

focus

A close-up photograph of a young girl with dark skin and curly hair, smiling broadly as she drinks water from a public tap. She is holding the tap with both hands, and water is spraying out. The background is blurred, showing a blue sky and some greenery.

THE MAGAZINE OF AUSTRALIA'S OVERSEAS AID PROGRAM

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AFRICA

Looking to the future

About AusAID

The Australian Government, through the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), provides official development assistance to countries in the Asia-Pacific, the Caribbean and in Africa.

Development assistance is delivered as part of long-term sustainable programs across a range of sectors—health, education, infrastructure, gender equality, law and order, rural development and the environment. AusAID also 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), which aim to alleviate world poverty by 2015. Poverty is one of the greatest challenges of our time. We know that poverty not only blights the lives of individuals but contributes to instability and conflict. A strong and effective aid program advances Australia's reputation and influence in the international community. It is in Australia's national interest to support stability and economic development across the world through assistance to people and governments of developing countries.

Size of the aid program

In 2010–11, Australia plans to spend \$4.3 billion on official development assistance. This is 0.33 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.



Look out for this icon which tells you when you can find more information at Focus online. Visit <http://www.ausaid.gov.au/focusonline/>

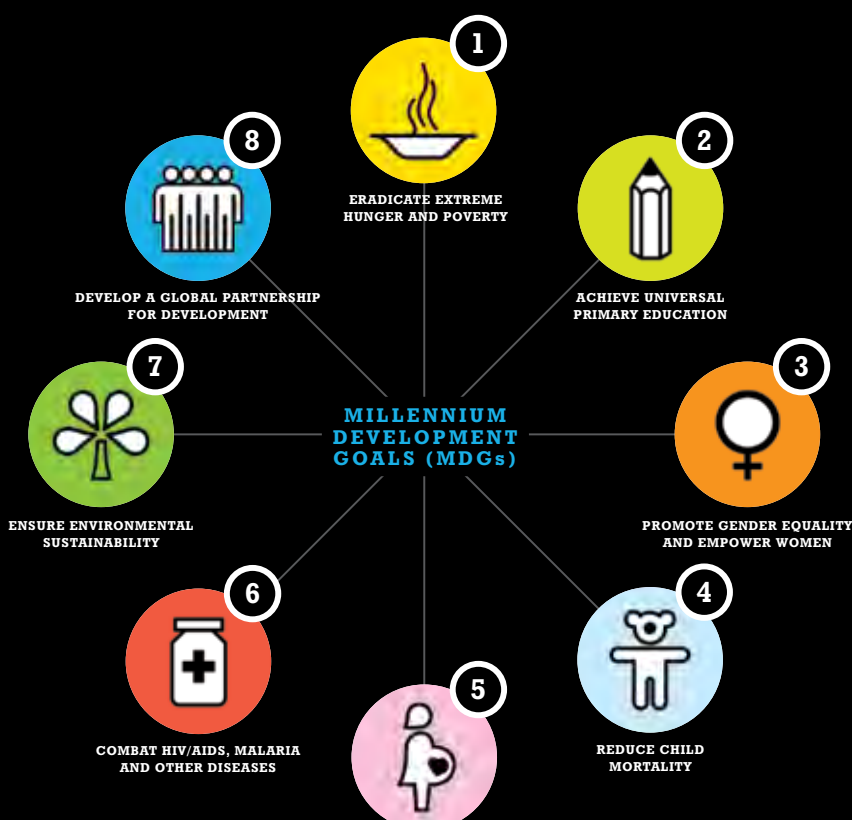


A student with the vegetables he helped to grow at Nakanyonyi Primary School, in Jinja, Uganda.
Photo: Kate Holt/Africa Practice

Millennium Development Goals

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

For further information see <http://www.ausaid.gov.au/keyaid/mdg.cfm>



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Australia commits a further \$9 million to rebuilding Haiti

Australia's contribution to Haiti following a devastating earthquake on 12 January has reached \$24 million after a further \$9 million announcement in March.

At the International Donors' Conference towards a New Future for Haiti at the United Nations headquarters in New York, Australia pledged an additional \$9 million for the long-term reconstruction of Haiti. This is in addition to the \$5 million rebuilding assistance and the \$10 million initial humanitarian assistance previously announced.

An estimated 230,000 people were killed in the earthquake and more than a million were left homeless. The UN reports that 3.5 million survivors have received food assistance and 1.3 million have received water daily. More than 500,000 adults and children have been vaccinated against common diseases too.

ABOVE: Children eat a meal distributed by Bolivian UN peacekeepers in Cite Soleil, Haiti, after a powerful earthquake left food shortages in the area. Photo: Marco Dormino/UN Photo



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Fiji assistance

Australia is helping the people of Fiji to rebuild following Tropical Cyclone Tomas.

The cyclone caused significant damage when it struck Fiji in March. More than 500 homes were destroyed and around 25 health centres and 15 schools were heavily damaged.

In May, a further \$1 million was announced for Fiji's rebuilding effort bringing Australia's total assistance to \$2 million. This money will help rebuild schools and health centres. Australia has also provided emergency supplies such as tents, tarpaulins, water containers and water purification tablets.

BELOW: AusAID representatives supervise the unloading of humanitarian supplies from an RAAF C130-Hercules in Fiji in the wake of Cyclone Tomas. Photo: Claire McGeechan/AusAID



'Banker to the poor' visits Australia

Australians got the opportunity to listen to Nobel Laureate and Grameen Bank founder Professor Muhammad Yunus when he visited Australia to present The Power of Small series in March.

Organised by Business for Millennium Development (B4MD) with an Australian Government Community Call to Action grant, Professor Yunus used his three-day visit to challenge the conventional thinking of the corporate and capitalist world to create new opportunities for businesses and millions of impoverished people.

RIGHT: Professor Muhammad Yunus during the Power of Small event series. Photo: B4MD





Blog comp

A blogging competition ahead of the MDG summit at the UN in September is under way. The TH!NK3: Developing World competition, organised by the European Journalism Centre, has lots of prizes. Visit <http://development.thinkaboutit.eu/about/>

Australia to participate in MDG summit

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has called on world leaders to attend a summit in September to boost efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

'The summit will be a crucially important opportunity to redouble our efforts to meet the goals,' Ban Ki-moon said. The goals are aimed at slashing poverty, hunger, disease, maternal and child deaths and other ills by 2015.

'I declared 2010 to be the year of development,' Ban Ki-moon said. 'We need to focus attention and accelerate the process to achieve the goals by the target year, 2015. We have only six years left.'

The summit will be held at the UN in New York on 20–22 September. Australia, along with other member countries, will take part in the summit.

Chile assistance

A devastating 8.8 magnitude earthquake struck Chile on 27 February, killing 802 people and destroying 500,000 homes. Foreign Affairs Minister Stephen Smith announced an initial contribution of \$1 million in emergency assistance and a further \$4 million in reconstruction assistance. Australia has sent emergency supplies to the country, including 50 generators, 150 family tents and 1,060 collapsible beds.

Australia to host UN health conference

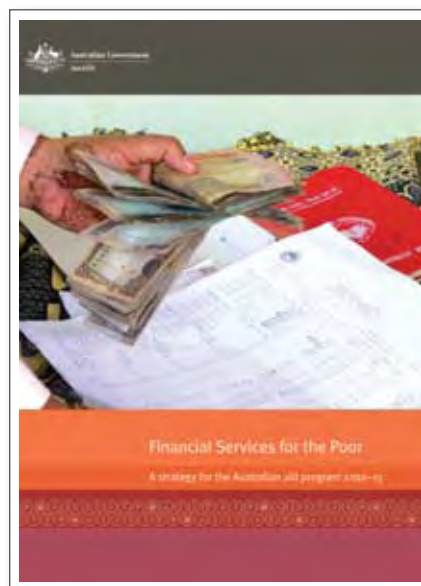
Australia will host a major United Nations conference on global health issues.

The 63rd UN Department of Public Information/Non-Governmental Organisation Conference will be held in Melbourne from 30 August to 1 September 2010.

This will be the first time Australia has hosted a UN event of this size and only the third time this conference has been held outside of the UN headquarters in New York.

ABOVE: A mother and her child in the maternity ward of South Tarawa Hospital, Kirabati.
Photo: Lorrie Graham/AusAID

New financial services for the poor strategy



A new strategy will help poor people improve their way of life through increased access to financial services such as banking.

The Australian Government's *Financial Services for the Poor: A strategy for the Australian aid program 2010-15* was launched in March by Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance Bob McMullan.

The strategy sets out how the Australian aid program will increase annual spending on microfinance with the objective of improving poor people's access to financial services.

Australia will help formal and informal financial institutions to offer quality, affordable and fair financial services to the poor, support financial literacy programs and support governments to set up the right policy and regulatory environment.



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Reducing the threat of landmines

The Australian Government announced more than \$10 million in April for mine awareness and action in Laos, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon.

The announcement coincided with International Day for Mine Awareness and Action and included a \$2.7 million contribution to help Laos with the removal of unexploded weapons, ammunition and cluster munitions.

In Iraq, Australia will provide \$6 million to help clear 24 square kilometres of land, deliver rehabilitation services for victims and educate communities about the risk of mines.

Australia will also contribute \$1 million to the northern border landmine clearance project in Jordan, \$500,000 to support the removal of unexploded munitions in Lebanon, and \$500,000 to the International Committee of the Red Cross Special Fund for the Disabled.

ABOVE: An Iraqi landmine victim, who has lost part of his leg, is measured for a prosthetic limb.
Photo: Victor Mello/UNDP Iraq

New website for Australian Development Gateway

The Australian Development Gateway (ADG) launched its new website in May.

The 'one-stop shop' for development information includes job vacancies, resources and stories, newsletters and much more.

The ADG website has more than 40,000 users a month.

www.developmentgateway.com.au



Health rewards in Fiji

by Paulini Sesevu, AusAID



Paving the way for acceptance and understanding of mental illness in Fiji.

A mental health community outreach program in Fiji that helps to increase community understanding and acceptance of people living with mental illness has been recognised with an international award.

Mental disorders affect nearly 12 per cent of the world's population—approximately 450 million people around the world. People with a mental illness are often isolated and struggle to find work or participate in education because of a lack of understanding within the community. The community outreach program at St Giles Psychiatric Hospital in Suva is trying to break down these barriers and reach out to communities to increase awareness and understanding of mental illness.

This work was recognised in 2009 when St Giles Psychiatric Hospital's community outreach team won the Asian Federation of Psychiatric Associations'

international excellence award. Dr Odille Chang, Chief Medical Officer at St Giles, said the award recognised the team's efforts, which included basic mental health services training for community nurses. She said the award would not have been possible without the Australian Government's support of \$15 million over six years through the Fiji Health Sector Improvement Program.

'The award for excellence recognised the efforts made to make mental health services available to communities. This would not have been possible without the Australian Government's support, which has enabled us to take mental health services to communities, destigmatise mental illness, and encourage people to seek the psychiatric assistance they may require,' Dr Chang said.

In January 2010, the Australian Government gave mental health services in Fiji an added boost. A new van will help St Giles Psychiatric Hospital's Community Mental Health Outreach

The Fiji Health Sector Improvement Program is a \$15 million initiative to improve health services in Fiji. The program also supports the Fiji Ministry of Health in rural health, clinical services, management training and infrastructure.

Program access communities to support people living with mental illness.

When handing over the keys, Sarah Goulding, the Counsellor for AusAID in Fiji, said: 'I'm delighted to be handing across the keys of this beautiful new vehicle. I'm sure it will travel many miles over its life and be of great use to hospital staff in the very important work that they do with people with mental illness.'

Fiji's Deputy Secretary for Public Health, Dr Jo Koroivueta, said: 'Lack of transport is one of the many problems we face here at the Ministry of Health and this kind donation will go a long way to ensure that we are able to do our work better and more efficiently.'

ABOVE: Counsellor for AusAID in Fiji, Sarah Goulding, hands over the keys to a new van to the Fiji Ministry of Health to be used by St Giles Hospital for community outreach work. Photo: Tony de la Fosse/Australian High Commission in Fiji

Educating communities in Aceh

by Yoyoh Hafidz and Katie Smith, AusAID



An Australian Government-funded program is strengthening education in Aceh.

Until two years ago Azhar, a villager in Baktiya, North Aceh, assumed that educating children was the business of school teachers. Like other villagers, Azhar thought parents could just send their children to school and teachers would do the rest.

Haririe, a senior official of North Aceh Education District, thought the same. He never thought communities could help improve education.

‘We have been trapped in the assumption that formal education is only the business of education authorities and schools,’ Haririe said.

Communities believe this divide stems back to the conflict over independence, which began in Aceh in 1976. An

estimated 600 schools were destroyed or damaged during the conflict, affecting the education of 55,000 children. North Aceh and Bireun were among the worst-affected districts.

Although the conflict ended with the peace agreement in 2005, distrust remained between communities and the schools, often perceived as representative of the government.

This began to change more than two years ago when the Australian Government-funded Communities and Education Program in Aceh helped strengthen the role communities play in education in the districts of North Aceh and Bireun.

The program brought education authorities, schools and communities together.



‘As a result of the program, targeted schools have improved facilities, management and teaching practices, and increased community participation.’

Villagers talked more openly and worked together to address village issues—a crucial step towards ongoing stability and peace.

Bringing together the groups previously in conflict also helped improve the quality of education.

More than 50 public primary schools in the two districts were given grants to repair schools.

Through a socially inclusive approach, communities were taught about their important role in improving the quality of

education. With a focus on transparency, accountability and zero corruption, the program trained school principals and community members to manage school budgets and prioritise children’s needs. The teachers were also trained in active learning.

The approach has built community trust in the schools and unified villagers through participation and discussion. Community members were democratically elected to school committees that worked with principals

to develop transparent systems of school management, and to provide joyful learning environments for children.

People like Azhar, who was elected as one of the school committee members, are now actively involved in decision making.

‘Before, I didn’t care what was happening to these schools, but now I realise that I can help improve the quality of education for children here. This is also a good education for us, the villagers, on how to participate in the development process,’ Azhar said.

The program relied on working closely with three education authorities: the District Education Office, the District Office of Religious Affairs (which manages faith-based schools), and the District Education Council. For the first time, the program brought the three authorities to the same table to achieve education targets together.

A recent joint audit of how grants were spent between the program and the district governments found there was no corruption. Instead, communities had made many financial and in-kind contributions.

‘This rarely happens with government-assisted funding. Before, we had our own program to rehabilitate the schools, but we didn’t involve communities. The rehabilitation process often failed, unfinished with no budget remaining. The use of budget was also not transparent,’ said Haririe, who intends to adopt the program’s system in his office.

As a result of the program, targeted schools have improved facilities, management and teaching practices, and increased community participation.

Two years after it began, the program finished in October 2009, leaving Azhar, Haririe and others inspired to continue to improve the quality of education for children in Aceh.

ABOVE LEFT AND RIGHT: Children from the school in Baktiya, North Aceh. Photos: Lila Dwilita Sari and Bruce Bailey/AusAID

Preparing for climate change

by Dr Kate Duggan, AusAID, and Dr James Butler and Dr Sarah Park, CSIRO

**Bridging the knowledge gap
as the climate changes.**

The province of Nusa Tenggara Barat in eastern Indonesia, including the islands of Lombok and Sumbawa, has a fascinating cultural and natural history. Most people are Sasak, which means they practise Islam and retain traditions that date back hundreds of years.

Geographically, the province lies on the famous Wallace Line where plants and animals of Indonesia and Malaysia transition to those of Australasia.

While tourism is growing steadily, rice, cattle and other agricultural produce are major exports. The central valley of Lombok was, until recently, among the most fertile areas of Indonesia supporting a large local population. The productivity of the central valley is now under threat because changes in rainfall over the past decade have brought drier conditions. Coastal areas and fishing communities already coping with falling fish stocks and habitat damage are also at risk. 'There is nothing but jellyfish and a few small fish in our nets these days. It is not enough to feed our families and there is nothing to sell,' said a local fisherman from Senggigi in West Lombok.

Researchers from the University of Mataram have been working to improve the livelihoods of people in high-risk areas and help them prepare for climate change. Dr Sri Tejowulan, who lives in Lombok and works closely with farming communities, said the key to lifting people out of poverty in the province was to farm livestock as well as crops. By doing so, communities receive cash from selling their livestock to buy food and other essentials and pay school fees. It also gives them greater security should the annual grain crop fail.





AusAID–CSIRO Research for Development Alliance

The Research for Development Alliance is a strategic research partnership between AusAID and the CSIRO.

The alliance tackles important development challenges in the Asia–Pacific region by improving knowledge of climate, water and energy systems. The alliance also improves understanding of people's vulnerabilities and their options to adapt and manage their natural environment.

The alliance brings the science and research skills of the CSIRO together with the development experience of AusAID, to work collaboratively with researchers in the region to address the needs of partner countries.

One of the problems the researchers face is there is very little accurate information about what will happen as the climate changes. Without this knowledge, it is difficult to predict which communities are at greatest risk and what can be done to help people prepare and cope with the impacts.

Professor Suwardji, from the university's natural resources centre, said: 'We have many bright young postgraduate students who would love to look at these questions but we don't have access to good data or enough resources in the province to support them.'

A new strategic partnership between the Australian Government's aid program and the CSIRO will help to bridge the gap. The Research for Development Alliance will work with local researchers in Lombok and Sumbawa to build a better understanding of the likely impacts of climate change. The alliance will also look at options to help communities to adapt to the impacts.

Dr Sarah Park, from the CSIRO, said: 'There are some efforts to address climate change at both a national level and through more grassroots activities. What appears to need strengthening is the integration of these activities within an effective climate change research context.'

'The basis of our approach is to work with local agencies and communities in several high–risk areas to test likely climate scenarios and to develop adaptive strategies. By doing this, we can then identify the most effective measures to put in place through the policy and programs of government and civil society.'

As part of the alliance, Australian scientists, who have tackled similar problems in Australia and in other countries, are working with Indonesian researchers, some of whom have been beneficiaries of scholarships from the Australian Government. The research will span three years and will inform Indonesian Government responses to climate change.

Dr James Butler, from the CSIRO, underlined the importance of the research, 'I think this project presents an exciting opportunity to integrate many years of research from our Indonesian partners and Australian agencies with local knowledge and development experience in the province. In doing so, we hope to help build more sustainable future pathways for the province.'

OPPOSITE: Fishermen haul nets at Senggigi, Lombok.

ABOVE: Fishermen travel many kilometres out to sea on small boats to reach richer fishing grounds.

Photos: James Butler/CSIRO



More at Focus online

Looking back: Bob McMullan



by Hannah Cattanach, AusAID

I first met Bob McMullan when he was launching a small community art exhibition on a crisp spring day in 1995. He spoke compassionately and with conviction about the huge contribution that these particular artists—a group of children caring for people with disability—made in their everyday lives, and the unique trials facing them and the people they cared for. Fifteen years later, he remains committed to equal opportunity for all. As Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance, Bob McMullan is at the centre of Australia's efforts to alleviate global poverty, including an emphasis on improving the lives of people with disability in developing countries. It is a cause he speaks of with the same compassion and conviction that honoured that group of children showing their art in 1995.

After nearly four decades in public life, Bob McMullan is stepping out of the political spotlight in pursuit of new ways to help tackle poverty. Here, he reflects on a life in politics and the future of Australian aid.

Of your time in politics, what are you most proud of?

Without doubt what we're doing now around development assistance because it's a passion of mine and it's an exciting time. The Australian Government is increasing the aid program and we've been able to take a lot of initiative, particularly in the area of disability, where there was an internationally vacant space that needed to be filled. People with disability are among the poorest and most vulnerable in the world. We're taking a lead role in addressing the needs of people with disability in developing countries to make sure that they benefit equally from development and get the same opportunities as everyone else. We're doing something that the rest of the world is looking at and I'm really proud of that.

You speak very passionately about social inclusiveness and equality. Where does that passion stem from?

It's about having an instinct for justice. I come from a working-class background and both my brothers had to find work at 15 so I could stay in school. By sheer luck, being the youngest, I was able to get an education. If a society only values the input of one gender, one race, the upper class or the able-bodied, that is a huge waste of talent. People aren't equally

talented at the same things but everyone has an equal right to develop their talents, whatever country they're in and whatever their circumstances.

Do you think Australia pays enough attention to global poverty?

The amount that we invest in international development is far behind the global standard, so clearly Australian Governments have not paid enough attention to it [*Australia has committed 0.5 per cent of the Gross National Income to the overseas aid budget by 2015, and the internationally agreed target of 0.7 per cent remains an aspirational goal*]. We are in a better place than we have been for a long time though, and we're lucky to have a Prime Minister who is also passionate about it. When Kevin Rudd was Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and I was on the backbench, we talked at length about global poverty issues. A lot of the new policy emerging now came from those early conversations, like expanding the aid program in Africa.

In your time working on the Australian aid program, what do you consider the strengths and weaknesses of how AusAID works?

The strength is definitely the people that AusAID attracts—the agency is full of passionate, committed and highly



‘Everyone has an equal right to develop their talents, whatever country they’re in and whatever their circumstances.’

qualified people who are good at turning the Government’s ideas into effective public policy. This is really valuable because the Australian aid program is doubling and AusAID is about to be transformed into one of the biggest-spending agencies. Now that’s the big challenge because when you’re just jogging along in the crowd, no one notices you but when you take the lead people really look at you. AusAID is going to be doing many more things in many more places and be under a lot more scrutiny.

What did you set out to achieve in your career that you haven’t done yet?

Globally, we’re failing to reduce maternal mortality and to stop violence against women. There’s still an unimaginable level of violence against women which needs to be cut, and the Millennium Development Goal on maternal mortality is tracking the worst. These are international responsibilities and Australia has a duty to contribute to the solution. We have experience in improving maternal health but violence

against women has no simple solution; it’s deeply embedded in social and cultural systems. Statistics show that the rate of violence faced by women in our neighbouring Melanesian states is worse than anywhere in the world. We can’t be smug because there’s an unjustifiable amount of violence against women in Australia, but we have to address the global situation; it’s just terrible.

What are you hungry to accomplish in your next role?

All over the world there are people facing development challenges and I want to keep helping with that. I’m trying not to narrow it down too much but I’m definitely not a frontline person—if you want a well dug in Africa then I’d be no good. I’d end up killing myself or someone else for sure. I admire people who go overseas to volunteer at the grassroots level, but that’s not my talent. I’m good at policy work and I have a unique perspective on economics, public administration, politics and international development. If I need to go overseas to

follow through on the things that I want to do then I will, but I’m not desperate for that. I’ve travelled a lot in my career and Canberra will always be my home.

Are you eager to keep working on disability issues?

I’d like to do more work in the disability sector but at the moment there’s not an obvious role for me in that. I still have a full-time job to focus on so I’m not applying my mind to my next role at the moment. I just have a general ‘open for business’ sign up and there are lots of interesting possibilities.

What are you looking forward to doing in your time off after the election?

Firstly, I have several decades worth of papers to sort out but I’ll probably tire of that pretty quickly and find that most of them can be burnt by now anyway. My daughters and grandkids all live in Canberra and it will be nice to spend more time with them, and with my wife. Robyn and I have been married for 32 years, which is quite incredible really. I don’t think I had a relationship longer than 32 days before that. I was on holiday with her last year and we were driving along trying to remember the last time we had had 10 days off together. We thought as far as 10 years back and couldn’t think of a time, so I’m keen to rectify that. I’d like to travel around the parts of Australia I haven’t seen yet.

Looking back, what have you most enjoyed of your time in public life?

The experience of working with AusAID on recent public policy challenges has been the highpoint of my work. I’ve been in public life in one way or another for 37 years now, but the last three have been the best. I’m very grateful to everyone at AusAID for all the work they’ve done, and we’ve had a lot of fun as well.

OPPOSITE: Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance Bob McMullan speaks to AusAID’s Hannah Cattanach in his Parliament House office. **Photos:** AusAID

ABOVE: Bob McMullan hands food to a child in a refugee camp in Dadaab, Kenya.

Photo: Kate Holt/Africa Practice





FOCUS ON AFRICA

Africa is changing. The world is seeing a more confident Africa—a continent engaging with the world and playing an increasingly important role in international economic and political debates. Robust economic growth, forecast to reach four per cent in 2010, is transforming the continent and raising living standards.

But Africa continues to face serious security and development challenges, including ongoing instability and conflict in some countries. HIV/AIDS, poverty and food insecurity are ever present.

African countries comprise 33 of the world's 49 least developed countries. Africa lags behind most other regions in progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The majority of Sub-Saharan countries are not on track to meet the target date of

2015 and the goals around poverty, hunger, health and environment are seriously off track.

Australia's aid program in Africa focuses on areas where we can make the most difference. By using our expertise and experience in agriculture and food security, maternal and child health and water and sanitation, Australia is working with governments, multilateral partners and other donors to support Africa's progress towards the MDGs.

Philipina Ndamane holds some of the vegetables she has grown in the Abalimi Bezekhaya garden in Cape Town, South Africa. The Abalimi Bezekhaya project teaches improved farming techniques and the produce is sold to generate incomes for the farmers involved.

Photo: Kate Holt/Africa Practice

Australia and Africa: Looking to the future

Edited speech of Foreign Affairs Minister Stephen Smith at the University of Sydney International Forum on Africa, 19 March 2010.

Africa is changing for the better and this is underappreciated in Australia as it is internationally.

It is a more stable, free and prosperous continent than it was a decade ago. The number of countries in crisis has declined and significant conflicts have ended.

Later this year, South Africa will host the World Cup with predictions of as many as 400,000 international visitors during the tournament.

Africa, of course, continues to face serious security and development challenges.

HIV/AIDS, poverty and food insecurity remain serious problems. We can't and we don't gloss over these issues, but we do recognise recent progress.

Today, millions of African men and women are enjoying more freedom, greater economic opportunity and greater security than before. Governance has improved markedly with progress on accountability, political liberalisation and economic management.

Robust economic growth is also transforming Africa and raising living standards.

The World Bank has said it expects Africa-wide economic growth of nearly four per cent in 2010.

The many positive changes I have mentioned herald enormous opportunity not just for Africa but for Australia.

Until recently, the Australian private sector had been quicker to recognise the economic importance of Africa than had the Australian public sector. This has particularly been the case for the mineral resources industry. Already more than 150 Australian minerals and petroleum resources companies have interests in more than 40 African countries, with current and prospective investment estimated at \$20 billion.



Trade with Africa is also growing. Trade in goods with Africa is valued at close to \$5 billion, having grown at more than six per cent annually over the preceding decade.

Just as there are sound economic reasons for enhancing our engagement with Africa, there are also good strategic and geopolitical reasons. African nations have an important and growing influence. It is difficult to imagine progress on issues such as climate change, the Millennium Development Goals, trade liberalisation, disarmament, and United Nations reform, without working closely with Africa, African countries and the African Union.

Of course in Africa, as in all regions of the world, Australia seeks to build support for its candidacy for a temporary place on the United Nations Security Council for the 2013–14 term. The cynics who assume Australia's engagement with Africa is simply or only about this really miss the fundamental point: Australia's re-engagement with Africa is driven by a clear-eyed and pragmatic view of our long-term strategic and economic interests into the future. It also reflects Australia's commitment to be a good international citizen and to support Africa, which remains the continent with the highest percentage of people living in absolute poverty, in making progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.

Over the last two years, the Australian Government has strengthened Australia's

relations with Africa. In this financial year 2009–10, Australia's development assistance to Africa will increase by 40 per cent on the previous financial year 2008–09, providing assistance to over 30 countries. Our assistance explicitly focuses on areas where Australia is best able to make a difference. This includes assisting African countries reach their Millennium Development Goals, particularly in the areas of food security, water and sanitation, and child and maternal health.

To improve food security, Australia's \$100 million support will enable the opening of rural markets and increased crop and livestock productivity.

Education is also a vital part of our development assistance, building the capacity of African countries and forging enduring people-to-people links.

The Australian Government also recognises the importance of fostering institutional links. The new \$8 million Australia–Africa Millennium Development Goals Research Partnerships Program will assist African and Australian education and research institutions to work together to support African economic growth.

Australia is committed to delivering an expanded scholarships program in Africa with 1,000 scholarships offered a year across Africa by 2012–13.

We have also put in place fellowships that will cover resource sector governance. This year these fellowships have been offered to 24 African officials from 15 countries.

Fifty new Australian volunteers will also be placed in nine countries, including the first 10 Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development to Africa, who will depart for Ghana in April and July.

Australia is committed to Africa for the long term. We want to draw on our experience and expertise in ways that will make a unique and positive contribution to Africa.

We want to work with Africa to be a part of the future that Africa is forging for itself.



Australian volunteers in Africa

St Michael's Community Hospital in the town of Guillemé in Malawi provides health services to around 22,000 people. With 60 beds and a busy outpatients' clinic, it is a hive of activity caring for people of all ages from not just Malawi, but also neighbouring Mozambique and Zambia.

Most of the patients coming to St Michael's Hospital suffer from anaemia, malaria and malnutrition. HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis are also major health problems.

Since 1990, Australian Volunteers International, which is supported by the Australian Government, has placed more than 90 volunteers throughout Malawi. Their work has responded to issues in the health, education, disability and agricultural sectors. Working at the local level, volunteers share their skills and knowledge with people and communities in Africa. By living and working as part of the community, volunteers also build strong cultural ties between Africa and Australia.

Pharmacist Danielle Deidun recently returned from a two-year volunteer assignment at St Michael's Hospital. She took up the pharmacist position having developed an interest in health in developing countries after working for 10 years in Australia and the UK. At St Michael's Hospital, Danielle's role was to manage all aspects of medicines supply at the hospital. She also trained staff members so they could continue to run the operation as a team, without the support of volunteers.

Now back in Australia, Danielle is using the knowledge she gained while training hospital staff at St Michael's Hospital and is pursuing studies in international health.

Like Danielle, other young Australians continue to work with people in African countries and across the globe to develop their communities and achieve their full potential.

ABOVE: St Michael's Community Hospital
RIGHT: Australian pharmacist Danielle Deidun dispenses medicines at St Michael's.

Photos: Kate Holt/Africa Practice

More Australians than ever are volunteering their services in Africa. In 2009–10, 50 new Australian volunteers will be placed in nine African countries. This year programs are expanding into Ghana, Kenya, Namibia and Tanzania.



Australia supports African scholars

by Asif Khan, AusAID



The new and scaled-up Australia Awards in Africa program will focus on areas where Australia has recognised expertise and can respond to the development needs identified by African countries.

their countries and meet their own development challenges, reducing the need to rely on foreign experts.

The Australian Government has committed to a ten-fold scaling up of the new Australia Awards in Africa program—1,000 long and short-term awards a year to candidates from across Africa by 2012–13.

Australia Awards are also important because they build strong person-to-person links between Australia and other countries.

The Australia Awards alumni association in Africa has nearly 600 registered alumni. A number of alumni work at senior levels within the public, private and NGO sectors including Malawi's African Development Bank Head; Lesotho's Head of Disease Control and Tanzania's Principal Mining Geologist.

The new and scaled-up Australia Awards in Africa program will focus on areas where Australia has recognised expertise and can respond to the development needs identified by African countries. These include mining and natural resource management, agriculture and public policy, as well as food security, water and sanitation, and maternal and child health.

ABOVE: Catherine Barasa, who completed a Masters in Public Health at the University Sydney, in her UNAIDS office in Kampala, Uganda. Photo: Kate Holt/Africa Practice

 More at Focus online

When Catherine Barasa was studying for her Masters in international public health in Australia she learned that to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS there needs to be a prevention program which tackles the factors that put people at risk. Since returning to Uganda, Catherine has worked for UNAIDS and believes the education she received in Australia is helping her make a real difference to the health of Ugandan people.

'The course has definitely changed my way of working, thinking and presenting ideas, and I feel so much more comfortable when confronted with the challenges in my working environment,' she said.

Catherine is one of more than 3,600 people from African countries supported by the Australian Government to undertake tertiary-level study since 1960.

Providing tertiary education opportunities to people in developing countries has played an important role in Australia's aid program. Such opportunities help build the skills of decision makers to achieve reform in



Engagement with South Africa

'By working more closely together in the multilateral arena, Australia and South Africa can help shape responses to global challenges.'

Australia and South Africa have a pivotal role to play in shaping global solutions to the complex problems facing the world today.

That was the message Foreign Affairs Minister Stephen Smith gave during his visit to South Africa in January.

In a speech to the South African Institute for International Affairs, Mr Smith said: 'As a Western Australian, I am struck by the similarities of our two economies ... We are also great competitors in sports such as cricket, rugby and football. This competition is fierce and ongoing but the linkages built between our countries are enduring.

'By working more closely together in the multilateral arena, Australia and South Africa can help shape responses to global challenges. As good international citizens, Australia and South Africa share a commitment to multiculturalism, good governance and democracy.'

During his South Africa visit, Mr Smith and his counterpart Foreign Minister Nkoana-Mashabane agreed to

sign a Memorandum of Understanding to continue to enhance the strong bilateral relationship between the two countries.

Mr Smith announced that Australia, as a fellow member of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, would contribute \$6 million over the next two years to United Nations peace building efforts. This includes \$4 million over three years to the UN Peacebuilding Fund and \$2 million to support peace building initiatives identified by the Peacebuilding Commission, focusing on Burundi and Sierra Leone.

Mr Smith also announced that Australia would contribute \$500,000 and technical expertise to support South Africa in the development of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Climate Change Plan of Action. This is important in guiding African strategies to address climate change. Australia will also cooperate closely with South Africa to continue to support the recovery of Zimbabwe including: \$4 million to support collaboration between the

South Africa and Zimbabwe taxation authorities to build Zimbabwe's taxation administration; and \$2 million for South African technical expertise to support capacity building efforts in water and sanitation.

Mr Smith also visited Botswana where he met with President Khama his counterpart Foreign Minister Phandu Skelemani. He announced further development assistance for Botswana including \$500,000 in fire management assistance and \$250,000 to build capacity in quarantine and plant bio-security.

ABOVE: South Africa Foreign Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane with Foreign Affairs Minister Stephen Smith during his visit to South Africa in January. Photo: Jacoline Prinsloo/South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation.



Malawi mines Australian expertise

'All elements of Australian society will be required to contribute to the achievement of the MDGs. Development assistance, alone, will not be enough. Economic growth—driven by the private sector—remains the long-term solution to poverty.'

*Minister for Foreign Affairs,
Stephen Smith*

Africa is home to the world's largest deposits of platinum, gold, diamonds, iron ore, copper and much more.

With such a rich supply of natural resources, it is not surprising that Australian business interest in the continent is, according to the Australia Africa Business Council, 'growing at an extraordinary speed'. Strong economic growth combined with such rich resources

has seen more than 150 Australian mining companies invest in more than 40 African countries, with current and future investment estimated at \$20 billion.

As a world leader in mining, especially regulation and environmental conservation, Australia is creating education opportunities for African government professionals. This will help them protect the environment and maximise the financial benefits of their mining industries.

Charles Kaphwiyo is Malawi's Commissioner for Mines and Minerals in the Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Environment. Having completed a mining governance fellowship under the Australia Awards program, Mr Kaphwiyo is now at the forefront of developing Malawi's mining sector. Traditionally, Malawi has relied on agriculture but, with a changing climate and unpredictable weather patterns, new approaches were needed.

Malawi has had to diversify and find another engine for economic growth.

Given that the country is rich in natural resources such as uranium, coal and bauxite, mining is starting to develop. But mining also brings major challenges for governments and regulators: the most difficult being environmental regulation, the management of taxes and royalties, and the rights of local landowners. These are areas where Australian regulators have considerable experience.

In 2008, geologist Mr Kaphwiyo was one of five African officials nominated for an Australian Government-funded mining governance fellowship. Having worked in numerous geological positions throughout his 30-year career, Mr Kaphwiyo said the fellowship gave him the opportunity to build on his knowledge of mining legislation, policy and practices.

Since completing his fellowship, Mr Kaphwiyo has coordinated the development of Malawi's first mining policy and the revision of existing mining legislation, including the drafting of regulations for the mining and processing of radioactive minerals and petroleum.



‘My job primarily involves the administration of the Mines and Minerals Act, coordinating the formulation and implementation of mining policy, coordinating the revision of mining legislation, issuing licences and providing advice.’

‘The mining sector in Malawi has now taken off with really serious mining operations under way. Australian companies are engaged in both exploration and mine development too. The only modern mine that we have in Malawi so far has been opened by Paladin (Africa) Ltd, a subsidiary of the Perth-based Paladin Energy Ltd.’

Paladin Energy is mining uranium in northern Malawi in a USD300 million investment. The company currently employs 500 people.

ABOVE LEFT: Machinery at Paladin Energy’s Kayelekera Mine in northern Malawi.

ABOVE RIGHT: An aerial view of Paladin Energy’s Kayelekera Mine in northern Malawi.

Photos: Paladin Energy Ltd

Another round of fellowships targeting the management of the mining sector is under way. As part of this round, 26 senior government officials from 16 African countries will travel to Australia to undertake mining-focused fellowships in the areas of geographic information systems, regulation and management of the sector, and sustainable management of revenue flows from the sector.

Did you know?

- > Sub-Saharan growth is expected to hit 4.7 per cent this year. (African Economic Outlook)
- > In Rwanda, it takes just three days to start a business, making it one of the best World Bank Doing Business performers in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2009.
- > Namibia was 23rd on the World Press Freedom Index in 2009 ahead of the USA, France, Italy and Spain.
- > In Côte d’Ivoire, registering property took 397 days in 2005. Now it takes 32 days. (Business Action for Africa)
- > Senegal has reduced the time it takes to clear goods for importing or exporting from approximately two months to two weeks. (ICF)
- > Uganda’s GDP grew by seven per cent from 1993 to 2002.
- > Four years ago it took 153 days to set up a business in Mozambique. The World Bank said that time had been cut to 26 days.
- > The number of African democracies jumped from just four in 1990 to 17 today.

Australia–Africa Food Security Initiative

In Sub-Saharan Africa, one in three people suffer chronic hunger—its people face the lowest level of food security in the world.

Australia shares similar dry and tropical environments with many African countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. Australian expertise, developed because of water shortages and low soil fertility, can benefit African countries.

Based on this experience, Australia is working to boost food security in Africa over the next four years through the Australia–Africa Food Security Initiative. This \$100 million initiative will focus on investing in agricultural research and development; increasing market access for rural farmers; and helping the most vulnerable people gain access to food.

New research partnerships have been set up between Australian and African institutions. The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) and the CSIRO are working with African institutions to help boost farming production in Sub-Saharan Africa. A new partnership is also being set up to support the Common Market for East and Southern Africa's efforts to make rural markets work better.

ACIAR is supporting research institutions in Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania to develop drought and disease-tolerant maize and legumes. The CSIRO is working in partnership with the West and Central African Council for Research and Development to improve agriculture across its 22 member countries. The CSIRO is also working with Biosciences eastern and central Africa to improve research into the nutritional quality of food and animal health.



New ideas yield food security in Africa

by Warren Page, ACIAR

Many poor farmers in eastern and southern Africa struggle to grow enough food. They plant maize and other crops, hoping to harvest enough to feed their families and sell some leftover crops for income.

Drought and low soil fertility are major threats to the food security of these farmers. When drought strikes, farmers will often plant more maize across a wider area of their farms, hoping to compensate for the reduced yield due to lack of water. But, when there is limited or no water, the maize crop uses nutrients in the soil at a faster rate. This affects later crops.

In these conditions, farmers opt to plant staple crops and avoid using fertilisers because they cost a lot of money. If a farmer uses fertiliser and the crop does not produce enough to cover his or her costs, the losses can be devastating.

The end result is a cycle of drought and lessening soil fertility that is reducing maize yields for poor farmers. This also reduces household food security and increases poverty in the maize-growing regions of eastern and southern Africa.

A new Australian Government project is looking to boost food security in eastern

and southern Africa by combining maize and legume farming. The four-year, \$20 million program, run by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), will carry out research in Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi and Mozambique. Called *Sustainable intensification of maize–legume cropping systems for food security in eastern and southern Africa*, the program builds on past research and is part of a \$100 million Australian Government initiative to help build food security in Africa.

Research has seen legumes such as beans, cowpeas, pigeon peas, groundnuts, chickpeas and soybeans, planted between rows of maize or after harvest. These crops, usually planted by women, are a good protein source in diets and provide additional income.

Legumes also add nitrogen to soils. The nitrogen is used by subsequent crops through a process known as rhizobial fixation. In this way, legumes act as a fertiliser and can improve crop yields.

In a bid to overcome the problems posed by drought and erratic rainfall, previous ACIAR research into maize farming in southern Africa looked at low-cost methods that were similar to existing farming practices. By using a computer-based simulator, ACIAR assessed the potential yields and risks



Feeding the displaced

involved in planting legume varieties in the Chisepo area, near Lilongwe in Malawi.

Forty per cent of farmers involved in the research planted the legume mucuna, which was found to be the most effective in boosting soil fertility and controlling weeds. Pigeon peas and cowpeas were the next most effective. Many more farmers, upon hearing of the success, started growing one of the three legume types.

The new program will identify and support the introduction of improved varieties of maize and complementary legume varieties to help improve agricultural methods in Malawi, and in maize-growing regions in Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Mozambique. Maize and legume productivity could improve by 30 per cent across 500,000 small farms because of the research. ACIAR will work with African governments and agricultural organisations to implement this program.

ABOVE: Maize is shelled. Photo: Kate Holt/
Africa Practice



More at Focus online

Dadaab, 100 km from the border with Somalia in the North of Kenya, is one of the oldest and most overcrowded refugee sites in the world.

Around 270,000 refugees, most of whom have fled the conflict in Somalia, are registered at Dadaab's three camps: Hagadera, Ifo and Dagahaley. Others are in the North West of Kenya in the Kakuma refugee camp. The camps are managed by the United Nations refugee agency, UNHCR, in partnership with the Government of Kenya.

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), whose operations in Kenya are supported by the Australian Government, has several major programs under way to provide food to people living in the camps in Dadaab.

The head of WFP's refugee program, Josephine Mahiga-Janabi, said the program had provided food to refugees in Kenya since 1991, when the camp was first set up in Dadaab. 'WFP currently provides food support to about 330,000 refugees both in Dadaab and Kakuma,' she said.

One program, a school feeding project at the Friends Primary School in the Ifo camp, gives each child who attends the school a meal. Adam, a teacher at the

school and also a former student, has spent 20 years in Dadaab.

'I fled from Somalia and came here as a refugee. Since then I've lived in the camp. I went to Friends Primary School and for the last four years I've taught in the school.'

Adam said enrolments had increased since the school feeding program started and, not surprisingly, that children were better able to learn when they were not hungry.

'The school feeding program has helped. Maybe half the children may not have had food at all. They gain energy and have motivation for learning. It motivates them to come to school,' Adam said.

The WFP also provides take-home rations for girls to make sure they get enough food to eat and provide an incentive for them to keep coming back to school. To address the needs of younger children, WFP has supplementary feeding programs that target moderately malnourished children under five, caretakers with severely malnourished children under five, and women in the late stages of pregnancy and during the first six months of breast feeding.

ABOVE: Children at the Friends Primary School get a meal from the World Food Programme. Photo: Kate Holt/Africa Practice



Protecting mothers and children

by Nankali Maksud, UNICEF

A social protection scheme now reaches more than 24,000 households in Malawi.

In Malawi, mothers, grandmothers, brothers and sisters are getting a helping hand. With a cash handout to buy food and access basic health and education services, the Government of Malawi's cash transfer scheme, supported by UNICEF and the Australian Government through the Children and AIDS Regional Initiative, is changing the lives of people like Violet Gavin, 69.

Violet looks after her youngest daughter, Irene, who has epilepsy and lost nearly all her toes because she fell into a fire during a fit. Violet's husband left her and Violet's two older daughters have their own families to look after far away. With no way of making money and no support, Violet and Irene would often go without food for extended periods.

But Violet's life has changed with the help of her cash transfer. As part of the scheme, monthly payments are made to the head of eligible households—often a child or an elderly person—to spend on basic necessities like food.

As part of the scheme, Violet was given a small plot of land to live on and grow crops—maize and sugarcane. Having grown and harvested her maize, Violet uses her cash grant to grind the maize while trying to put some aside to buy essential items like sugar and soap.

'The cash we receive each month has definitely helped our situation. Before we started to get it, I think it is about two years ago now, things were very bad and we would often go without food. So for that I am thankful,' Violet said.

The social protection scheme now reaches more than 24,000 households in Malawi. AusAID, through UNICEF, is also helping the Government of Malawi to



develop a comprehensive social protection policy and scale up social protection programs like the cash transfer scheme. The aim is to provide a comprehensive package of support to poor households in Malawi, including expanded access to basic services such as health and education. The cash transfer scheme will be an important part of that scheme as it helps people to buy food and access education and health services.

With this kind of ongoing support, young carers like Boniface Mzembi will continue to benefit. Boniface lives with his sister Maculata; their other sister died when she was just 10. Their mother died in hospital when Boniface was about eight and still in school, and their father died at home that same year.

With nobody to pay for his books or clothes, Boniface left school when he was eight to get casual work to support his sister. He doesn't remember how to read

or write. Boniface and Maculata, who is deaf and dumb and never went to school, now live alone.

For the last two years Boniface has received 1,000 Malawian Kwacha (about USD10) each month as part of the cash transfer scheme. While there are times when he and his sister still go hungry, the money usually buys two basins of maize as well as some salt and sugar. Sometimes Boniface is able to grow maize on some land that his father left.

'I am getting older now and would like to get married but I have to support Maculata first as she has nobody to look after her, and because she is disabled she will not get married,' Boniface said.

But his biggest worry is that he has missed out on his education and cannot read or write, and he dreams about being able to do so.

Facts

- > Since 2006, the Children and AIDS Regional Initiative has reached 98,000 people in 24,308 households in Malawi.
- > 70 per cent of those households are affected by HIV/AIDS.
- > Households receive a school bonus for each child enrolled in either primary (USD1.4) or secondary (USD2.7) school.

ABOVE LEFT: Violet Gavin, 69, sits outside her small hut with her daughter and three of her grandchildren near Chimteka, Malawi.

ABOVE RIGHT: Boniface Mzembi and his sister, Maculata, both of whom are orphans, sit on the floor outside the hut they share near Chimteka, Malawi.

Photos: Kate Holt/Africa Practice

Thirsty work

by Kim Knight, AusAID

Access to a clean and reliable water supply is helping the Costa del Sol community in Mozambique to grow.

Amelia Lisango has good cause to smile. She now has a pipe in her garden that supplies her and her family with clean running water.

Amelia lives with her husband, a fisherman, their daughter and several relatives in Costa del Sol, near Maputo in Mozambique. Like many others in her community, she used to have to walk several kilometres each day to get enough water. As part of the World Bank's Water and Sanitation Program, supported by the Australian Government, a water pipe was installed on her property.

Amelia said having fresh water on their property had already made a big difference to their lives.

'Before I used to have to walk very far to get it, but now that we can get it right outside our house, I have a lot more time to work in my garden and help my husband mend his nets for fishing,' she said.

The program in Costa del Sol has connected 3,600 homes to the water supply. Health and hygiene has improved as people can access clean water on demand in their own home. Most importantly, many community members, especially women, now have more time to tend their crops or work.

The program was put in place when the water problem in Costa del Sol reached crisis point in 2000. Millions of people who had fled Mozambique's civil war returned to crowded Maputo and nearby towns like Costa del Sol in 1992. A cholera outbreak in 2000 exposed the dire water and sanitation situation caused by rapid expansion and under-investment in water and sanitation. With no water supply, Costa del Sol's residents had to walk to get clean drinking water. They tried bringing





water in by tanker to store for the whole community but this was too expensive.

With the water shortage reaching crisis point, non-government organisation Water Aid worked with the city water utility to set up a water supply. A new water distribution unit was built in 2008 in Costa del Sol and the World Bank's Water and Sanitation Program got involved to work with the Costa del Sol community to build local skills to manage and sustain the water supply.

As part of the program, the water utility provided pumps and each family paid back the cost of installation. This was the best way to ensure that each family had access to water on their property. Jucca Guibango, president of the Association of Community Water Users, a community-based organisation in Costa del Sol, said: 'The idea is that we are developing local capacity to implement private water supplies and give as many families as possible an independent water source, but to do it in a way that they have some input.'

LEFT: Amelia Lisango collects water at her home in Costa del Sol, near Maputo in Mozambique.

ABOVE: Children collect water from a newly installed water pipe in Costa del Sol.

Photos: Kate Holt/Africa Practice



More at Focus online



Responding to Zimbabwe's cholera outbreak

by Gilbert Kamanga, World Vision

The town of Beitbridge is a shifting tide of migrants, truckers, and people trying to find a better life—mostly by attempting to cross the border from Zimbabwe into South Africa.

Beitbridge is the largest inland port in Sub-Saharan Africa. It lies south of the Zimbabwean capital, Harare, on the Limpopo River and has an estimated population of 40,000 that swells and recedes as people come and go. The continuous movement of people in and out of Beitbridge led to a devastating cholera outbreak in 2008–09. More than 5,000 people were infected and 149 people died in the township—proof that poor water and sanitation can cause widespread illness and death.

World Vision, with the support of the Australian Government, was one of the non-government organisations working

in Beitbridge to tackle the outbreak. They supplied the community with cholera kits, which included antibiotics and rehydration salts and fluids, and carried out awareness campaigns to educate communities about the importance of hygiene in preventing disease. Refuse was cleaned up and support was provided to strengthen Beitbridge Town Council's water and sanitation services.

As a result, the people of Beitbridge no longer use contaminated water from the nearby river but instead rely on protected boreholes. Public waste collection points have been set up and Beitbridge Town Council will soon complete a pipeline to provide 9,000 residents with fresh water. Australia's support has helped to prevent further outbreaks of cholera.

ABOVE: Patients receive rehydration treatment at the Beitbridge cholera quarantine camp in Zimbabwe. Photo: World Vision



Getting children into school

by Lynne McAllister, AusAID

While schools in Australia are using computers and digital technology more and more, some schools in Africa struggle to find suitable space for students to sit and learn.

About 80 million students in Africa have limited or no access to a desk. Many schools operate in shifts, where some students arrive early and others arrive later in the day, to help manage the shortage of desks.

To help provide space for African students to read and write, the Australian Government is supporting a lap desk program.

Lap desks have been designed to cover a student's lap while they sit on the floor or in a chair. The desks wrap around the student's body with enough space for a

textbook and a notepad to sit on top of the desk. The desks can be taken home too so the students have a surface to use for their homework.

During the World Cup draw last December, the Australian Minister for Sport Kate Ellis, Australia's High Commissioner to South Africa Ann Harrap, Australian Socceroos coach Pim Verbeek and eight young Australians who had won a Football Federation Australia writing competition, presented 1,700 lap desks to students at Tafelsig Primary School in Cape Town. The presentation marked Australia's support for the iGOAL Education for All campaign.

The mother of one of the young Australians, moved by what she had seen in Africa, wrote, 'We visited a primary school in a very poor area ... to present the school with 1,700 lap desks for the

students—they work off dirt grounds—plus soccer balls and other items. They greeted us all as if we were rock stars, singing and dancing and chanting. The looks on their faces were priceless, an experience my son and I will never forget, and it has taught us to be even more grateful for the things we have. We really are beyond more privileged than most.'

Education—especially for girls—is one of the best investments in development. It can halt the spread of HIV/AIDS, increase economic growth and break the cycle of poverty. It is also critical to achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals by 2015.



More at Focus online



Australia has distributed more than 10,000 lap desks to students in and around South Africa and a further 10,000 to schools in Zimbabwe.

ABOVE LEFT: The Hamlet Girls Soccer team play in Kibera, Nairobi. Photo: Tim Freccia/CARE
 ABOVE RIGHT: Bob McMullan, Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance, presents a lap desk to a schoolgirl in South Africa. Photo: AusAID
 RIGHT: Children queue up for their daily meal at the Kawangware School in Nairobi, Kenya. Photo: Kate Holt/Africa Practice

1GOAL

EDUCATION FOR ALL

Australia has joined 1GOAL Education for All, a global campaign to change the lives of people living in poverty by giving every child the chance to go to school.

This campaign uses the 2010 FIFA World Cup to create a global groundswell of support and raise public awareness of the importance of education.

With the world's eyes turning to the World Cup in South Africa, it is an ideal time to create awareness about the importance of education and to encourage those watching the World Cup in Africa to send their children, particularly their daughters, to school.

Tim Cahill, Australian Soccerroo and 1GOAL Ambassador, said: '72 million children are denied an education—let's leave a legacy after this World Cup and get every child into school.'

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, together with leaders in the United Kingdom and Europe, and football stars from around the world, with South African President Jacob Zuma and the captain of South Africa's football team Aaron Mokoena, have all signed up to 1GOAL.

In April 2010, school students across Australia, participated in the 1GOAL Lesson For All—a world record attempt to get students around the world studying the same lesson on the same day. Students learned about how education opens up opportunities, provides pathways out of poverty and can transform individuals, families and societies.

Since 1999, the number of children in primary school has grown by 33 million worldwide. But 72 million children around the world still don't go to school.

Education is the flagship of the Australian Government's aid program. Australia is increasing its support to education and is working with partner countries around the world to help get more children, particularly girls, into school.

Australia provides targeted support to education in Africa through a global partnership called the Education for All Fast Track Initiative. By the end of 2010, the partnership aims get more than 20 million children into school.



ABOVE: Girls play soccer during playtime at the UNICEF-supported Khorbu Centre Basic School in Juba, capital of southern Sudan. Photo: UNICEF/NYHQ2007-0878/Cranston

TOP: Children learning at Nakanyoni Primary School, Uganda. Photo: Kate Holt/Africa Practice

Something new out of Africa

by Marc Purcell, Executive Director of the Australian Council for International Development

The arid Tanzanian landscape has one of the biggest holes I've seen in my life. The 'Golden Pride' open-cut mine stretches for a kilometre across the flat, dry plains of Nzega district. A lot of gold, 1.1 million ounces, has been extracted from the Western Australia-owned mine, providing valuable tax revenue for the Tanzanian Government.

In 1999, mine manager and Western Australian, Grant Pierce, took me on a journey around Nzega district, which sits at a crossroad 750 km North West of the capital, Dar es Salaam. Our main destination was Isanga Primary School. Grant explained that when he arrived a year ago the school consisted of one teacher and two mud brick rooms. There were no desks, books, water, electricity or windows. The school had been transformed: a bore had been sunk for fresh water, the children all had desks and books. Seven other schools in the district had also been restored by the mine.

The number of teachers at the school had increased from one to three, including primary teacher and musician Louise Cameron, from the Australian Government-funded Australian Volunteers International. The children, who performed at the Womadelaide music festival in 2006, sang for me in Swahili:

The responsibility of developing and directing our country

It is the responsibility of every Tanzanian citizen

We must work hard

So we can alleviate our nation from poverty

We must be responsible Tanzanians

Squandering, fraud and corruption will not end, if we only curse them

The spin-offs from the Australian presence in Nzega have been many: the impact of Australia's development assistance in education, the mine's



investment and lots more. For the Australian public, Africa is the face of poverty with unrealised human development potential. Of the \$800 million in donations raised annually by non-government organisations (NGOs), more than \$280 million is spent in Africa.

The Australian Government's decision to lift aid spending to Africa by 40 per cent to more than \$160 million in 2009–10 makes sense. The Australian Government and Australian NGOs have lots of experience in areas that countries in Sub-Saharan Africa need. With over 33 Australian NGOs working in 39 countries in Africa, we are well placed to partner with the Australian Government's efforts.

Most NGOs have been in Africa for decades, some church-based agencies for half a century or longer. Like volunteer Louise Cameron, Australian NGOs work directly with local organisations and communities to strengthen community capacity to address development needs.

The UK's prestigious Overseas Development Institute looked at the approach taken by the Australian NGOs involved with the AusAID-funded Australian Partnerships with African Communities program. They found it



had a strong impact because AusAID and the NGOs understood that 'development programs work best when they reflect the local reality and respond to both rights violations and a lack of access to services'.

ABOVE: Marc Purcell

TOP: Children play at Chimteka Child-Care Centre in Chimteka, Malawi. The child-care workers at this centre have been trained by UNICEF, with money from AusAID, in early childhood development.

Photo: Kate Holt/Africa Practice

Women leading the way in Malawi

by Jess Perrin, Development Education Coordinator, CARE Australia

Women in Malawi are being empowered to reach their potential.

Powerful women are emerging across Malawi. Despite facing many challenges—more than 65 per cent of people are living in poverty, severe drought has caused food shortages, and diseases such as HIV continue to spread—women are using their skills to generate an income for the first time and inspire positive changes in their communities.

Lifineti is one of these women. The 32-year-old mother of four from the remote Malawian village of Mnthambala is helping more than 190 people, mainly women, lift their communities out of poverty.

She was empowered to reach her own potential through CARE's Supporting and Mitigating the Impact of HIV and AIDS for Livelihood Enhancement project. The project works with women like Lifineti to help families access the food they need and secure their livelihoods. By setting up village savings and loans groups and other activities, the project is creating opportunities for communities to overcome poverty and raise awareness of HIV.

The project began in 2004 as part of the Australian Government-funded Australian Partnerships with African Countries program. Since then, it has had an enormous impact on women who are determined to help their communities overcome poverty.

In 2007, Lifineti and her husband Elisa joined a village savings and loans group supported through the project. Each week they attended the group meetings and contributed a small amount of their savings to a fund from which they could eventually borrow. As the fund grew with interest from repaid loans, all the



members began to make money. Within a year, Lifineti took out a small loan from the group and became the first woman in her community to own a goat.

Lifineti used the profits from selling her goat's produce to improve her small business. After participating in further training, she had the confidence to become a community volunteer to help other women.

'At first people pitied me because I didn't have much money, but now they respect me and I can share my learnings with them so they can prosper too,' she said. Elisa also shares in his wife's

success: 'I'm very proud and happy for her. At first I was the only one trying to help our family, but now we are partners,' he said.

Today, Lifineti is working with 13 village savings and loans groups. 'I'm encouraging everyone to participate because I'm a changed person,' she said.

The project is also helping to address the marginalisation of HIV positive people (14 per cent of the adult population in Malawi are HIV positive).

In Chakhaza, a community on the outskirts of the capital, Lilongwe, lives 41-year-old Ruth, who is HIV positive.



When she was first diagnosed, Ruth experienced shame and was outcast from her village. Today, through the project, Ruth is part of a support group as well as a village savings and loans group. The support group perform drama and dance routines to build awareness of HIV and encourage voluntary counselling and testing. As a result, Ruth's community is beginning to understand the virus. "The village head appreciates my role because so many people have gone for testing," said Ruth.

Lifineti and Ruth are just two of the thousands of women who have benefitted

from the project in Malawi. Before it was introduced: few vulnerable groups were involved in community decisions, had the support to start small businesses or were leaders within their community.

The project demonstrates the unlimited potential that women and vulnerable groups have to make sustainable positive changes, and the powerful difference that seemingly small steps can make in the fight against poverty.

LEFT: Lifineti and Elisa with their family in the village of Mnthambala near Lilongwe in Malawi.

TOP: Ruth feels happy because her community accepts her and now asks for her advice.

ABOVE: A group of women walk in a funeral procession near Lilongwe.

Photos: Tim Freccia/CARE

Australia Awards making a difference

In 2010 alone, AusAID will give more than 3,500 individuals from developing countries the chance to undertake study and professional development in Australia before returning home to contribute to the development of their countries.



Marcelino Lucas

Marcelino Eurico de Sales Lucas, from Mozambique, graduated with a Masters in environmental health from the Queensland University of Technology in 1998. He is currently the Director of Planning, Statistics and Cooperation at the Mozambique Ministry of Science and Technology.

'I have worked in science and research for a long time and have used my skills to improve public health in Mozambique. It all started when I got a degree in biology from Universidade Eduardo Mondlane in Mozambique. I obtained several subsequent qualifications in environmental health such as solid waste management, and public health and disaster management.

'In my current role I coordinate an HIV/AIDS research group and I work with other researchers on HIV, malaria and science policy projects. I'm also the coordinator of the World Bank's science and technology capacity-building project.

'One of the most exciting projects I've been involved with was in 2002. This was a collaborative project between the Government of Mozambique, the World Health Organisation, Doctors

Without Borders and the International Vaccine Institute. We developed Durkol, a vaccine that has all but vanquished cholera in the city of Beira in Mozambique. This drug now plays a leading role in the combat of cholera worldwide. To be able to have such a dramatic impact on cholera in my country gives me great satisfaction.

'I've also helped to develop an alternative water purification treatment called Certeza ('being-sure') and supported public education campaigns designed to educate people in Beira about water-borne diseases. My Australian scholarship has given me the skills and the contacts to be able to go out and make a difference to the health of people in Mozambique.'

Pham Thi Cuc Ha



Pham Thi Cuc Ha graduated from Flinders University in South Australia in 2004 with a Masters in education management. Since returning to Vietnam, Ha has established her own kindergarten to put into practice skills she learned in Australia as part of her Australian Development Scholarship.

An adult stepping through the front door of Ha's kindergarten might have doubts over the dazzling tangerine and lime walls, but a child would be delighted. Children and their education is Ha's passion, and she has turned that passion into a thriving business. Just Kids opened in June 2007 and now has two branches with 150 children whose ages range between two and five years. 'I went to Australia specifically to realise this dream,' Ha said.

She has come a long way in the six years since graduating with her Masters. Now 43, and brimming with energy, Ha began her working life as a kindergarten teacher in Ho Chi Minh City. 'I always wanted my own school. My mother was a teacher and she encouraged me to be one.'

It took a year to set up Just Kids. 'I learned a lot from Australia,' she said. 'When I was there I put my daughter in the university kindergarten and I studied their program. What I'm trying to do here is combine the Vietnamese curriculum with an Australian one,' she said, citing Show and Tell as an Australian example. 'The kids love it.'

'I really want to thank AusAID and my teachers in Australia,' Ha said. 'I didn't just learn from the university, but also from the people who were around me. Those two years in Australia put me in a different, stronger position in this market. I learned how to set up a school that was different. And that was just the start.'

Ha's grand vision to expand the program to reach millions of children is now on the way to realisation—Just Kids recently produced its first television program.



[More at Focus online](#)

GLOBAL EDUCATION

Resources for schools

The Global Education Program produces curriculum material to support the teacher professional development program. The latest posters are available from books@ausaid.gov.au





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