



Gender equality and peace-building Better health
for women and their children in Irian Jaya Youth
ambassadors at the forefront helping women

focus





From the Minister

Attention to gender issues is essential for poverty alleviation and economic growth

This edition of *Focus* coincides with International Women's Day on 8 March, a day that gives us an opportunity to celebrate the gains made in improving the status of women. The theme for this year is Women and Peace. I am very pleased that the United Nations Security Council recently reaffirmed the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building. I have myself seen the positive results from the crucial role women in Bougainville played in the peace process.

Women are more likely to be poorer, less educated, and less healthy than men. They are subjected to more violence and other human rights abuses than men. Estimates from the World Bank suggest that rape and domestic violence account for 19 per cent of the total disease burden for women, which is comparable to HIV or TB.

A strong international consensus has emerged that attention to gender issues is essential to achieve poverty alleviation and economic growth. Social and economic research has stressed the high return from investment in women as well as the poor performance of projects that ignore differences in gender roles.

The roles of men and women are different in the family, the community and in society. The gender approach to development ensures that aid takes into account the social, political and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with

being male and female. Active participation and cooperation by all members of the community is at the heart of sustainable development.

The objectives of Australia's gender and development policy include assistance to increase women's access to education, health care and economic resources. The policy encourages women's participation and leadership in decision-making at all levels. It also promotes the human rights of women and the elimination of discrimination against them. Spending on activities that address gender considerations increased from \$280 million in 1997/98 to an estimated \$507 million in 1999/00. This represents an increase from 19 per cent to 31 per cent of overseas aid.

One of many organisations receiving Australian assistance is the Vanuatu Women's Centre. When I visited it in November, I was impressed with the dedication of the women at the centre. They are doing important work in counselling and assisting women who are survivors of domestic violence. I am pleased that the aid program is helping these women to take control of their lives.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alexander Downer'.

Alexander Downer

Minister for Foreign Affairs

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COVER Agatha Monei and her son, Godfrey, from Kohino Village in the Solis area, Buka, Bougainville — page 7. Photo: Anne Rigby



Events in 2000 have again demonstrated the aid program's integral role in Government efforts to promote Australia's fundamental national interests in regional development, stability and peace.

The year in focus

The region has seen some positive developments over the past 12 months. Recovery from the financial crisis in East Asia has continued, and the Morauta government in PNG has pressed ahead with an ambitious economic and political reform agenda. But set against these positives, we are all only too conscious of the many challenges to peace and security in the region. The coup in Fiji, fighting in Solomon Islands, unrest in Indonesia and East Timor's transition to nationhood are examples. The annual statement to Parliament on the aid program by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Downer, highlighted the role that the program plays in supporting Australian interests in the region.

The following provides an indication of some of the areas where Australia's aid program is making a difference.

RESPONDING TO CRISIS

Humanitarian assistance in Solomon Islands has been provided to meet the basic needs of disrupted and displaced communities. Peace building and conflict resolution activities include facilitation of peace negotiations and assistance for reconciliation. Australia's support for strengthening law and justice will be crucial to long term stability.

The aid program has been part of the overall Australian response to the coup in

Fiji. The program's focus is now on helping the poorer sections of the Fiji community and supporting macroeconomic stability and public sector reform. Australia stands ready to support appropriate activities to promote Fiji's return to constitutional and democratic government.

AID PARTNERSHIPS

Australia completed a successful emergency response to the crisis in East Timor and has moved into developing a program of assistance focused on building local capacity to govern a stable and democratic East Timor after independence. Australian aid is helping to get children back to school, people housed, agriculture revived, basic services restored and a nascent East Timorese administration established.

The aid program continues to be a strongly positive element of the bilateral relationship with Indonesia. Australia has delivered strong and consistent messages on the need to push ahead with implementation of the economic reform agenda, and to address the West Timor issue. These messages were backed up with constructive and practical aid program support, in particular through a strengthened governance focus, and a range of high priority economic reform activities.

As our closest neighbour and largest bilateral aid partner, Papua New Guinea's major development challenges will continue



East Timorese children read the special East Timor edition of *Focus*. Australian aid is helping to get children back to school, people housed, agriculture revived, basic services restored and a nascent East Timorese administration established. Photo: David Haigh

to demand attention. The Development Cooperation Treaty, which commenced in July, with its groundbreaking emphasis on performance benchmarks and the new Incentive Fund, moves the aid relationship on to a higher level of mutual trust and cooperation.

One million people attended the opening of the My Thuan Bridge in Vietnam in May.

The bridge is not only of economic and social significance for a region containing 15 million people, but also symbolises positive Australian and Vietnamese relations.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Unchecked, the spread of HIV/AIDS can devastate a nation's productive resources and dramatically reduce economic and social development. Earlier last year Mr Downer announced a six-year \$200 million global HIV/AIDS initiative which aims to develop appropriate strategies in response to the problem.

The Government recognises that unsustainable debt is a serious problem for many poor countries striving to tackle poverty and achieve sustainable development. Australia has pledged 100 per cent bilateral debt forgiveness to countries that qualify for debt relief under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative.

AusAID is strengthening its engagement with key donor organisations. For example we are working with New Zealand to better harmonise aid arrangements to cut the administrative load of aid programs on our South Pacific partners.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Australia is a major donor in assisting demining. The Government's Destroy A Minefield (DAM) initiative has cleared 68,000 square metres of land in Cambodia, destroying more than 100 landmines and unexploded ordnance. Public awareness of the landmine issue is increasing. For example, donations from the Australian public to the DAM campaign now amount to around \$180,000.

A total of 285 young Australians have taken up assignments through the Australian Youth Ambassadors program. The program is valued by host organisations and developing country governments and is rated as a great experience by Australian Youth Ambassadors.

AID MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY

AusAID manages the third largest portfolio of contracts and consultancies in the Commonwealth. The current portfolio is worth over \$1.7 billion, and involves 186 separate implementation contracts valued at more than one million dollars each.

The development of an AusAID-specific poverty reduction framework will make the poverty focus of Australia's aid program more effective. Similarly, the publication of the Government's policy on overseas aid and good governance will help improve AusAID's portfolio of governance activities and will be of valuable assistance to partner governments, Australian managing contractors, NGOs and other donors.

AusAID's quality assurance and review processes continue to make a substantial contribution to enhancing the quality, effectiveness and accountability of our activities. Improvement strategies have particularly focused on issues of quality at entry and sustainability.

GENDER ISSUES

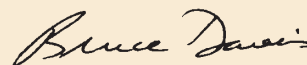
Australia is committed to addressing gender disparities. The stories in this issue of *Focus* highlight how we are working with women and men in partner countries to address gender disparities and to improve the status of women.

What is strikingly evident in these stories is how women can make a difference to their lives and those of their families and communities if given the opportunity. As well as funding women in business enterprises (see pages 24 and 26), we are supporting initiatives which address violence against women such as the Fiji Women's Crisis Center (page 17). The vital role women are playing in the peace process and in rehabilitation in Bougainville and the Solomon Islands (page 10) is also being recognised through the aid program.

During 2001 we will continue to focus on addressing violence against women and the role of women in peace-building. We will also support initiatives to enhance opportunities for women to participate in decision-making and leadership, and to improve women's economic empowerment.

FAST, FLEXIBLE RESPONSE

There are a number of emerging trends that are likely to affect the aid program and the potential remains for further economic and political instability in the region. The aid program has demonstrated that it is able to respond quickly when our neighbours are faced with circumstances beyond the capacity of their own resources. The program will retain flexibility to respond appropriately to emergency and humanitarian relief needs as they arise, whether from natural or man-made disasters.



Bruce Davis
Director General

Australia promotes gender equality and peace-building

Addressing a symposium of the Development Studies Network at Parliament House, Canberra, Senator Kay Patterson, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, spoke on gender and development and the particular efforts of the Australian aid program in promoting women's role in peace-making.



Senator Patterson – 'We all need to work to ensure women play an equal role in political structures and in community decision-making.'

As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, I know that the Australian Government's overseas aid program has been strongly supportive of the role of women in the peace process.

I would particularly like to emphasise the importance of the gender and social dimensions when dealing with conflict and long term peace building. Women are active players in their communities. Women's very positive role in peace-making deserves recognition and support.

The Government is also keenly aware of the social dimensions of conflict and the involvement of the community in peace negotiations, and peace-building.

ROLE OF THE AID PROGRAM

Our aid program supports the efforts of community groups in helping to bring about peace and to keep governments democratic and accountable for long term stability.

The aid program supports also the goal of increasing women's participation in decision-making and access to and control over resources.

This is a critical aspect of our support for long term and lasting solutions – because, as studies show, women are prominent in the peace process, but this doesn't necessarily translate into women playing leadership roles once conflict is over.

We all need to work to ensure women play an equal role in political structures and in community decision-making once peace has been forged.

I would like to briefly highlight two examples of where AusAID's Gender and Development policy, launched in 1997, is being implemented in conflict-affected environments.

BOUGAINVILLE

In Bougainville, women have played a critical role in the peace process. Women mediated between all sides of the conflict and contributed to bringing the warring parties together.

Through the aid program, Australia provided substantial support to the peace process to enable both men and women to participate in the peace talks.

Australia also supports projects that

include all members of the community in planning reconstruction efforts.

The Bougainville Development Project provides economic assistance to community groups in two districts of Bougainville. Women are represented on the advisory committees which decide which projects receive financial support.

Projects include water supply, adult literacy, and cocoa rehabilitation. The district committee system established as part of the project is an important model of community-based decision-making, involving people from both sides of the conflict, the Council of Elders and the Council of Women.

Since 1994, Australia has funded the Bougainville Community Projects Scheme. This has enabled women's groups to receive funding for sewing projects, materials for Women's Resource Centres, support for bakeries and guesthouses, water tanks and boats for transport.

Women have been active in applying for this assistance which helps them generate a small income and helps the economy to recover from the damage of a decade-long conflict. They often use this income to pay school fees or to buy household items.

Importantly, AusAID has employed female community liaison officers on its projects in Bougainville to ensure projects properly target the needs of recipient communities.

Australia is also addressing the social dimensions of conflict through the Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency. We are funding programs that deal with social

problems such as homebrew consumption and domestic violence. There is also a focus on helping ex-combatants – particularly young men – to integrate back into village life after their long years of combat.

Australia has also supported innovative models of restorative justice to help young men assimilate back into the community. The model bypasses the court system and reunites disaffected young people with their village structures through a process of compensation and reconciliation.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

In Solomon Islands, women have also faced obstacles in participating equally in the peace process. In particular, women have lacked a voice at formal peace negotiations.

In May, Australia funded a conference organised by the Department of Women, Youth and Sport which gave women a forum to express their concerns about the impact of conflict, and to argue for a legitimate role for women in the peace process.

Women were particularly concerned about the impact of conflict on their children, their restricted access to health and education due to protracted conflict, their reduced income, lack of freedom of movement and concern for vulnerable groups.

The situation in Solomon Islands is still a struggle for local women. However the Australian Government will, through the aid program, continue to support their efforts to improve their status in society and their level of political participation.

That assistance includes sending advisers on conflict resolution and peace communications to Solomon Islands.

We have also strongly supported the peace promotion activities of church and women's groups, including the organisation, Solomon Islands Women for Unity, Peace and Prosperity, a group that Australia is proud to support. I would like to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of two women in particular: Alice Pollard and Ruth Liloqula, who are working to bring peace to their communities. I'd also like to acknowledge the significant work of Dalcy Paina.

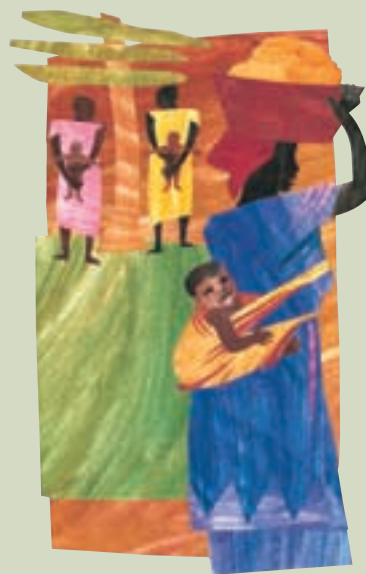
In addition, we are providing a \$1 million Community Peace and Restoration Fund. This fund will provide much needed facilities in communities disadvantaged by the crisis – such as classrooms, water supply and sanitation, and employment opportunities for ex-combatants.

Bougainville and Solomon Islands are just two examples of where the Australian Government has a gender focus in conflict-affected countries. The aid program will continue with its gender focus. In particular, the aid program will give attention to women's participation in decision-making in public policy-making and governance, women's economic empowerment, women's participation in development activities, and trauma counselling for women and girls.

It is clear that women's participation is essential for building peaceful and sustainable democratic societies. And when I talk of women's participation, I mean not only the peace process, but in decision-making roles in all aspects of society.

It is also clear that men and women have to work together to achieve this goal. *The complete text of Senator Patterson's speech is available on AusAID's website, www.ausaid.gov.au* ■

Good for women – good for all



Countries that adopt specific measures to protect women's rights and increase their access to resources and schooling have less corruption and achieve faster economic growth than countries that do not, according to a World Bank research report released last year.

Report co-author Andrew Mason said the research team's review of experience in more than 100 countries concluded that, 'although income growth and economic development are good for gender equality in the long run, growth alone cannot deliver the desired results.'

Mason said that societies progress more rapidly if they also adopt specific measures to narrow gender gaps. Ensuring equal rights to land and other property, and designing infrastructure and services, such as water, transportation, education, health, and credit, to better meet women's needs are examples of such measures.

Other steps include eliminating gender bias in the workplace and increasing women's participation in politics. ■



Sticker advocating peace for Bougainville.

Women form half of every community – they are also half of every solution



Australia is providing agricultural assistance to East Timorese farmers. Photo: David Haigh

On United Nations Day last year, the UN Security Council held an open debate on women, peace and security.

'Women continue to be targeted in wars,' Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director of UNIFEM (the United Nations Development Fund for Women), told a press conference held in conjunction with the debate.

Describing the reasons why women in conflict situations have special needs and

important contributions to make to peace and security, she said, 'Rape and sexual violence continue to be used as weapons of war. The vast majority of all refugees and displaced people are women and children.

'Nearly all girls abducted into armed groups are forced into sexual slavery. The vast majority become infected with sexually transmitted diseases and, increasingly, HIV/AIDS.

'In addition, women and girls are forced into sex for safe passage, food, and other protection. Women are rarely protected from these threats. Their perpetrators are rarely punished. What kind of sadly ambiguous message does this send to the predators who continue to rape, exploit, torture and mutilate?

'Without international action, women caught in conflicts will have no security of any kind whatever the definition. And without their full participation, the peace process itself suffers for there will be neither justice nor development.

'In the words of the President of the Security Council, "women are half of every community, are they therefore not half of every solution?" How can we, in good conscience, bring warlords to the negotiating table and not women?

'The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programs and strategies that promote women's human rights, political participation and economic security. UNIFEM works in partnership with UN organisations, governments and non-governmental organisations and networks to promote gender equality.

'Without recognising and supporting both of these aspects with equal vigour, many lifetimes of untold sorrow will continue to unfold.' ■

For more information about UNIFEM's activities, see www.unifem.undp.org/index.htm

‘What peace means to me’ – by the children of Bougainville

The island of Bougainville is emerging from a long and bitter civil war. Many children have barely known what it means to live in a peaceful community. AusAID officer Boni Maywald, working as a peace monitor in Bougainville, collected these prose poems from children at Buin Community School, Bougainville.



ABOVE The children of Bougainville are experiencing peace for the first time in their lives – Judith Kuhn, Nopan village. Photo: Anne Rigby

BELOW RIGHT Chris Nawa (centre) looks on as his daughter Alexia is presented with her winner's certificate and ball by AusAID's Boni Maywald.

Nius Bilong Peace is a regular news sheet produced by the Peace Monitoring Group in Bougainville. The 29 September 2000 issue advertised a writing competition for the children of Bougainville. The theme they asked children to write about was, ‘What peace means to me’.

Children were encouraged to write a poem, a song or a story, in English or Tok Pisin.

The children of Buin Community School (which caters for primary school children) responded. Their efforts were compiled by Boni Maywald into a booklet which was then presented back to the school as a measure of appreciation and admiration for the children's work.

On the following pages, along with photographs of children from Buka by Anne Rigby, a selection of their words is reprinted.



Oh Peace: the people of Bougainville need you.
The people of Bougainville want fear to go and
peace to remain. But will you become real in
our hearts? People talk about peace, but people
don't know what peace is. That's why people
drink and fight, and hate one another. Peace
please, speak, talk, to us. Tell us who you are.
Oh, if people could only understand what peace
is, Bougainville will be another Paradise. Oh
Peace you will stay forever.
You came and broke the darkness. Now the
people of Bougainville live in one family.
Oh peace, you lead us in the way to go. Oh
Peace you are the only way to go.

Roselyne Itanu, age 13

A river flows down its course washing always
all kinds of rubbish as the white sands smile
up into the sky enjoying the coolness of the
water flowing over them. They enjoy the
peaceful harmony below the water. As it
brushes, then white as snow. Peace is like a
river. To love is peace.
To forgive is peace. To smile is peace. It
comes from the heart. When we love someone
as we love ourselves we live in peace. We love
and make friends with our enemies — we live
in peace.
The peace flows over us and makes us look
beautiful to one another and we live in
harmony like the sands below the water.

Severina Paru, age 15





I see people of different coloured skin, white, brown and black, live together. I see them work, play and eat together. And I know there is peace. I see people walk here and there. I see them greet each other with smiles and handshakes. And I know there is peace. I see people go to work.

Doctors, teachers and other public servants. I see them work side by side and I know there is peace. I see vehicles travel far and near. I see them loaded with goods that I see sold in shops.

And I know there is peace.

Richard Patara, Age 10

Oh! My island Bougainville you make me very proud of this time that we are living in Peace. Because of you we are able to clean our homes and see other places. Because of you we are able to buy some new things in other places and in the store. Because of you we are able to talk to our friends. When there's no peace we can't see our friends and we can't see other places.

Oh! My island Bougainville you bring happiness to our mothers who have lost their children. They cried for a long time and tears ran out of their eyes.

Oh! My island Bougainville today you look like a hibiscus flower when sun shone at last. What a lovely island you are.

Adelbertha Luen, Age 14



Bougainville – bullet holes, helicopters and remarkable women

For three months, Misha Coleman swapped her sedate Canberra desk job for a life of helicopter rides, flak jackets and mountain patrols. She spoke with Peter Davis about her life as a peace monitor on Bougainville.

Smoke grenades and emergency flares were just some of the essentials Misha Coleman carried in her daypack as a peace monitor. 'I didn't use them,' she said. 'But we were required to carry the emergency kits wherever we went on the island. For security reasons, we were also required to be accompanied by one male around town, and two males when we were out on patrol.'

Bougainville is a 90-minute flight northeast from Papua New Guinea's capital, Port Moresby. After almost a decade of conflict between the Bougainville Revolutionary Army and PNG government troops, peace was finally brokered in May 1998. As the troops moved out, a multinational Peace Monitoring Group moved in. Led by Australia, the group included forces from New Zealand, Fiji and Vanuatu. It also had a few civilian faces. Misha Coleman was one of them.

'I wanted to apply for one of the Peace Monitoring Positions since the Peace Monitoring Group was established, and as soon as work commitments allowed, I volunteered. Before I knew it I was at a boot camp in Bamaga [Northern Queensland], getting toughened up,' says Misha. 'It's amazing how quickly you can get used to climbing up mountains with what feels like a dozen house bricks on your back.'

Misha was stationed at Arawa, a small and once-prosperous town in the middle of Bougainville. It's a long way from her desk job in Canberra where she works as an officer for AusAID.

So what does a peace monitor actually do?

'Our job was to help instill confidence in the people whose lives have been turned upside down by the conflict,' says Misha. 'We were there to create an environment in which people can pick up the pieces and rebuild their community.'

The initial training may have been tough and although Misha was well briefed before actually arriving on the island, she wasn't prepared for the house where she would live.

'The place was totally shot up. Bullet holes were everywhere. There was a trap door in the floor of my bedroom for emergency escapes and I had a flak jacket under my bed with a great wad of ceramic in it. When it's on it feels like an armoured tank around your neck.'

But peace monitoring isn't about keeping fit or getting around in army gear. 'I often went to meetings of various women's groups. That's where I learned a lot about the community and their real needs.'

'Often I just sat and listened to the stories. Everyone has a story to tell and many of them are very traumatic. Being there to listen is part of the healing process. Bougainville has survived, and continues to survive, on the strength of the women. Peace is so fragile and tenuous but I am convinced that it's the women who make peace happen.'

Following every meeting, reports had to be written. The reporting process is essential. It helps to build up a big picture of how the peace process is going.'

A helicopter view of the big picture on Bougainville reveals a wide range of



Peace monitor Misha Coleman: 'I am convinced that it's the women who make peace happen.'

development programs in education, infrastructure strengthening and community health. These are a collaborative venture between the provincial government of Bougainville and Australia. But zoom in for a close-up and the problems come into focus. Too many guns, too few police and serious alcohol abuse among young men are the main threats to peace in the community.

'With these problems, people continue to feel insecure,' says Misha. 'However, there is a lot of energy and, I believe, a genuine commitment to economic and social development. That's why we were there. This is their peace process – we were there because the people of Bougainville want peace.'

'I met some remarkable people there, especially some of the women. I really would like to go back and work for a longer period, in a non-military environment one day.' ■

Love in place of fear

A group of East Timorese kindergarten children and their Indonesian teacher meet joyfully across the gulf of past violence.

In a burnt-out street in Dili, 30 East Timorese children huddle in front of a kindergarten, clutching each other, squealing.

The boots beneath a crisp uniform beat a steady march towards them. 'Line up, line up,' comes the command.

The children squeal even louder, but these are squeals of joy. The children rush to kiss the hand of Sister Klementina Sinaga, dressed in her starched blue nun's habit, arriving for another day's work with the children she loves.

A Franciscan nun who moved from her native Sumatra in Indonesia to East Timor two years ago, Sister Klementina and the love shown to her prove that reconciliation, even for people who have suffered the worst excesses of conflict, is possible.

Sister Klementina, from the order of *Franciscane Cordis Jesu et Maria*, says her heart is in East Timor. She runs the *Putri Hati Kudus* kindergarten in Vila Verde, Dili. With a community assistance grant from Australia, she has been able to replace many of the essential items destroyed in the violence following the independence ballot in 1999.

'I bought tables, chairs, cooking utensils, also some rice — because (the children) need it — and also books,' she explains. 'And for the children's writing: pens, pencils, anything to make their knowledge grow.'

'We teach the children to write, to read the alphabet, to count from one to 10 and the English ABC.'

The kindergarten has played an important role in helping the children deal



Sister Klementina from Sumatra, Indonesia, is adored by her East Timorese kindergarten children.
Photo: David Haigh

with the trauma they have suffered. In the weeks following the ballot, even the sound of a car was enough to set the children running for cover from the imagined return of militia trucks.

'And when the (Australian) aeroplanes

flew over, they disappeared. I tried to show them, "no, they are our friends"; Sister Klementina said.

'Now, they are not afraid. These children will build East Timor.' — GC ■

Women take part in community health project

Clean water and safer births — life is better for Mama Asa and her village now that the inclusion of women in water management is being promoted through the Alor Community Based Health Project.



Villagers from Adang using water brought to them from a spring in Aimoli, almost 6 km away.

Mama Asa Lobang is reluctant to reveal her real age, but after some thought her husband says she is 47 years old. She and her husband are farmers. They farm the land up in the highlands, not too far from Wahing, the coastal village where they live on the Indonesian island of Alor, near Timor.

They have two sons. Kamarludin is 10 years old and goes to the local primary school. His elder brother, Kosman, is 12 and has finished school. He is not interested in going to middle school and helps in the fields.

It is common for someone in the family to be sick with a fever, body aches or a headache. Mama Asa says she usually visits the Health Centre to get medicine or an injection if they are really sick. Sometimes even the subsidised medicine is too expensive to buy regularly and the only thing to do is drink lots of water.

The family now shares a public piped water tap with four other families. The water is still running well. And the tap is so close to the house, she says — just 25 metres away!

‘Before, I collected water from a spring about two-and-a-half kilometres away. I used to have to carry around 10 litres of water in a long bamboo container, which I carried on my head. Now I can just use a bucket. Now I have more time and I am not always tired. I feel much healthier.’

Her husband says that it is her responsibility to get the water, but now it is good because she doesn’t have to go as far. ‘Before it was the same. It was her



Helping to reduce malaria – children using bed nets on Alor, Indonesia.

responsibility. She was always tired. It is better for her now.'

Mama Asa is one of more than 15,000 people from three target areas in Alor who now have reliable access to water through piping systems, water tanks or wells. All the piping systems have established water management committees and collect dues on a regular basis. Over 30 per cent of the management teams of these committees are now women.

Mama Asa's husband has been involved in the establishment of the piping system and has gained technical skills to assist with piping maintenance. He is a member of the water management committee (UPS-AB) as a skilled pipe technician.

Improved access to water and the inclusion of women in water management are changes being promoted through the Alor Community Based Health Project. This project began in July 1996 and was designed to work with the government, but through community groups.

The core of the project was to address basic primary health care issues such as safe birthing practices and efficient operation of basic government health

services. It also addressed the two major health-related issues of Alor – water supply and malaria.

SAFER BIRTHING PRACTICES

Mama Asa's friend, Ibu Susama is due to have a baby soon. Mama Asa is confident that Susama and her baby will be safe. Before the project, nearly 80 children died and around 15 women died in childbirth each year in the project target areas. In the past year she knew that only four babies and two women had died. Ibu Susama could rely on her *dukun* (traditional birth attendant) for help and knew that the *dukun* would call the midwife.

The project has trained the *dukuns* to use clean materials and to check carefully for how the baby is positioned. The midwives can help if there are complications in the birth.

In the past there were not many midwives and the *dukuns* would assist the births themselves. If something went wrong the community would say there must have been some sin in the family or maybe even some evil power. These stories are not so common now.

INVESTMENT COOPERATIVE

Before, Ibu Susama did not have much money to pay for the *dukun* or the midwife. But now she is a member of a small investment cooperative. She and two other friends joined training provided by the project to learn how to save money, to keep records and plan a self-help group.

Susama and two other women now manage a cooperative with more than 40 men and women from three adjoining villages. They meet in a room in Susama's house and the group have their own sign and a bulletin board to post business developments.

Each member pays a monthly contribution for at least three months. Then they can take a loan from the cooperative. They also attend monthly meetings to report on and discuss developments in the group.

Most members have taken loans to help their children attend school but some have invested in small business opportunities such as buying harvested almonds to sell to the district town of Kalabahi.

CHANGES FOR THE BETTER

Mama Asa sat under the tamarind tree reflecting on the changes to her village in the last four years since the project started. Most of her village has much better access to water, income has increased and children do not get sick so often. They do not get malaria so often. Most villagers now use at least one bed net in their homes.

Mama Asa's family had three mosquito nets. She says that using the mosquito nets was good to maintain their health, that the family could sleep safely without being bothered by mosquitoes. She knows how to get another bed net as her family has learned this from the project and a kiosk established with project assistance sells the nets.

'Wahing is much better to live in now. We know how to do many more things and have more control of our lives. The project has also shown us that as women, we can take more control of activities and we can see that when we do, the activities work well.' – AN ■

Better health for women and their children in Irian Jaya

Through the WATCH project, Mama Pao and many women like her feel that a significant change has been brought about in their lives and those of their children.

'Allah Bapa Wah – hear our prayer! We are “merely women”. We used only to go in and out of the house and garden. There was no difference between our animals who went in and out of their pens in the morning and evening. When Martha, Susana and their friends from WATCH came, we were very happy ... We were happy because we could get together, sit together to learn, talk and each be heard and get new experience ... we are now not “merely women” – Allah Wah! We give thanks to You for these meetings, for these trainings which can help us and be useful for all of us ... Allah Wah! ... Wah!...'

This is the prayer of Paulina Tabo Pao, a health worker who has worked with the WATCH (Women And Their Children's Health) Project from 1992 in Jayawijaya, Irian Jaya. *Wah* is a word in the Lani/Western Dani language. It expresses gratefulness and thanks for God's guidance, blessings and mercy.

The Jayawijaya WATCH Project was an Australian Government-funded project in Indonesia working with the Department of Health and managed by World Vision from 1991 to 2000.

Mama Pao represents the voices of many women who, up until now, felt inadequate with work in the garden and around the *honai* (traditional dwellings in the mountains of Irian Jaya).

Mama Pao also represents many who, because of the remoteness of their villages, felt that they were a forgotten part of their society; women from places where health was not yet a priority for most of their



Health workers on the training course in Java collect ingredients from medicinal plants for making traditional medicines.

community. Through the WATCH project, Mama Pao and many women like her feel that a significant change has been brought about in their lives and those of their children.

Mama Pao started off as her church delegate for training as a development health worker. She also has duties as a local

posyandu (village health centre) worker. As well, she is now helping development groups in her church area.

At every *posyandu* activity, Mama Pao encourages other mothers to bring produce from their gardens such as sweet potato, corn, peanuts, different kinds of vegetables and chicken eggs as the ingredients for supplementary feeding for their children. The WATCH project introduced a diverse range of nutritious foods to villagers' diet which used to consist mainly of sweet potatoes.

Many challenges and obstacles still need to be faced. Communication is difficult for visiting staff, transportation is hazardous and there is a constant search for more appropriate ways to share information with other women in her *kampung*, or village.

Mama Pao knew it wouldn't be easy to bring about improved health conditions for the women and children of her district. However, after nine years with WATCH, she says there are now many children who not only eat sweet potato and its leaves, but also peanuts, red beans, rabbit meat, carrots and other vegetables. There is a village dispensary in their *kampung*, many pregnant women had avoided catching malaria, and it is now rare for mourning rituals to be held for women dying from childbirth.

'Allah Wah! ... Finally we are not “merely women”, but we are the women who will take an active role and improve health for ourselves, our children, and our families.' – GY ■

Young girls and marriage – bringing a dangerous practice to a close

A UNICEF–Australia project in Niger, supported by the Australian Government, is working with traditional chiefs to change the practice of early marriage of girls. Sarah Lendon heard one girl's story during her recent visit to Niger.

Sadi (not her real name) is a 15-year-old wife and mother who had been married for two years. When I met Sadi in her village, she had her 14-month-old daughter tied to her back. The little girl was unhappy and kept crying despite Sadi's rocking.

She was married at the age of 13 to a man she had never met who was much older than her. Every night she would run away to the bush to hide from her husband. But each time, her husband's friends would find her and force her to return. She was her husband's property and there was no escape.

By the age of 14 she was pregnant. Luckily she was one of the few girls to survive the birth without injury. I asked Sadi about her sisters and friends. She said that, like her, they had all left school to get married at the age of 13 or 14. And that Sunday, her youngest sister was also getting married at the age of 12.

The one consolation I could draw from my conversation with Sadi was the knowledge that an Australian project is working with traditional chiefs to change the practice of early marriage of girls.

We were able to tell Sadi and her friends that the Sultan of Zinder – who is effectively king of the region – was coming to speak to the people of their village. The Sultan is committed to changing the practice of early marriage of girls.

With the support of the Australian project, he is travelling to many villages to urge parents to stop marrying their daughters at such a young age, and to educate them about the serious



Mother and child in Niger, West Africa.

consequences of early marriage of girls. It is too late to stop Sadi marrying and having a child so young but not too late for many of her friends.

THE EARLY MARRIAGE OF GIRLS PROJECT

The UNICEF Australia/AusAID Early Marriage of Girls Project in Niger started in December 1999 with \$108,000 support from the Australian Government. It aims to increase the average age of marriage of girls and to ensure more girls receive an education.

These goals are being achieved by working with the traditional chiefs and religious leaders who organise large gatherings in the villages to discuss early marriage of girls and its serious consequences. The plays, songs, debates and speeches performed at the gatherings are broadcast over national radio and filmed by a video crew. ■

Helping to reduce gender violence in South Africa

Gillian Dadswell finds that the beauty of a city conceals a cruel undercurrent in a country with about 25 times Australia's sexual assault rate.

The South African city of Pietersburg lies on the Great North Road, half way between Pretoria and the Zimbabwean border. This northern provincial capital is a very attractive city with wide streets, jacaranda and coral trees, colourful parks and sparkling fountains. It also has a high level of domestic violence.

Despite the rapid post-apartheid era transformation of South African society, discrimination against women continues. Violence against women and children is a serious problem. South Africa has the highest rate of reported sexual assault in the world – about 1,000 cases a day compared with 280 a week in Australia.

These appalling statistics have led

Australia's aid program to introduce a \$1 million Gender Violence Fund to give direct financial support to South African NGOs in their efforts to combat this hidden scourge.

Projects also take into account the needs of men as well as women, encouraging self-help, and strengthening organisations to help them to keep going.

COMPETING STRUGGLES

The struggle for women's rights has popularly been seen as less important than the struggle against apartheid.

'Stories were being taken from women – but women as partners of victims, as mothers, as daughters. No-one was wanting to hear a story of how, as women, you suffered even

more than the men,' says Thenjiwe Mtintso, Deputy Director of the ANC.

In an effort to correct this situation, the Nicro Project in Pietersburg focuses on abused women in its community victim support program. Nicro's services include two victim support centres – a refuge for women at the Seshego police station, and the other giving services and support to women who are involved with divorce and/or domestic violence proceedings at the Mankweng magistrate's court.

The project trains community volunteers to work as counsellors in these centres. The volunteers also tell the community about Nicro's services and raise funds for the project. ■

Domestic violence is often described as the most hidden crime in South Africa. Yet it is a crime that has a major impact across South African society, regardless of race, culture, religion or economic status. One woman is killed every sixth day by an abusive partner in the Gauteng Province of South Africa, according to Lisa Vetten, a leading gender violence researcher, while another recent study in South Africa indicated that young boys in their teens consider rape a game and declare

themselves openly in favour of sexual violence.

It is against this environment that the Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa applied to the Australian aid program for funding through the Gender Violence Fund to provide education to the community and services to victims of gender violence in five rural and semi-rural townships in the Free State.

The kinds of activities undertaken through this funding include:

- compiling a baseline study on the incidence of gender violence within the targeted geographical areas
- counselling and referral services and workshops by establishing peer group systems in each community
- training workshops for volunteers to run these workshops
- education campaigns based on the theme of 'men as partners' delivered through community workshops. ■

An end to silence about violence

Australia is working with people in the Pacific to find ways to change attitudes towards violence against women and children.

Violence against women and children is a major health and human rights concern. According to a 1998 research report, gender violence is a greater cause of death and disability among women aged 15–44 than cancer, malaria, traffic accidents or war.

Growing recognition exists of the need to address violence against women and children in the Pacific. Delegates at the 1999 Asia Pacific Women's Development and Law Conference in Vanuatu identified violence against women as a critical area for governments to play a more active role.

Addressing violence against women and children often means tackling taboos. Many people view attention given to gender violence as both interfering with privacy and a potential threat to family unity. Attitudes are changing as governments and communities become aware of the damaging impact violence has throughout society.

FUJI WOMEN'S CRISIS CENTRE

The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre is addressing violence against women. Established in 1984, the centre has headquarters in Suva and regional centres in Ba, Labasa and Lautoka. It provides counselling for women and children subjected to domestic violence and sexual abuse.

The centre actively supports other organisations in the Pacific working towards eliminating violence against women and children. Women and men from Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Bougainville spend time learning how their societies could benefit from Fijian experience.



The centre also acts as the Secretariat for the Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women and since 1992 has hosted two regional meetings that have provided opportunities to share and assess strategies and actions. The third meeting was held in Fiji in February 2001.

AUSTRALIAN SUPPORT

Australian support to the centre began in 1990. Since then, 23 crisis counselling and community education programs have been established throughout the Pacific region. Australia will provide a further \$2.2 million over the next five years to fund additional counselling services.

Centre staff have developed extensive skills in planning and managing gender violence programs. In recognition of this, AusAID appointed the centre to manage funding for the Vanuatu Women's Centre in Port Vila.

Their approach to dealing with violence against women 'is gender-based and situated within a human rights and development framework with particular emphasis on cultural, traditional and religious practices', according to Shamima Ali, Centre Coordinator, who has been working there since 1985. The firm links forged with the police, judiciary and community are a strong feature of this approach.

Shamima says that while changes in social attitudes and behaviours are difficult to measure, an indicator of positive change is that gender violence is now widely debated in Fiji.

Both police and the judiciary are increasingly recognising that violence against women is a crime. The dedication of the women who work at the centre has led to recognition in Fiji that there is a need for emergency services and ongoing support for women who are subjected to violence.

LEGISLATION

As well as education campaigns and counselling services, the centre recognises that current legislation covering domestic violence is inadequate. Shamima says that there is a need for specific legislation which deals with domestic violence.

'As long as domestic violence is tolerated publicly and is not recognised as a specific crime in law,' she says, 'it will continue to be legitimised and blamed on the victim herself.' — RC ■

Further information about the centre can be found on its website at www.fijiwomen.com

A better life for children in Bangladesh

Birth registration in Bangladesh means children can be protected from economic exploitation and being married too young. It also means better planning for health and education. Andrew McGregor recently visited an innovative birth registration project in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. It has more than 120 million people crowd into a space smaller than Victoria.

Rich green rice paddies stretch endlessly into the horizon and thousands of rickshaws ply the crowded laneways. It is also a place of incredible hardship, being ranked 146 of 174 countries in the 2000 UNDP Human Development Index. Bangladesh constantly struggles with the dangers associated with flooding, cyclones, poor nutrition and poverty.

The Australian aid program and UNICEF Australia have combined to support a project that protects the rights of one of the most vulnerable groups in Bangladesh, the children. Bangladeshi children often bear the brunt of the harsh economic and social conditions.

Many children become victims of exploitation, through child labour or child prostitution. Others are married at very young ages, while those who come before the courts are tried according to adult, rather than child, laws.

The Australian project protects children by promoting child rights through a birth registration campaign in three districts, Laximpur, Kurigram and Kishoreganj. The \$300,000 project is expected to protect more than one million children through registration. Many more will benefit from increased awareness of children's rights.

In June 2000 I visited one of the AusAID/UNICEF IDEAL schools to talk to children about their experiences. I asked the class how old they were. This caused



Brightly dressed girls perform a colourful cultural performance at the launch of the Laximpur campaign.

immense confusion and it became clear the children simply did not know.

Currently very few children know their age and it is very hard to find out as only an estimated three per cent are registered at birth. This conflicts with Article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states, 'The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents.'

Birth registration protects children's rights in several ways. It assists in the

implementation of child protection laws; it assists in planning and allocation of educational and medical resources; and a third form of protection comes when children benefit from the sensitisation of communities to the importance of child rights.

The campaigns are highly visible events that attract media and the support of national and district level officials, as well as local village leaders and community health workers. All receive training in child rights and their messages permeate through communities to create a more supportive and caring social environment for children. ■

From small beginnings to world-class research

A project in India that began with Australian Government support back in 1993 has become a world leader in appropriate and supportive services for people living with AIDS, especially women and children. Peter Davis reports.

'This laboratory is the result of years of tireless dedication from many individuals and groups. Its establishment marks another important stage in a very long process that is making a significant difference to the lives of many people,' says Dr Suniti Solomon, the driving force behind YRG CARE (Centre for AIDS Research and Education), based in Chennai (Madras).

Dr Suniti Solomon was speaking at the official launch of the YRG CARE Infectious Diseases Laboratory at the VHS Hospital in Chennai. Dr Solomon documented the first case of HIV infection in India back in 1986.

Fourteen years later, she has every reason to look back with pride and a sense of achievement.

'We started with almost nothing except some very dedicated people,' she told me after the launch. 'It was because of the foresight of the Australian Government [through the Australian High Commission in Delhi] that we secured the initial grant to establish YRG CARE.

'Now we have strong links with some of the best research institutes in the world. But there is still so much to be done. I see a time where correct diagnosis is quick and accessible and when there is no reason why anyone should be ignorant of preventative measures.'

It is this vision and drive that has turned Dr Solomon into a household name in the medical research community of India. YRG CARE became India's first anonymous walk-in clinic for HIV. Soon it was offering counseling services with home visits and an outreach program.

Within four years it linked up with VHS Medical Centre (a leading institute in Chennai) to offer a 16-bed in-patient facility. Drug and diagnostic support programs soon followed. Then came a full time dietician followed by an eight-bed women and children's ward. In parallel with these developments, significant research was underway.

Today, YRG CARE has strong links with two of the world's leading medical research establishments, Johns Hopkins University and Brown University in the USA. In December 1999, YRG CARE expanded its operations into three other states in South India.

'We are researching many aspects of AIDS,' says Dr Solomon. 'We are looking at the alarming decrease in the age of infection, we are establishing appropriate preventative strategies for people living in a variety of socio-economic circumstances and we are looking at how to overcome the prejudices against women who are diagnosed.'

Geetha Duragabai was the first full-time nurse at YRG and has been with the organisation since its inception. 'I see all sorts of people here, from the slum dwellers to the very wealthy. AIDS does not discriminate. I love my job because I know that we are making a difference. I have been a part of the growth of this place. It has therefore become a part of my growth.'

In 1999, YGR CARE nutritionist, Suneetha Sughayanm, travelled to France to address an international conference on nutrition and AIDS.



Geetha Duragabai was the first full-time nurse at YRG. She has been with the organisation since its inception.

'I spoke about my experiences of working with the slum dwellers in Chennai. My work can be emotionally draining but what excites me is to know where we have come from. We started very small. Now people all over the world want to learn about our methods and our research.'

Dr Solomon thanked the Australian government for having the courage and the foresight to support such a fledgling idea. 'It is because people had faith in our aims and our abilities that we have been able to come this far,' she said. 'Come back in two years and see how much further we have traveled.' ■

A new start for China's unemployed women

The economic pain of changing to a market economy is lessened by an Australian-funded business incubator for women.



Australia's Ambassador to China, Mr David Irvine, helps cut the ribbon at the official opening of the Tianjin Women's Business Incubator.

China's state-owned enterprises had long provided secure lifelong employment for large numbers of unskilled workers. Now, as China moves towards a market economy, many of these factories are being drastically downsized or closed.

Women are more likely to be laid off than men, and hundreds of thousands of women in China's cities have become unemployed as a result.

In Tianjin, a major port city on China's north-east coast, nearly 200,000 such women face dire poverty due to their lack of training and employment opportunities. Australia is contributing to improving the prospects for these women to overcome poverty by funding the establishment of a 'business incubator'. This is a facility to assist small business entrepreneurs.

The business incubator will provide

women entrepreneurs with low-rent premises, basic shared facilities and other support including assistance with developing business plans.

The incubator was officially opened in October last year by Australia's Ambassador to China, Mr David Irvine, and the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Ms Kirsten Leitner.

Several women have already started their small business operations in the incubator and some are already employing numerous other laid-off and unemployed women.

One such entrepreneur is Wang Shengyun, whose garment business employs 100 women part-time and full-time.

Australia is funding the business incubator as one part of a larger project, the Tianjin Re-Employment and Venture

Creation Project, which is being implemented through the UNDP. Other assistance provided under the project includes training both for unemployed women and for the staff of employment agencies.

The project is run mainly by the Tianjin Women's Federation, a branch of the All China Women's Federation, a nation-wide organisation dedicated to the advancement of Chinese women.

The project also provides a small loan scheme. Commercial banks are often unwilling to make loans in small amounts to the unemployed (especially unemployed women). This project provides an opportunity to demonstrate to the banks that women pursuing small enterprises are credit-worthy. — JW ■

Women's organisations in Mongolia work toward a fairer society

Australia is supporting a number of women's organisations in Mongolia working to eliminate discrimination and violence against women.

Mongolian women are playing significant roles in their country's transition to open democracy and development. This transition began when Soviet support for its then communist government was withdrawn in 1989–90.

Through the Australian Government's Small Activities Scheme (SAS) for Mongolia, an important part of the aid program in this country, Australia has supported several Mongolian women's organisations that are working for a fairer society.

Among the organisations funded under the Australian scheme is the Mongolian Women Lawyers' Association. The majority

of Mongolia's lawyers are women, but female lawyers can face problems with discrimination.

CEDAW Watch (Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women) monitors women's human rights issues. Australian support has assisted the Mongolia CEDAW Watch to provide education and awareness-raising programs.

Australia is also helping to fund the Centre Against Violence, which began operating more than five years ago from the Ulaanbaatar women's hospital. It seeks to combat the growing problem of gender violence, often associated with long-term unemployment and alcohol abuse.

The centre's activities have expanded to include an improved crisis shelter for women and children affected by gender violence, counselling for offenders and an impressive program of training for the police force and judiciary.

In 1999–2000 the Australian Government's SAS fund for Mongolia provided more than half a million dollars to support a number of small activities such as these. — JW ■



Employees from the National CEDAW Watch Network Centre in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, meet with AusAID staff from Beijing and Canberra.

Going to school among the living and the dead

Kirsten Hawke visits a school for Filipino street children in a most unlikely place.



Urban squatters living in Lorega Cemetery in San Miguel, Cebu City in the Philippines now have their own community school. Photos: David Haigh

'The living and the dead shouldn't have to live side by side,' says Francis Pestanyo, shaking his head as he looks around the Lorega Cemetery. But in this part of Cebu City in the Philippines, it is not unusual that children will grow up and go to school, without leaving the cemetery gates. The living have no choice but to live beside the dead.

A community of 200 families lives in the Lorega cemetery. Francis Pestanyo, as the local village head, says this is the product of unfortunate circumstances. Squatters in other parts of the city have been forced to move often by fire or encroaching development. With nowhere else to go, squatters came to live in the abandoned cemetery, with its statues of Jesus and Mary, its ageing tombs and leafy surrounds.

'Eventually we plan to move some of the old tombs, so people can stay here and make their homes here permanently,' says Francis Pestanyo. 'But at the moment, people have no other choice.'

The scene before us is heartbreaking. Families have built their scrap metal shanty houses around tombstones. One house has a marble tombstone as its kitchen table. In another, somebody takes a nap on top of a coffin. Children play among the stench of rotting tombs and poor sanitation. Parents eke out a living selling peanuts or rags. Their children have grown up here, and they are too poor to move away.

Life is hard here. But for the last five years, Australia has provided some help to the 200 families that live at the Lorega



Among the tombstones, children learn the basics of writing, drawing, art and singing.

Cemetery and their 13,000 neighbours, by funding a local informal school program and an accompanying feeding program for street children in the area.

Every day you can hear the shrieks of 35 happy children as they come through the gates of the cemetery to go to school. They meet near the shady entrance, right under a statue of Jesus. Their teacher, Helen Supilamas, pats the statue on the shoulder before she begins the day's lessons, armed with paper, stickers and pens.

Australian funding has meant that these children can go to school as they've always dreamed. Local aid worker Annabeth Cuizon explains, 'Often the children are too poor to attend primary school because of the cost of uniforms, books and projects – even if school is free. This makes the kids ostracised from school because of their poverty.'

The Lorega Cemetery school can give these children a chance. It is an informal school that teaches the basics of writing, drawing, singing and playing games and is an important transition to the formal school system.

After spending three years at the Lorega Cemetery school, the children can receive sponsorship to attend night classes at the Sapaterra School from 4pm to 9pm

each evening.

Two former Lorega students, Mercidita Brack, 14, and Albert Galvizo, 15, who now attend Sapaterra, are back to help the younger children as teachers' aides.

Mercidita thinks Lorega Cemetery school is excellent because it 'teaches nice manners', whereas Albert likes 'teaching the children drawing and writing, things that they really enjoy'.

And the school is not just for children. The parents who accompany their children get lessons in children's rights, health care, the appropriate chores to give their children and are warned about domestic violence.

They also learn to deal with the problem of not being able to afford school fees. Annabeth Cuizon says, 'If a child can have a pet pig, then when it grows up they can sell it to pay for their fees so they can go to school.'

The associated feeding program is an important incentive to parents to send their children to school, rather than out on the streets earning an income. Children who attend a whole week of school can each collect a 1.5 kilo bag of milled rice on Saturdays. This rice, which is fortified with iron, is enough for a quarter of the average family's food needs.

Back at Lorega, four hours of school

lessons are over. As the children line up to sign their names for their bag of rice, others rush up and tell their stories. Miguel, with his trademark sticking-out ears, is a six-year-old imp who says he loves drawing. Grace, nine, has quiet eyes and she tells her story with sadness. After losing her father, her mother now works in far away Manila and she lives with her grandmother. But her eyes light up when she talks about school. She loves listening to stories and playing games like 'Open the Basket'.

It is the future of these children that Australian aid is helping. Good food and an education can help them to be strong, healthy and literate. If they can get a good education, they can break the poverty cycle and improve their own lives and that of their families.

As we leave the cemetery, children smile and wave from the cemetery gates. Hopefully, one day they will be able to leave those gates and carve out their own lives. ■

BEYOND THE CEMETERY

For those who live outside the cemetery gates, Australian aid is also helping street kids in adjoining districts. The aid project at the Lorega Cemetery is just one of many run by the Philippines Government and funded by Australia.

Through the Street and Urban Working Children Project (SUWCP) of the Department of Interior and Local Government, Australian aid of \$10 million over three years is helping 60,000 street children across 25 cities. An additional \$3.8 million helps feed and educate street children in projects similar to those run at the Lorega Cemetery.

In the adjoining districts to San Miguel, Australia funds a mobile school in a bus which provides education to 500 street kids. Through the SUWCP, the children receive free porridge and health checks as incentives to go to school. ■

Just wild about permaculture

On an island in the Philippines that doesn't have its own local vegetable supply, a group of women is transforming backyards and community gardens into organic vegetable plots.



Within two years, group member Nora Dinarog has transformed her own home garden into an oasis of permaculture. It is hard to believe that this was a garbage dump now thoroughly transformed into a lush, bountiful garden, an oasis in a grey urban area. Photo: David Haigh

Permaculture is really taking hold on the island of Bohol, in the Philippines.

In Australia, permaculture is often associated with hippies' lifestyle. But it is a versatile method of food production, because it uses whatever local materials are available.

In an Australian city apartment, the principles of permaculture may turn a high-rise balcony into a productive mini-garden. In the Philippines, houses, backyards and community gardens are being transformed by a group of 50 women who are wild about permaculture.

Australian aid is funding this organic

food production, giving poor women who are unemployed a chance of earning a livelihood. They can grow healthy food for their children and sell the surplus to generate a small income. This helps pay for health care and education. Organic vegetable growing is therefore an important supplement for poorer families.

Permaculture is taking hold in Bohol through the Tagbilaran Urban Agriculture Project (TAGURA) which Australia funds with a grant of \$63,000 over two years. And volunteers from Australia have visited the project to lend a hand. Volunteer Greg Knipps from Perth, Western Australia,

visited last year and now the soil used by the women is full of Perth worms.

Project president Josefina Castillo explains, 'We started as a group of 25 women who had houses close by and wanted to learn about sustainable agriculture. Now we have three new communal gardens and 50 women in our group from two districts.'

The women are trained in permaculture farming techniques and recycle just about everything. Water is collected in rainwater tanks, and pig waste is decomposed by worms before being used as fertiliser.

The communal gardens are models of permaculture, with hanging pots made of recycled plastic containers of all descriptions. An impressive herb spiral garden designed with recycled car tyres now grows eggplant, onion and baby's breath.

The women work in their own backyard gardens every day then take turns in the communal garden every other day. When they're not gardening and looking after children, they also take turns to preach the message about organic gardening and the environmental dangers of pesticides and fertilisers. The women often talk on local radio on a Sunday to convince more people to take up permaculture.

Permaculture and Australian aid has made a real difference to these 50 women in Bohol. Their enthusiasm for permaculture will expand their group and reach many more women in the future. — KH ■

Youth ambassadors at the forefront helping women

Two Australian Youth Ambassadors are making a difference in diverse areas of the Philippines.



A poster illustrates the case of Sarah Jane Dematera, a famous legal case in the Philippines of an abused domestic worker.

It's the wet season in Manila, when sudden downpours of rain turn the backstreets into natural swimming pools for the local children and streets can flood over a metre deep.

Hidden in these back streets, Australian Youth Ambassador Katherine Chang is serving her four month placement in Manila at the Kanlungan Women's Centre. Open since 1989, the centre operates as a shelter for battered women. It also deals with international issues such as the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation and bonded labour.

As a paralegal and a law graduate from Sydney University, Katherine Chang is most

needed here. Her task is to draft policy to regulate the employment of women overseas – a hot issue given that legislation to do just that is going through the Philippines Parliament.

Katherine says: 'We want to make sure women aren't tricked by unscrupulous employers – women like Sarah Jane Dematera.'

Sarah Jane Dematera is a famous case in the Philippines. She was accused of murdering her employer in Saudi Arabia after working for him as his maid and suffering a long period of abuse. Her case serves as a warning to other young women who venture abroad to earn money for

their families.

'The problem is a lot deeper than Sarah Jane's case,' explains Mary Lou Alcid, Katherine's boss and executive director of Kanlungan Women Centre. 'Filipino women have been illegally recruited to countries as far as away as Nigeria. The unfortunate ones are sold into brothels, their passports are removed, and the women often have no method of escape out of bondage. If they ever return, they suffer trauma and depression from long periods of abuse.'

Katherine says, 'The successful adoption of an anti-trafficking law will stop illegal recruitment on a large scale. We need to stop unscrupulous employers, but we also need to educate women about not taking risks.'

Katherine's work is very important because domestic workers in the Philippines go overseas each year in large numbers. As many as one in 20 Filipinos travel overseas to work, often as servants.

Close to the Kanlungan Centre is the Manila office of the Alliance for Philippines Partners in Development (APPEND), where another Youth Ambassador, Heather McLean from Sydney, is working. She is in the Philippines for a year on an Opportunity International project that provides credit to 50,000 of the poorest women across the Philippines.

Heather finds her work fulfilling as she helps the extremely poor. 'The women we help earn less than one dollar per day, but they have business potential,' she says. 'They only lack access to credit and we give

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A valuable stitch in time

Kirsten Hawke meets a group of women who used fashion to break the poverty cycle.

them the opportunity to set up their own businesses, and to raise their incomes and living standards.'

Heather lends an average of around \$100 to women to invest in their own businesses. 'There are 50,000 of our clients across the Philippines and we are aiming to raise this to 250,000 borrowers by 2003,' she explains. 'Our clients often buy material or food in bulk and then form small local stores and sell their goods.'

'One of my favourite stories about how small loans work is the case of Virginia, who used to live in the Payatas dump. She was able to use her loan to weave baskets and now she owns her own junk store,' she smiles.

Heather's work is making a difference by helping people to increase their incomes by forming their own businesses, while Katherine is making it safer for women to work overseas. This is women helping women, through the Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development Program. — KH ■

To find out more about Australia's Youth Ambassadors for Development Program, visit the website at www.ausaid.gov.au/youtham



When the Australian Government gave a small grant to a community organisation in Cebu Province, in the Philippines, little did anybody know that five years later the knock-on effects would produce a garment business and a sewing training program.

In June 1995, the organisation BIDLISIW, an acronym which includes the Cebuano word for 'sunrise', successfully applied for a grant from the Philippines-Australia Community Assistance Program to expand its microcredit program.

First the money bought 11 sewing machines to set up a sewing program. More than 100 women were initially trained to sew for the fashion industry. Through the microcredit program, small loans were offered to very poor women with training in three Cebu *barangays*, or villages, so they could set up their own garment businesses.

It wasn't long before the 110 women they first trained then set up their own association, known locally as *lamdag*. They also established a Cebu Garment Production Centre with their 11 sewing machines, sharing premises with BIDLISIW.

Australian funding of \$93,000 over three years has been very successful. The business now directly employs 40 women in garment-making. It also trains 35 women a year in garment-making and high speed sewing so they can set up their own businesses. This way, the project has so far helped 600 families in six *barangays*.

Association President Nora Oseo explains how the centre is self-supporting. 'We make sports clothing for local and American companies,' she says. 'Our group has also had to be proactive in seeking out orders for clothing in our local area. For

instance, we have orders for weddings and for school bags and uniforms for the coming school year.

'We have come a long way from being poor women, watching our husbands go to work, and doing housework all day,' she says.

'Many of the trained women become self-employed and work from homes turned into small businesses.'

As the 35 women are trained each year, their self-esteem improves, as does their capacity to earn income for their families. Australian aid has helped develop the training which includes leadership, conflict resolution, literacy and financial management as well as all of the latest sewing techniques. Nora says: 'It has transformed us from women who didn't know we had skills. Now we are empowered.'

The combined impact of the training, the garment production centre and the microcredit loans has not only helped women to form their own small sewing businesses, but it has helped to raise their income and their position within the family.

Nora says, 'We have noticed the impact in the changed attitudes of our families and husbands to our new work. Arguing and bickering stops, our children are healthier and are going to school. If our husbands are out of work, then we become the sole breadwinners and our families rely on us.'

Importantly, their income is much higher, even during economic downturns. Nelly Majadillas, Executive Director of the BIDLISIW Foundation, says that poverty is divided into levels in the Philippines. Level 0 is the poorest 15 per cent of the urban poor. Nellie says that the 600 families that have benefited from the training, credit and garment centre were originally classed at Level 0 poverty. A typical family at that level would earn a maximum of \$75 a month or less than \$3 a day.

She goes on, 'Within a year of the program, we've noticed that the women who have completed the training program have more than doubled their family income in the first two years. The families living in Level 0 poverty have moved up to



Association President Nora Oseo with Felicidad Carreon and Lalaine Trinidad. Australian aid trained these women to sew and now they pass on their skills to other women to help them earn an income.

Photo: David Haigh

Level 1 poverty, which means they may have upgraded cardboard houses, curtains, better hygiene and drainage.

'They learn to budget through our program, so they have more money for health, education and transport for their children and have savings. Also their position in the family has improved and domestic violence has decreased.'

What began with a small grant and the will of 110 women has now helped

600 families across Cebu to have a better life. As Nora puts it: 'We don't only help our own families, it's the joy of teaching others.' ■



Depth and breadth of aid program contribute toward regional stability

In his annual statement on Australia's aid program, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Alexander Downer, told Parliament Australia's development cooperation stands alongside the defence and diplomatic arms of government in working for regional stability.

While Australia's aid program has continued to contribute successfully toward building peace, security and sustainable development in our region during the past year, the challenge for the future was to continue this work, Mr Downer said in his statement to Parliament in November.

Mr Downer said it was encouraging that for the first time, a review of the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD had recognised that Australia had legitimate geo-political reasons for concentrating its aid program on countries in the Asia Pacific.

Each year, around three quarters of Australia's aid budget goes to the Asia Pacific, Mr Downer said. The final budget for Australia's total aid program in 1999–2000 was about \$1.75 billion.

Mr Downer also gave some striking examples of the depth and breadth of Australia's role in the region and the strength of our regional relationships.

These included the opening of the My Thuan bridge in Vietnam in May last year, aimed at improving the lives of many poor farmers in the Mekong delta; more than 2,000 students from the region currently studying in Australia under aid-funded scholarships who would return home with skills and enduring links with Australia; and some 285 Australian Youth Ambassadors, and many other volunteers, contributing their skills and developing lasting friendships in countries across the region.

'The aid program reflects and promotes Australia's fundamental national interests

in regional peace, stability and prosperity,' Mr Downer said.

GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMIC REFORM A PRIORITY

In East Asia the program's focus had been on economic and financial sector reform, while in Papua New Guinea Australia was providing technical assistance and other support to improve the country's economic management, public sector administration and delivery of services.

In the South Pacific, activities in support of economic reform and governance were a key priority.

However, set against these positives, Mr Downer said, 'We are all only too conscious of the many challenges to peace and security in the region. The coup in Fiji, conflict in Solomon Islands, East Timor's transition to nationhood and peace efforts on Bougainville are cases in point. And Indonesia is undergoing tremendous economic and political changes as its democracy evolves.'

Other destabilising influences in the region, such as environmental degradation, people smuggling, drug trafficking, money laundering and the spread of communicable diseases were also of increasing concern.

'In the face of such non-military threats, as well as the broader security concerns, Australia's development cooperation stands alongside the defence and diplomatic arms of government in working for regional stability,' said Mr Downer.

Promoting poverty reduction and sustainable development in order to



During his recent visit to PNG the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Downer, talks to Kari Eure (left) and Janet Willie, participants in the YWCA Sex Workers Education Program. The project trains sex workers in HIV/AIDS prevention and alternative skills such as garment-making. Australia's support for the Government of PNG's fight against the epidemic is part of Australia's \$200 million global commitment to HIV/AIDS programs.

enhance stability in the region would continue to underpin the aid program. The four key arms of the poverty reduction framework were sustainable and equitable economic growth, increased productivity of the poor, greater accountability of government and reduced vulnerability.

This is an edited version of Mr Downer's 10th annual statement to Parliament on the aid program. The complete text is available on the AusAID website, www.ausaid.gov.au/media/speeches.cfm

Water on tap for 400,000 people

The Five Towns Provincial Water Supply Project, funded with \$51 million from the Australian Government's aid program, and \$20 million from the Government of Viet Nam, has given hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese people immediate access to clean water. Jacinta Cubis reports.



'Clean running water in my home helps me get my work done faster,' said Mrs Lan, of Vinh Long. She works through the night making steam buns for local restaurants. She worked with other people in her lane to cover the open gutters running behind their houses.

Most Australians take clean water for granted but in rural Viet Nam most people rely on wells or rivers, or get untreated water from the village tap.

Now 400,000 people in five provincial towns in Viet Nam can get clean running water from their own taps, courtesy of the Five Towns Provincial Water Supply Project.

A successful partnership between the Governments of Australia and Viet Nam, the project has also helped improve sanitation in local communities. It has also trained people in operating the equipment safely and maintaining it.

People in Bac Ninh and Bac Giang, North Viet Nam, Ha Tinh, in the centre and Tra Vinh and Vinh Long, South Viet Nam, have taken key parts in the project, getting involved in community schemes to pave lanes and cover open gutters, achieving immediate improvements in their children's health and their local environment. — JC ■



Clean water is one of the keys to better health and poverty-reduction. Van drinks her fill from her aunt's café in Vinh Long.

The road to success in Papua New Guinea

Poor roads that deteriorate to impassability because of bad weather or ground instability present a huge challenge in PNG. Australia is helping to maintain the road system.



Regravelling a road in PNG. The Regravelling and Sealing Project is one of the aid program's biggest projects in PNG in recent years.

Anyone who has lived and worked in Papua New Guinea will tell you that getting from one place to another can be daunting, particularly for the 85 per cent of the PNG population living in rural areas.

One of Australia's biggest aid projects in recent years is the National Roads Regravelling and Sealing Project in Papua New Guinea. This project, now nearing completion, involves the maintenance of more than 1,300 km of roads in rural areas since 1995 at a cost of about \$65 million.

The project has helped the PNG Works Department with its core maintenance programs. All the construction has been by PNG contractors, technical assistance provided by the Australian managing contractor for the project. Because of the training and experience this approach has given local firms, PNG's capacity to maintain its road system in the future is greatly strengthened.

The road maintenance program is a success story of Australia's aid program in

PNG. The investment in maintenance repays itself many times over in reduced transport costs for produce, better access for rural communities to basic government services such as health and education, improved access to markets in rural areas, and higher economic returns for businesses.

MAINTENANCE CRUCIAL

The young geological age of PNG's landforms and the extreme environmental conditions take a heavy toll on PNG's road system. Continual maintenance is crucial to protecting the considerable investment in these assets.

The Government of PNG's National Transport Infrastructure Plan, published this year, emphasises the importance of maintaining infrastructure and PNG's 2001 budget more than doubles last year's budget allocation for road maintenance.

Other achievements of the land transport program include working jointly with PNG to:

- upgrade more than 40 km of highway in the Highlands of PNG, more than 40 km of Gazelle roads in East New Britain and more than 20 km of key roads in Lae;
- replace 19 bridges and maintain another 150 bridges across PNG; and
- undertake emergency rehabilitation of more than 250 km of road in Bougainville. — RT ■



snapshots

INDIA'S EARTHQUAKE

Australia has committed \$2.5 million to the relief effort following the earthquake which shook the Indian subcontinent on the morning of 26 January.

The earthquake's magnitude was 7.9 on the Richter scale and its epicentre was 20 km north east of Bhuj City in the State of Gujarat. It was the largest earthquake to hit the subcontinent since 1956. Unofficial reports indicate more than 10,000 people have died and many thousands more are either missing or trapped in the rubble.

A rapid response contributed \$1 million to the United Nations and International organisations to assist immediate emergency relief programs provide clothes, blankets, medical supplies and clean water to the devastated communities.

Australia is also supporting the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team. AusAID has contracted an experienced disaster management expert to join the team to assist in assessing the situation and coordinating international assistance.

UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL SESSION ON CHILDREN

A United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children is scheduled for September 2001. The objective of the session is to review progress in the promotion of children's rights and interests against the goals established at the 1990 World Summit for Children. These include the ratification, implementation and monitoring of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; combating childhood diseases; addressing food security and nutrition; protecting children from exploitation; and enhancing

the status of girls and women through improving access to quality education, health and other social services.

The Special Session will consider the lessons learned over the past decade and seek to identify practical solutions for future action. UNICEF, as secretariat of the Special Session, is encouraging the global community to commit to three key areas: the best possible start for children in the early years; a good quality basic education for every child; and an enabling environment for adolescents as they develop their capacities. — SI

CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON INDONESIA

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Downer, has welcomed the strong support pledged by the international community for Indonesia's program of economic reform and democratisation, expressed by the Consultative Group on Indonesia (CGI), which met in Tokyo.

'I am pleased that Australia has been able to announce a pledge of around \$120 million for 2000–2001,' he said. 'This confirms our commitment to providing practical assistance to support the Indonesian Government's reform efforts.'

On the link between the security situation in Indonesia and renewed investor confidence, Australia, along with many delegations, expressed its concern about the situation in West Timor and the need for Indonesian authorities to establish effective security there. This was an essential precondition if refugees were to be repatriated and resettled free of fear and intimidation.

'If significant progress is made towards

resolving the security situation in West Timor, Australia is ready to provide substantial support towards a credible international plan of assistance for the refugees in West Timor,' Mr Downer said.

LAW AND JUSTICE SECTOR ASSISTED IN SOLOMON ISLANDS

An Australian three-year support package for the law and justice sector in Solomon Islands follows a request from the Solomon Islands Government for Australia to assist with the restoration of law and order after the signing of the Townsville Peace Agreement in October.

The \$8.5 million project will include strengthening police management and human resource development capacity, promoting community policing and supporting reform and management strengthening of the prison service. The project will also develop a plan of assistance for the judicial system

These latest initiatives are in addition to more than \$650,000 committed by Australia since April for peace building and conflict resolution. Australia also contributed \$2 million this year to the International Committee of the Red Cross for relief operations in the Solomon Islands.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FOR THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Australia is contributing \$5 million to the World Food Programme and \$580,000 to the United Nations Children's Fund for their humanitarian assistance activities in the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea (DPRK).

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr

Downer, said his discussions with the Government and aid agencies operating in the DPRK highlighted the poor prospects of food security. 'The short-term food situation is particularly precarious,' he said. 'Of major concern is ensuring children and other vulnerable groups, such as pregnant women and the elderly, receive sufficient nutrition.'



Australia has contributed \$5 million for the purchase and delivery of 12,000 tonnes of Australian wheat, which left Newcastle, NSW, in November.

Australia will also contribute \$580,000 to a UNICEF program for the severely malnourished, targeting two million children and half a million mothers. Severely malnourished children require frequent feeds of high-energy foods. Australia's contribution to this project will help with the production of these special foods.

EDUCATION FEASIBILITY STUDY

The Australian Government and the World Bank will conduct a feasibility study to promote educational opportunities for people in developing countries using information and communication technologies.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Downer, said, 'Sometimes referred to as a latter-day Colombo Plan, this proposal arose from discussions the Treasurer and I had with Dr Mamphela Ramphele, Managing Director of the World Bank, during her recent visit to Australia. The Government has agreed to undertake a joint feasibility study with the World Bank to look at how technology can be used to alleviate poverty, with a particular focus on education.'

Distance learning methods, which improve access to education, are among the major elements of the Australian Government's overseas aid program.

CANBERRA ROTARY HELPS TO REMOVE LANDMINES FROM CAMBODIA

The Rotary Club of Canberra Burley Griffin has raised more than \$6,000 for the Destroy A Minefield Campaign.

Destroy A Minefield, an Australian Government initiative, enables the community to donate funds to clear minefields in Cambodia. Every two dollars raised will be matched by one dollar from the Government. Funds are used by Australian and Cambodian deminers to clear minefields in the provinces of Siem Reap and Battambang.

Congratulating the Rotary Club of Canberra Burley Griffin and its President, Mr Graeme Howieson, Australia's Special Representative for Demining, Senator Kay Patterson, said, 'These funds will also contribute to clearing mines from the Sunrise Orphanage just outside the capital, Phnom Penh. The Sunrise Orphanage is well known to Australians as it was established by expatriate Geraldine Cox.'

Australians can contribute to demining in Cambodia by supporting the Government's successful Destroy A Minefield campaign by calling 13 32 40.

GOOD GOVERNANCE — THE KEY TO DEVELOPMENT

The Australian Government's policy document on overseas aid and good governance, *Good Governance: Guiding Principles for Implementation*, emphasises that reducing poverty through achieving sustainable development is the key objective of Australia's overseas aid program.

In launching the document, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Downer, said, 'Governance is something we in Australia take for granted. It means the ways through which citizens and groups in a society voice their interests, mediate their differences and exercise their legal rights and obligations. Essentially it is the economic, social and political fabric of a country.'

The policy outlines the governance assistance activities Australia undertakes in partnership with governments in the Asia Pacific region. Some of these include helping the Government of Papua New Guinea reinforce constitutional checks and balances through support of the judiciary and the ombudsman; helping the Government of Samoa to introduce accountability frameworks in its public sector; and providing training for judges at Indonesia's newly established commercial court.

In 2000–2001, Australia will spend an estimated \$245 million on direct assistance to help improve governance in developing countries. This represents about 15 per cent of over-all aid expenditure.

AUSTRALIA ASSISTS VICTIMS OF MIDDLE EAST VIOLENCE

Australia is providing \$1 million to help provide medical care to people affected by violence in the West Bank and Gaza – \$800,000 through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and \$200,000 through Australian non-government organisations. This latest contribution is in addition to \$500,000 provided for humanitarian assistance last October.

Australia's contribution to ICRC provides life-saving medical goods and services, including support for mobile first-aid stations.

AUSTRALIAN ASSISTANCE FOR BOUGAINVILLE'S ECONOMY

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Downer, has announced that Australia is providing up to \$23.2 million to support five major projects to help reinvigorate Bougainville's economy.

In April, Australia will help build and rehabilitate two wharves. A jetty, landing ramp, shed and weighing facilities will be built at Kangu Beach, on the southernmost point of the island, and Australia will help to improve the wharf at Buka, the main town in Bougainville. Within two years, local producers will be able to use the wharves more efficiently to export their cash crops. Communities will be able to import essential goods unavailable on the island.

The rehabilitation of the coastal trunk road from Kokopau in the north to Sovele in the south-west will provide a vital link to previously isolated communities. Australia will continue to work with the national and provincial authorities to maintain the road.

Over the next three years, Australia will help approximately 30,000 families earn a living from copra and cocoa by repairing 800 cocoa driers, 450 small cocoa driers and 600 copra driers. The project will specifically help smallholder growers and enhance economic opportunities for ex-combatants and households headed by women. A quarter of a million tree seedlings will also be distributed around the province to ensure



The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Downer, receives a traditional tree fern carving from Vanuatu's Minister for Health, Mr Keasipai Song, during Mr Downer's recent visit to the country. The gift was in acknowledgement of Australia's support of health services in Vanuatu, and on the occasion of the delivery of two twin-cab trucks to the Vanuatu Ministry of Health.

a sustainable supply of firewood.

Another important initiative involves 3,000 ex-combatants who will be trained in basic literacy, numeracy and other skills to help them gain employment.

Mr Downer also announced the extension of a microfinance project that would help local people become financially self-reliant.

Last year alone, Australia helped immunise 21,000 children against polio and 15,000 against measles and more than 2000 mothers were vaccinated against tetanus.

Australia has also supported nutrition and mother-and-child health programs, and HIV/AIDS will be addressed through the National HIV/AIDS Support Project.

These projects represent another stage in the Australian Government's commitment of \$100 million over five years to Bougainville's reconstruction and to assisting the people of Bougainville to return to normal social and economic activities through targeted development assistance. ■



global education

CLASSROOM RESOURCES ON GENDER ISSUES

What is masculine and what is feminine? In different countries there are very different views about this and about the proper roles of women, men and children. When these views discriminate against women and girls, they affect poor countries' development prospects in many ways, including women's and children's health, human rights and economic progress. The Global Education Website has a number of case studies of women in developing countries which relate to various parts of the Australian school curriculum, including Studies of Society and the Environment and Civics and Citizenship.

WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD: CASE STUDIES

Livestock and livelihoods – Escaping poverty in rural China

Women's income is improved through loans and agricultural initiatives.

<http://globaled.ausaid.gov.au/secondary/cases/tud/china/1/poverty1.html>

Credit where credit is due – The Grameen Bank in Bangladesh

Small loans in Bangladesh are increasing self-reliance and income opportunities among women.

<http://globaled.ausaid.gov.au/secondary/case/stud/bangladesh/1/bank.html>

Women and recovery in the Palestinian Territories

Women's groups in the Palestinian Territories organise training and improve business opportunities.

<http://globaled.ausaid.gov.au/secondary/case>

stud/palestine/1/palestine.html

Halting health hazards – Primary health care in Laos

Access to quality health services is increased.
<http://globaled.ausaid.gov.au/secondary/cases/tud/laos/1/laos.html>

Bringing back the trees – Responses to deforestation

Women's groups are managing sections of forests in Nepal.

<http://globaled.ausaid.gov.au/secondary/cases/tud/nepal/1/forest.html>

Remember that each case study on the Global Education Website is written by a professional curriculum writer and designed for specific areas of learning on a state or national level. Teachers' notes explain how to use each case study and point to relevant resources and websites. Student activities based on each case study are also suggested.

CHILDREN AROUND THE WORLD

About a sixth of the world's population is aged between 10 and 19. Most enjoy better access to health, education, employment, recreation and welfare services than ever before.

Unfortunately, though, hundreds of millions of young people still have no access to such things. Instead they face poverty, child labour, conflict and violence, the deadly spread of HIV/AIDS, and discrimination, especially against girls.

However, many steps are being taken to improve their lives. The Global Education Website has a series of case studies of topics affecting young people in developing countries, showing examples of such practical steps.

CHILDREN AROUND THE WORLD: CASE STUDIES

In India, girl labourers quit labour for school

The importance of education in improving the lives of young children in India.

<http://globaled.ausaid.gov.au/secondary/casestud/india.html>

Friends house in Phnom Penh

Training street kids in Cambodia to improve their employment prospects.

<http://globaled.ausaid.gov.au/secondary/casestud/street.html>

Conventions on the Rights of the Child

Covers the convention, using examples of children in developing countries.

<http://globaled.ausaid.gov.au/secondary/casestud/child-rights.html>

Is work child's play? Poverty in the Philippines

The causes of child labour in the Philippines and ways of reducing the problem.

<http://globaled.ausaid.gov.au/secondary/casestud/philippines/2/child-lab.html>

JOIN GLOBAL EDUCATION NEWS

Global Education News is a quarterly email listing the latest case studies (with direct links), indicating how they relate to key areas of learning in the Australian School Curriculum and including a brief summary.

New classroom videos, education publications and other resources are reported too. To subscribe, either go to the Global Education website, click on Global Education News and then fill in the blanks, or phone the Global Education officer on 02 6206 4898.

CLASSROOM VIDEOS ON THE REFUGEE EXPERIENCE

Far from home (primary version) and *Rebuilding shattered lives* (secondary version) are two new videos examining a series of global topics about refugees, internally displaced persons and asylum seekers. The videos explore what it is like to be a refugee, where in the world refugees are, who looks after them and why people become refugees. They include teacher's notes and student activities. To obtain copies, contact Classroom Videos on 02 99138700 or <http://www.classroomvideo.com.au/>

See the Global Education website, under Resources, for other videos available: <http://www.globaled.ausaid.gov.au>

GO GLOBAL: A NEW RESOURCE

Go Global is the third teacher-resource book in the Global Perspectives series and is written for lower and middle secondary teachers and students. Each of the six units in *Go Global* investigates one or more pertinent global issue and provides a variety of effective teaching and learning aids. The range of core and extension activities takes into account the different learning styles, interests and ability levels of students. Many activities lead beyond the classroom and encourage positive, informed and reflective global citizenship.

Go Global can be used in all areas of the curriculum. It is available from Curriculum Corporation on 1800 337 405 or 03 9207 9600 or sales@curriculum.edu.au

THE LATEST GLOBAL EDUCATION CASE STUDIES

New case studies on the Global Education Website cover HIV/AIDS, land degradation, sea-level rise, volcanoes, human rights, governance and economics; and don't forget the water posters. You can obtain these, and lots more, through the Global Education Website at <http://globaled.ausaid.gov.au> — JMC ■



Each case study is written by a professional curriculum writer and has teacher's notes and student activities designed specifically for Australian state and national profiles.



Four posters on the theme 'water' are available free from the Global Education Program. They illustrate the relationship between water and four areas: work (above), health, the environment and agriculture.

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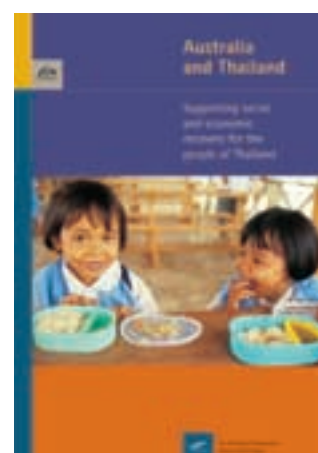
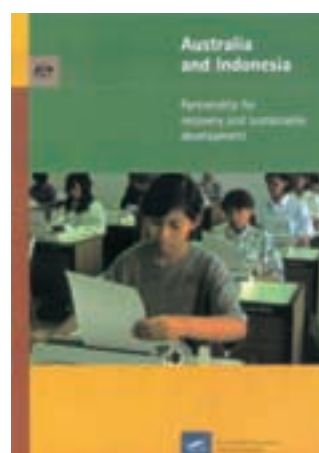
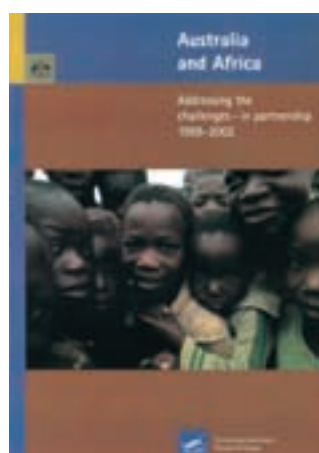
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