food security is a global need that is continually affected by changes to the natural and human environments around the world. On 22 April 2008 the United Nations issued a press release which stated that "a silent tsunami unleashed by costlier food threatens 100 million people." The focus of the global food security debate over many decades has been to ensure that everyone is free from hunger.

Two new teaching resources on the topic of food security are available free from: books@ausaid.gov.au or National Mailing and Marketing, PO Box 7077, Canberra BC, ACT 2610.



Food for all: a teaching resource for upper primary and lower secondary school teachers introduces teachers to this important global issue and provides source material, ideas and activities for classroom use.



A silent tsunami: global food security in the 21st century is a resource for middle school students that investigates the issues of food security, equity and sustainability.

www.globaleducation.edna.edu.au



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