

THE MAGAZINE OF AUSTRALIA'S OVERSEAS AID PROGRAM

focus

VOLUME 17 NUMBER 2 » SPRING 2002



» HELP FOR THE WORLD'S REFUGEES
» LANDMINE AND UXO ACTION
» NEW VOLUNTEERS HEAD

AUSTRALIA'S OVERSEAS AID PROGRAM HELPS EASE THE BURDENS OF CATASTROPHIC SOCIAL UPHEAVAL IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, AND WORKS TOWARDS PREVENTING THE UNDERLYING CAUSES THAT FORCE PEOPLE AWAY FROM THEIR HOMES.



FROM THE MINISTER

To the outside world, refugees are the most visible sign of violent conflict. Images of families fleeing for their lives across borders trigger appeals for assistance. The world looks on with horror and responds with compassion.

In the years following the end of the Cold War, the world has become increasingly volatile. Large numbers of refugees place considerable burdens on host countries – often those least able to bear it.

Australia gives assistance at the acute stages of emergencies when people are fleeing their homes and country, and for the longer term humanitarian care necessary until crises are resolved. This is provided largely through UN, international and non-government organisations.

Most recently, Australia contributed more than \$43 million in humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan and, in 1999–2000, \$80 million to East Timor. These have been our largest responses so far to overseas emergencies.

The social and economic costs of rebuilding a society emerging from turmoil are enormous compared with the cost of

preventing conflict. It will take years and dauntingly large sums of money to help reconstruct Afghanistan, East Timor, the Balkans and Cambodia.

In recognition of this, in June this year I launched a new Peace, Conflict and Development Policy to steer the aid program towards targeting the root causes of poverty which so often become the triggers for conflict and subsequent displacement of populations.

This policy focuses strongly on strengthening governance, providing support to encourage dialogue between those in conflict and reducing the presence and trafficking of small arms.

However, conflicts are not the sole cause of people displacement. Natural events, such as a large flood or a volcanic eruption, can leave a sickening death toll, thousands of people without homes, widespread crop and animal losses and heavily damaged infrastructure. These events can sometimes undo years of development work.

Yet in many cases the impact of these natural events can be

mitigated through a variety of well-planned measures.

For example, over the next two years the Australian aid program and World Vision Australia will work with local communities on a disaster mitigation project in flood-prone districts of Viet Nam where severe floods cause loss of life, loss of homes and immense hardship. It will include training, land reclamation, the construction of flood drainage canals and the establishment of nurseries for rice seeds.

In time, as a result of these measures, people who are already very poor will be better able to manage flooding and have more security in their lives.

By taking these approaches, we are acknowledging that it is far better to stop problems at their source than try to pick up the shattered fragments of people's lives after a disaster, man-made or otherwise, has occurred.

Alexander Downer
Minister for Foreign Affairs

ABOVE: The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Downer, addresses a ministerial conference on people smuggling and trans-national crime, held earlier this year in Nusa Dua, Indonesia, as Indonesian Foreign Minister Hasan Wiraduya looks on. Photo: AFP/AAP/Oka Budhi, © 2002 AFP

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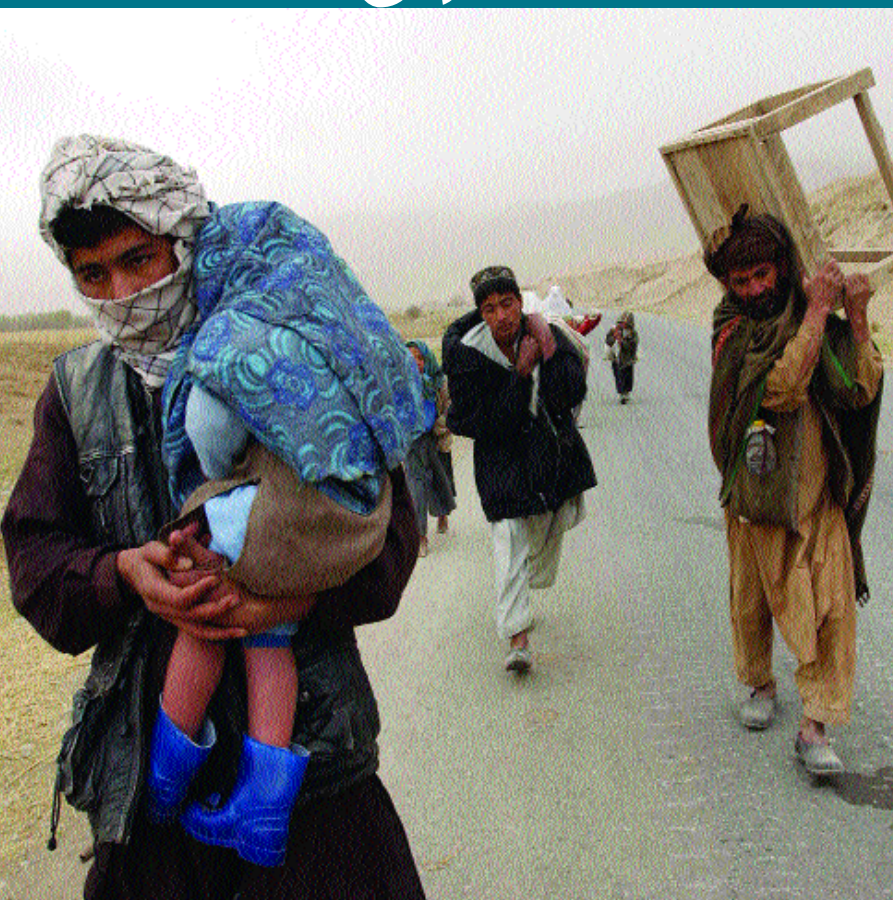
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Government aid in focus The Australian aid program is committed to reducing poverty and achieving sustainable development in the Asia/Pacific, Africa and the Middle East. Australian firms and people play a major role in delivering the aid program. We use Australian expertise, Australian experience and Australian resources to tackle poverty. And by investing in development we are investing in our future. In 2002–03, we plan to spend almost \$1.82 billion on development assistance. The aid program focuses on promoting regional peace, stability and economic development through several hundred large- and small-scale projects. Countries we are committed to include Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Samoa, Tonga, Kiribati, Tuvalu (the Pacific region); Indonesia, East Timor, Viet Nam, Philippines, China, Mongolia, Cambodia, Thailand, Lao PDR, Burma (East Asia); Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Pakistan, Maldives, Bhutan (South Asia); and Africa and the Middle East.

COVER: Close to the front line, near Konduz, Afghanistan, during fighting at the end of last year, civilians flee on foot. The battle for the town of Konduz was one of the bloodiest episodes in the war. Photo: Martin Adler/Panos Pictures

FOCUS ON

REFUGEES



Refugees and internally displaced people fleeing from conflict are among the most vulnerable people on Earth. Assistance for people in these circumstances is first and foremost a humanitarian responsibility – to save lives through the provision of food, water, shelter and health care, and to ensure their protection from further persecution and physical danger.

Women and children make up roughly 80 per cent of displaced people. Because of the absence of adult male family members, females of all ages are vulnerable to all forms of exploitation and abuse, including sexual exploitation, rape and other forms of physical violence. Unaccompanied children are the most vulnerable of all.

Assistance does not stop with the end of a crisis. It must continue during the return of people to their places of origin, with resettlement, or with local integration into host communities.

Long-term assistance also needs to be provided in protracted situations, such as in the camps along the Thailand–Burma border where Australia has contributed for many years towards the care of over 100,000 ethnic Karen, Shan and Karenni refugees. Ongoing support has also been provided for the care of 3.5 million Palestinian refugees in the Middle East, through the UN Relief and Works Agency.

However, it is not simply a matter of providing humanitarian assistance and protection. Assistance to refugees can cause resentment and problems in surrounding host communities. Returning refugees and internally displaced people can raise issues over ownership of land, housing and other property. The presence of large numbers of refugees can cause environmental damage to the surrounding countryside or impinge on local employment conditions and opportunities. All these issues are potential sources of conflict.

For these reasons, assistance must be provided not only for fundamental humanitarian requirements but also for longer-term development needs in the environment to which people return. For example, Australia is providing assistance to ethnic Rohingyans in Burma returning to Northern Rhakine State as well as to the surrounding community.

Longer term assistance also covers activities that encourage reconciliation where there may have been division within communities before the displacement occurred, such as in East Timor, or establishing house and land ownership, especially in situations where returnees have been away for a long period of time.

Refugees and internally displaced people are among the most visible consequences of



AusAID's Director General, Bruce Davis, presents a box of medical equipment to staff members Julie Mala and Leslyn Vatu at Vanuatu's Fanafo Clinic. Photo: Margaret Macfarlane

violent conflict but they represent a small proportion of the overall costs, both humanitarian and financial.

Australia's assistance in the future will be underpinned and informed by our new Peace, Conflict and Development Policy and will be fully integrated into all relevant country programs.

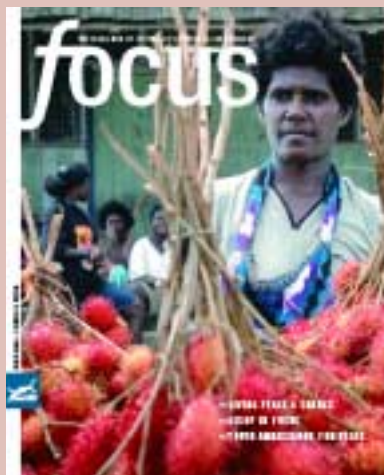
In this way Australia will be contributing constructively not only to the welfare of displaced people, but to sustainable peace and development for all those touched by the tragic, destructive consequences of violence.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'Bruce Davis'.

Bruce Davis
Director General

WHAT'S NEW

NEW LOOK *FOCUS*



There has been a good response from readers following the questionnaire that formed part of the Winter 2002 edition of *Focus*, and the overwhelming reaction has been positive.

As promised, a set of AusAID's new Peace posters will be sent to the first four respondents who completed and returned the questionnaires. They were Jocelyn Aitken of Culburra Beach, NSW, John Wrigglesworth of Isaacs, ACT, A. Mitchell of Pymble, NSW and Nicholas A. Hatswell of Ararat, Victoria. Congratulations and thanks for your speedy responses.

Many people used the questionnaire to ask questions

about AusAID, such as how to work for AusAID and how to get hold of other AusAID publications.

The AusAID website is the best place to look for answers to these questions. AusAID publications can be browsed and ordered online or downloaded in PDF format, and there are special pages for information on job and business opportunities at AusAID. Visit <www.ausaid.gov.au>

If you did not complete the *Focus* questionnaire but would like to have your say, please drop us a line – Canberra Mailing Centre, PO Box 462, Fyshwick ACT 2609, or email <books@ausaid.gov.au> – asking for a copy of the Winter 2002 edition of *Focus* which has the questionnaire inside. Closing date for returning questionnaires is 31 October 2002.

We will be following up after this date with a careful analysis of all the answers we have received, and hope to tell our readers in the Summer edition what we discover about what you want from your *Focus*.

Thanks again to everyone who took the time to respond. SN

AID FOR DROUGHT-STRICKEN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Australia will provide another \$6.5 million for food aid to Southern Africa through the World Food Programme regional appeal. The funding is in addition to the \$5 million already earmarked for the region.

The WFP appeal targets 10.2 million people in Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Swaziland and Tanzania.

Announcing the funding, Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs Mrs Chris Gallus said the Federal Government had acted quickly and generously to help alleviate the devastating food shortages in Southern Africa.

'Australia has now committed \$26 million to assist Southern Africa recover from the grip of drought,' she said. 'Over the next three years, Australia will also provide \$10 million for projects by Australian non-government organisations to improve longer-term food security in southern and eastern Africa.'

'Southern Africa continues to face a very serious food shortage, affecting as many as 13 million people,' Mrs Gallus said.

FLOODING IN INDIA AND NEPAL

Mrs Gallus has also announced that Australia will contribute \$200,000 to the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Appeal to help the victims of the recent devastating floods in India and Nepal.

Mrs Gallus said the IFRC appeal seeks to provide immediate assistance in the form of shelter, food, hygiene items and health services to several thousand people already affected by the disaster.

'The Australian Government is deeply concerned by the devastation and disruption to life caused by flooding and landslides occurring in areas across northern India and Nepal,' Mrs Gallus said.

AUSTRALIAN WHEAT AND RICE

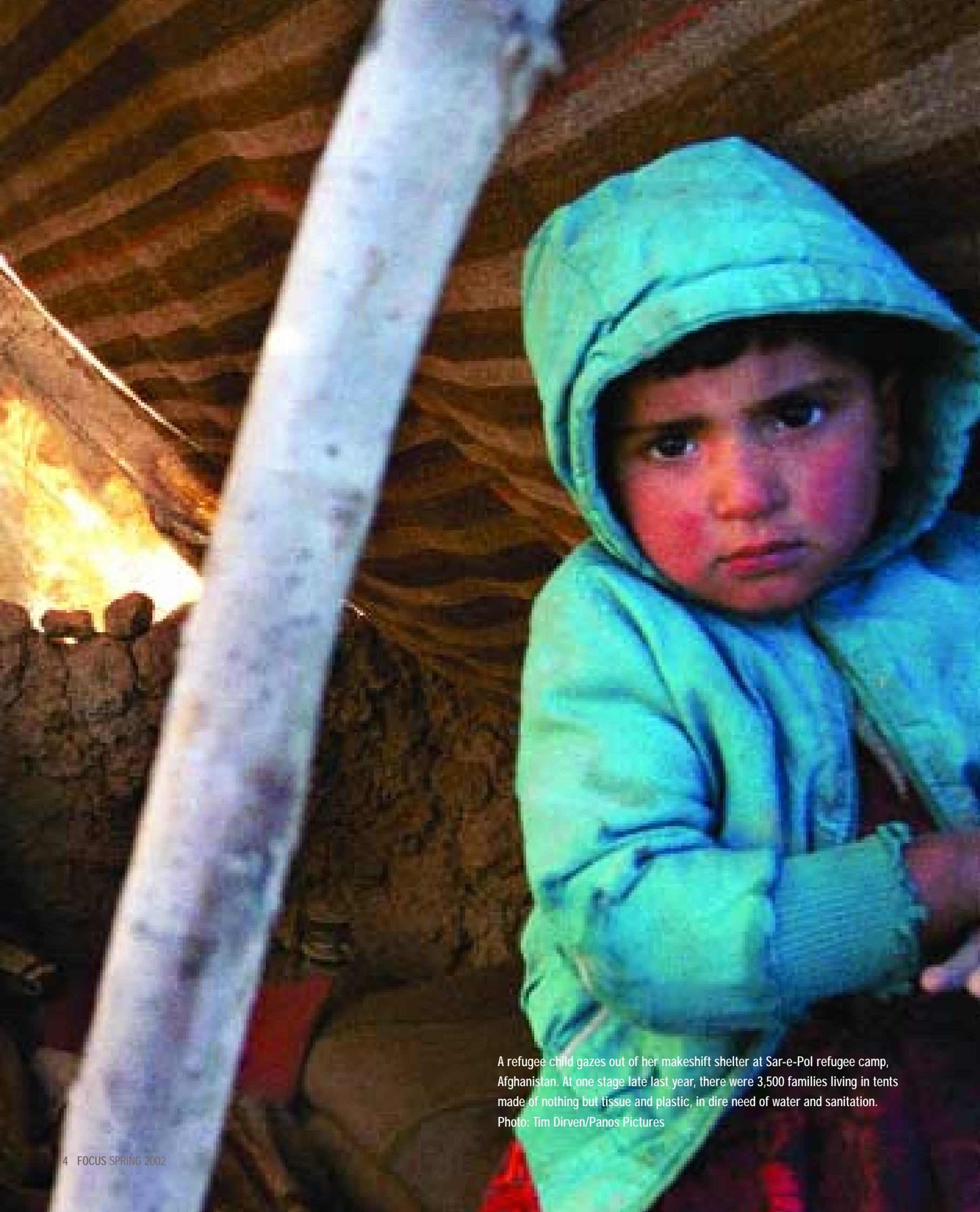
Australian wheat and rice is helping to feed the starving in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Southern Africa and Sri Lanka. The grain – 120,000 tonnes of wheat and 24,000 tonnes of rice, all sourced from Australian growers – is an important element of Australia's aid program. Last financial year Australia spent more than \$90 million on food aid.

Australia is supporting the World Food Programme's emergency operations in Afghanistan with a \$7 million contribution to supply Australian wheat.



FAR LEFT: Sydney 2000 Olympic gold medallist (tae kwon do) Lauren Burns, shown here with Song Kosal, a Cambodian landmine victim, attending a demonstration of landmine clearing in Melbourne earlier this year. The demonstration was addressed by Parliamentary Secretary Mrs Chris Gallus MP. Burns is an ambassador for the Destroy-A-Landmine campaign, run by World Vision.

LEFT: Carl Chirgwin, a demining expert, shows how it's done. See *Cruel Legacy*, page 16.



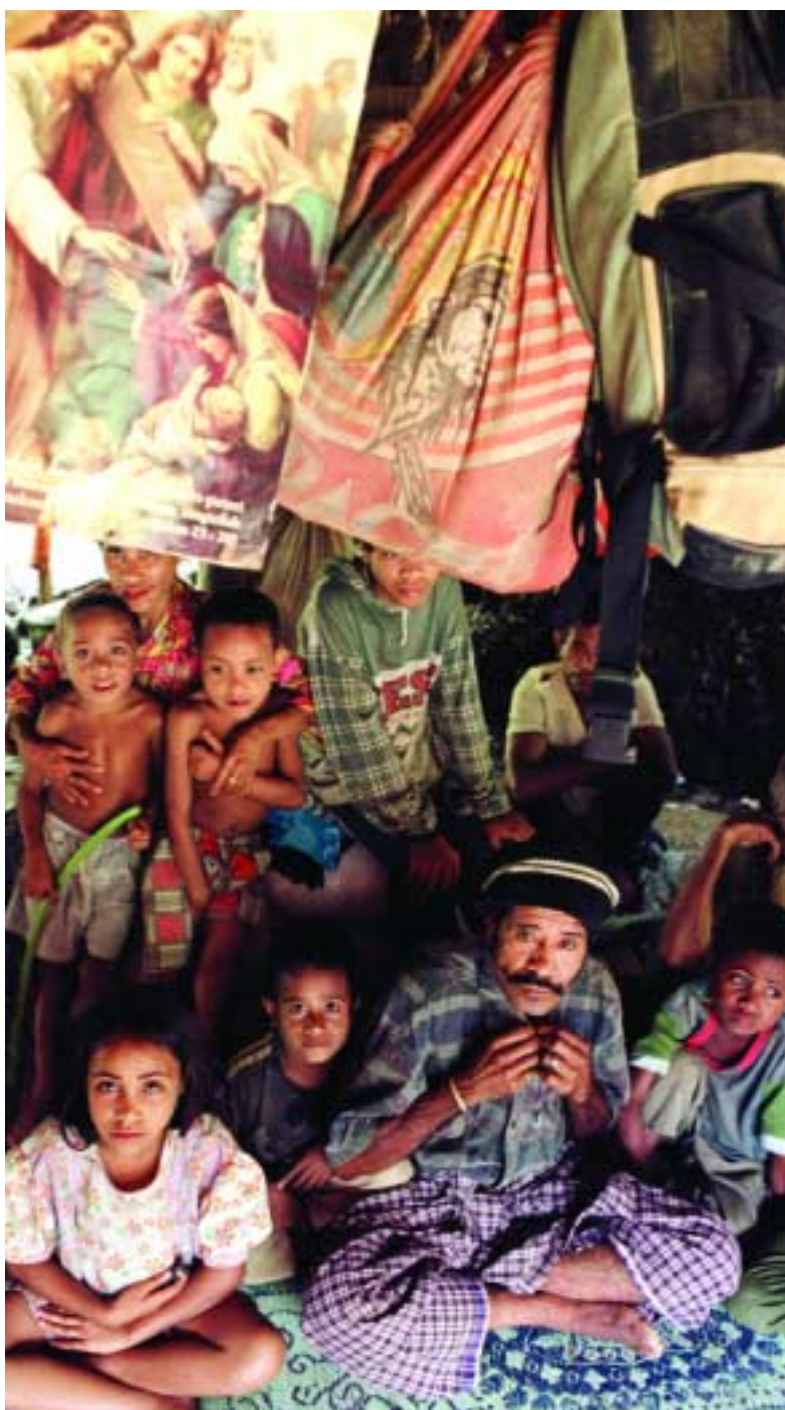
A refugee child gazes out of her makeshift shelter at Sar-e-Pol refugee camp, Afghanistan. At one stage late last year, there were 3,500 families living in tents made of nothing but tissue and plastic, in dire need of water and sanitation. Photo: Tim Dirven/Panos Pictures

NO PLACE LIKE HOME

We see them nightly on our television sets, hear their voices speaking in a hundred languages on our radios. Their drawn, anxious faces, their sad bundles of possessions, their patient waiting in queues for food, medicine, shelter are all too familiar sights. They are the uprooted of the world. And they number more than twice the population of Australia. Peter Cotton reports.

FLIGHT

FROM DESTRUCTION



Australia's humanitarian program plays a leading role in our region and is assisting displaced people further afield.

The changing nature of human displacement has made the task of aid agencies more complex and certainly more sensitive.

In previous eras, most of the world's displaced people were refugees, those who had fled to another country to avoid life-threatening upheaval or persecution. These days, more than two thirds of those who flee their homes to escape harm remain within the borders of their own country. They're called Internally Displaced Persons, or IDPs.

The United Nations estimates that there are now around 25 million internally displaced people in the world, compared with 12 million refugees

(see sidebar: *All the lonely people*).

Bona fide refugees are covered by an international refugee convention, which attempts to protect and assist them. But people displaced within their own borders remain the responsibility of their own government.

'The needs of internally displaced people and refugees are no different,' says Steve Darvill, a program manager for AusAID's Humanitarian and Emergencies Section. 'What's different is that one enjoys an international protection regime, and the other doesn't.'

'The international community generally can't act to protect and assist internally displaced people until their government requests support. And if that government is a party to the conflict that produced the internally displaced people, it's sometimes reluctant to have foreign agencies involved in any way,' Darvill says.

Nevertheless, the UN launched

Around 200 villagers from Turiscai and Same in East Timor, having fled from the violence of the militias, shelter in the Dili suburb of Mota-Ulun. Photo: Jan Banning/Panos Pictures



At Arghandab, Afghanistan, an Afghan family rests in a barren snowscape near the Pakistani border. Photo: Caroline Penn/Panos Pictures

a set of Guiding Principles in 1998, based on the provisions of other international human rights instruments. Though lacking the legal force of the refugee convention, the Guiding Principles still represent useful guidance for those working to assist internally displaced people.

Australia, for its part, is supporting dissemination of the Guiding Principles through support (\$250,000) to the Internal Displacement Unit of the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

‘If you leave Afghanistan out of the equation,’ says Steve Darvill, ‘the vast bulk of the people who are displaced in our region are internally displaced.’

DISPLACED PEOPLE IN OUR REGION

Australia’s humanitarian program for internally displaced people and refugees is considered very significant given our size, especially for what it achieves in the Asia/Pacific region.

‘The rest of the world looks to us to take a leading role in the Asia/Pacific,’ Steve Darvill says.

‘Australian aid dollars have affected the lives of millions of refugees and internally displaced people in our region over the past decade,’ he says.

Australian humanitarian assistance to the region’s displaced is partly targeted at the organisations working with internally displaced people and refugees, with other funds earmarked to deal with unforeseen human disasters during the course of the year.

Australia’s core contribution to the UN’s refugee agency, UNHCR (United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees), this financial year is \$7.3 million. The money helps fund its operating costs.

The Australian Government has also allocated \$15 million this year to support a range of international agencies assisting refugees and internally displaced people.

There’s another \$49 million for humanitarian programs in 2002–03, and the Government has increased by \$15 million to \$52.4 million the pool of money for dealing with unanticipated emergencies.

ALL THE LONELY PEOPLE ...

WHAT IS A REFUGEE?

A refugee is a person who 'owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country...'

The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees

IDPs – WHAT ARE THEY?

Like refugees, they are hapless civilians fleeing civil conflict or persecution but they remain within their country's borders. There are an estimated 20–25 million of them around the world and they are known among agencies that help them by the acronym of IDP – an internally displaced person. IDPs are the fastest-growing group of uprooted persons in the world.

WHAT IS THE UNHCR?

The UNHCR is the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. It is the United Nations refugee agency. UNHCR was established on 14 December 1950 by the UN General Assembly and began its work on 1 January the following year. The agency helps the world's displaced peoples by providing them with basic necessities such as shelter, food, water and medicine in emergencies and seeking long-term solutions, including voluntary return to their homes or beginning afresh in new countries.

According to Steve Darvill, up to three quarters of Australian humanitarian aid money targeted at internally displaced people and refugees goes to UN agencies and the Red Cross Movement. The rest is channeled through non-government organisations.

INDONESIA

Australia has a strong interest in supporting peace and stability across Indonesia. Indonesia currently accounts for a large portion of the Australian aid dollars spent on humanitarian assistance.

Over the past three years, Australian humanitarian aid to Indonesia has amounted to more

than \$105 million, much of it either assisting internally displaced people throughout the archipelago, or the East Timorese refugees in West Timor.

AusAID's efforts to assist internally displaced people in Indonesia is presently focused on the provinces of Maluku and North Maluku which lie north of East Timor in the Banda Sea.

There are about 330,000 internally displaced people in Maluku Province and 201,000 in North Maluku.

AusAID's Second Secretary based in the Indonesian capital Jakarta, Nikki Burns, says the causes of the conflict in North

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A REFUGEE AND AN ECONOMIC MIGRANT?

Economic migrants normally leave a country voluntarily to seek a better life. Should they elect to return home, they would continue to receive the protection of their government. Refugees flee because of the threat of persecution and cannot return safely to their homes in the prevailing circumstances.

Source: UNHCR <www.unhcr.org>

Maluku are complex and various and are not just about religion. For example, power struggles between local leaders over how the recently created province should be divided up are a key source of tension.

North Maluku has been relatively peaceful since July 2000 and Australia now supports a recovery effort in the province led by the United Nations Development Program.

'We've shifted from emergency assistance such as food aid, medicines and sanitation,' says Burns, 'to assisting internally displaced people to return to their homes and getting them to be more self reliant.'

'We're also helping rebuild infrastructure such as health services, schools and reconnecting the electricity in the province. We stand ready to provide relief aid to these internally displaced people, but that's less necessary now.'

Burns says AusAID is also exploring peace-building and conflict prevention strategies in North Maluku and other provinces affected by conflict. 'We're looking at how to bring communities that have been fighting back together,' she says. 'This is a very challenging task.'

Australia's humanitarian assistance to Maluku and North Maluku is delivered through UN agencies and international non-government organisations.

In Aceh, conflict stretching back 30 years means that displacement has become a long term issue for many people in this region.

Burns says the protracted nature of the Aceh conflict has left aid donors wondering how they can help in the province. 'The conflict increases and decreases in intensity creating temporary surges in the number of displaced people and making it too difficult to plan appropriate responses.'

Burns and her fellow AusAID officers in Jakarta have a watching brief across the Indonesian archipelago to identify areas where Australia can help. 'As well as Aceh,' she says, 'we keep an eye on West Kalimantan where there are internally displaced people from a conflict a few years ago. There are internally displaced people on the island of Madura in East Java from a recent conflict in Central Kalimantan.'

'We also keep a watch on Central Sulawesi where religious conflict has produced about 70,000 internally displaced people in recent years.'

EAST TIMOR

This year, Australia will contribute \$6.6 million to help Indonesia and the United Nations find lasting solutions for up to 80,000 East Timorese still living in refugee camps in West Timor (see sidebar: *Refugees in West Timor*).

When they arrived in West Timor, these East Timorese were classified as internally displaced people. After the United Nations Transitional Administration for East Timor was established in October 1999, and East Timor became a state in its own right, they became refugees.

The \$6.6 million Australia has agreed to contribute will help fund an ongoing information campaign to inform East Timorese refugees in West Timor about conditions in East Timor.

It'll also help to compensate for lost pension entitlements of former Indonesian Government employees who are willing to return to East Timor, and provide an enhanced repatriation package including transport and food aid on their return.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

As for other humanitarian hotspots in the region, about 40,000 people were displaced in Solomon Islands in 2000 due to armed conflict.

Representing about 10 per cent of the country's population, these people had shifted from the island of Malaita to settle on Guadalcanal. When fighting broke out they were forced to flee back to Malaita.

'They were displaced back to their roots and took an economic hit in abandoning what they'd built for themselves on Guadalcanal,' says Steve Darvill.

'The families they returned to also suffered financial hardship in having to support them. A number of Gwales [Guadalcanal

people] also fled the capital, Honiara, back to their villages in rural Guadalcanal. Things are still tense in the Solomons, but while the conflict originally involved organised groups with political objectives, it's now more to do with lawlessness and banditry.'

PHILIPPINES, THAILAND, SRI LANKA

Another regional hotspot is the Philippines island of Mindanao where people are regularly displaced when government troops confront rebels in their area.

There are displaced people on the Thailand-Burma border, too, and a significant displaced population in Sri Lanka, although the outbreak of peace in Sri Lanka is expected to see people return to their homes.

Examples of smaller UN projects funded by Australia include the reintegration of refugees in Burma (\$500,000), food for refugees on the Thailand-Burma border (\$400,000), and community resettlement programs in Sri Lanka (\$300,000).

THE BIGGER PICTURE

'In most emergencies,' says Darvill, 'OCHA [the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs] assesses needs across the affected population. It then negotiates with other agencies to allocate responsibilities.'

'For example, UNHCR might be allocated the lead role in providing shelter and other non-food assistance and it will allocate regions to other agencies and coordinate their efforts.'

AusAID sits on the boards of UNHCR and the World Food Programme, it's a regular member of the UNICEF board, and belongs

to the Donor Support Group of the International Committee of the Red Cross as well as the Working Group on OCHA.

'We play an active part on those boards,' says Barbara O'Dwyer, another program manager with AusAID's Humanitarian and

Emergency Section. 'Membership allows us to see where our money goes, and the impact it has on refugees and internally displaced people. Also it allows us to make sure that the needs of the Asia/Pacific region are met by these agencies.'



A refugee girl shelters in a mosque near Samalanga, Aceh, Indonesia.

Photo: Dermot Tatlow/Panos Pictures



SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN ...

- » Children make up around half of the approximately 50 million uprooted people around the world.
- » The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees cares for 22.3 million of these people. An estimated 10 million are children under the age of 18.
- » The majority of people who flee their homes do so because of war. It is estimated that more than two million children were killed in conflict in the last decade. Another six million are believed to have been wounded and one million orphaned.
- » In recent decades the proportion of war victims who are civilians rather than combatants has leaped from five per cent to more than 90 per cent.
- » Children in 87 countries live among 60 million landmines. As many as 10,000 per year continue to become victims of mines.
- » The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child is the international legal framework for the protection of children. The Convention has the highest number of state parties of any human rights treaty, being ratified by all countries except the United States and Somalia.
- » Around 40 million children each year are not registered at birth, depriving them of a nationality and a legal name.

Source: UNHCR <www.unhcr.org>

ABOVE: These East Timorese children are among 25 million displaced children around the world. Photo: Jan Banning/Panos Pictures

‘When you’re on the board, you’re involved in priority setting and the budgetary process and we’ve encouraged all the organisations we fund to set up a full evaluation capacity.’

No one can predict what future catastrophic events will impact on the people of our region. The only certainty is that Australia, through AusAID, will work to alleviate distress in times of calamity. •



East Timorese refugees returning from West Timor. Photo: Jimin Lai/AP Photo

REFUGEES IN WEST TIMOR

- » Australia’s commitment to help refugees in West Timor now totals \$13.7 million, including earlier assistance with repatriation, medical supplies, and water supply/sanitation and health programs.
- » At the Indonesia–East Timor–Australia Ministerial Meeting held in Bali in February 2002, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer, announced a package of assistance of \$6.6 million in support of the UN–Government of Indonesia joint appeal for East Timorese refugees in West Timor.
- » The package is aimed at promoting lasting solutions to the long-standing refugee problem. It will help refugees to either return voluntarily to East Timor or, where this may not be viable, settle elsewhere in Indonesia.

RAMIZA FINDS A NEW HOME

When Lazo Serdar went missing during a fire fight between his Serb unit and Bosnian forces in 1995, his wife Ramiza feared the worst.



I heard the Bosnians took him over to their side,' says Ramiza. 'Then Serbian soldiers coming back from the fighting said something had happened to him but they didn't know what. He's captured they said, but maybe he's dead. And if he's not dead, maybe they're going to kill him.'

Three months passed before Ramiza heard that her husband had been killed by an exploding grenade. Six months later, Lazo's body was returned to Ramiza as part of a prisoner exchange.

Ramiza, a Muslim from the Bosnian town of Velika Kladusa, met Serbian Orthodox Lazo in the early 1980s when he took a job on the farm where she worked tending chickens.

Four years after meeting they married and bought an apartment. 'Everyone was happy,' says Ramiza. 'It was a time when we didn't recognise people by religion and lots of people married someone of another religion.'

The couple had two daughters, Sonja born in 1984 and Tanja in 1987. Ramiza says: 'We decided from the start not to put religion into them.'

'PEOPLE TURNED THEIR HEADS FROM EACH OTHER'

Ramiza was working in a bakery in 1990 when war broke out in the former Yugoslavia.

She describes it as a time when 'people turned their heads from each other.' A lot of Serbs fled Bosnia for Serbia but Lazo decided

to stay put with Ramiza and his children.

At first it was a war between religions. Later when it became a civil war, Ramiza and Lazo joined 30,000 Muslims who fled to the Serbian side. They learnt soon after that their apartment had been gutted by fire.

For three months the family moved from village to village until they found shelter in a refugee centre inside Serbia. They later lived with Lazo's sister in the Serbian city of Novi Grad.

Then the Serbian authorities wrote to Lazo demanding that he join the army to fight the Bosnians.

'He didn't know anything about guns so he asked to be excused,' says Ramiza. 'They sent another letter and then they came and took him away. They sent him into the fighting almost immediately and within 27 days he was dead.'

Despite the fact that she was a Bosnian Muslim living in Serbia,

a refugee. 'We didn't even know where Australia was,' says Ramiza.

Ramiza waited two years before she was called in to the Australian Embassy and asked if she was certain she wanted to take herself and her daughters to Australia. She said she was.

'I was very depressed when I arrived in Australia. I didn't know anything about this place, and so it was very hard for me,' says Ramiza.

'Then the children went to school,' she says. 'They didn't know a word of English when we came here. Now they speak English very well and they're happy.'

'We have a government house here in Canberra in a very quiet area and I'm happy now too,' says Ramiza, who recently gained her Certificate in Aged Care and is now looking for a full-time job.

'I have friends who are Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian here. I also have friends from Japan and China that I met at English school,' she says. 'My heart is open for all good people. Their religion doesn't matter.' PC

Ramiza says going back to Bosnia after Lazo's death was not an option. 'But I was also scared to stay in Serbia as a Muslim,' she says.

Ramiza travelled to the Serbian capital Belgrade and filled out an application to come to Australia as

ABOVE LEFT: Ramiza – after loss and displacement, safe and settled in a quiet Canberra suburb. Photo: Peter Cotton



An Afghan man waits at the health post of the Sar-e-Pol refugee camp while a family member receives urgent medical assistance.
Photo: Tim Dirven/Panos Pictures

THE BIGGEST REFUGEE POPULATION IN THE WORLD

Almost four million Afghans fled across the border into neighbouring Iran and Pakistan during the reign of the Taliban, making them the biggest refugee population in the world. At the same time there was an unknown number of displaced people within Afghanistan itself.

The fall of the Taliban has seen Afghans return to their homes in massive numbers. Around 1.5 million Afghans have returned from Pakistan since the start of the UN's assisted repatriation program in March, in addition to the returns from Iran and more than 9,000 returns from the Central Asian states.

With cold weather now only weeks away, returnees and the humanitarian community are in a race against time to ensure that late arrivals receive the aid they need to get through winter.

Australian aid is helping ease the plight of these people.

Afghanistan is the biggest recent individual recipient of Australian humanitarian assistance, receiving \$44.43 million to fund various projects since 11 September last year. PC



Panos Pictures <www.panospictures.com>
Peter Bussian <www.peterbussian.com>

FACING PAGE TOP LEFT: A desperate mother tries to keep her baby warm and fed in her tent at Maslak camp at Herat, Afghanistan. Photo: Peter Bussian
FACING PAGE TOP RIGHT: At Shirim Tagab, near Meymaneh, Afghanistan, a man shivers in the cold at the refugee camp of Xjosa Sabz Poosh. Late last year 1,100 families were living in basic tents, and more than 200 people died from

hunger and cold. Photo: Tim Dirven/Panos Pictures

FACING PAGE RIGHT: Children in Nawabad refugee camp sit on a piece of abandoned military hardware in northern Afghanistan. Across Afghanistan, the detritus of war has become a plaything for generations of children. Photo: Martin Adler/Panos Pictures

TOP: Sar-e-Pol, Afghanistan. A refugee mother and child huddle together in a makeshift shelter against the cold. Photo: Tim Dirven/Panos Pictures

ABOVE: Elderly people are especially vulnerable during times of conflict. This displaced woman at a camp in Herat is one of more than 1.6 million people being helped by Australia. Photo: Peter Bussian

LEFT: In northern Afghanistan the body of 18-year-old Abdul Jalil is laid to rest in a makeshift cemetery on the edge of Nawabad refugee camp, with his head pointing towards Mecca. He was heading back to his shelter after getting some water when he fell down and died right in front of the photographer. His heart couldn't take it any longer. Photo: Martin Adler/Panos Pictures





Photos: Rodney Evans



CRUEL LEGACY

Unexploded bombs, shells and landmines remain throughout those countries of South East Asia affected by decades of war. The threat has prevented people from using fertile land for farming, causing food shortages and population displacement. Australia is helping to address this scourge.

The conflicts that took such a heavy toll on Cambodia, Laos and Viet Nam in recent decades may be over but a cruel legacy remains. Thousands of unexploded bombs and landmines lie quietly in wait, ready to be triggered by unlucky passers-by. And thousands of people are still unable to return to their villages.

In Cambodia, where conflict gripped the country for 30 years, the land remains riddled with mines and unexploded shells. The Cambodian Mine Action Centre estimates that 644 sq km of land is

mined and mines are suspected to lie in a further 1,400 sq km. To date more than 155 sq km have been cleared.

The presence and effects of landmines are very obvious in Cambodia where one person in every 384 is an amputee. Whole clinics are devoted to making and fitting artificial limbs. Bodies and lives are slowly being reconstructed.

In the countryside, fields lie fallow. Farmers are unable to plant crops for fear of stepping on mines. But international aid is making a



Landmines displayed at a museum help to educate Cambodians about their dangers.
Photo: Rodney Evans

difference. Australia is the largest contributor to the mine action centre and by 2005, will have spent \$40 million on helping Cambodia with demining activities.

The picture is similar in Laos. It is believed more than two million tonnes of ordnance were dropped onto the country mainly by the United States, but also by the Thai and Lao Air Forces during the war, especially between 1964–1973. The organisation responsible for clearing unexploded ordnance around the country, UX Lao, estimates up to 30 per cent remains unexploded (see sidebar: *UXO in Laos – fact sheet*).

The proportion of children to adults killed or injured in incidents involving mines or unexploded shells appears to be rising.

While adults remember only too well the bombing years, their children have no such memories. The temptation to pick up an object of curiosity can prove too much, often with devastating consequences (see sidebar: *Sport in a box*).

Australia is working with multilateral organisations such as UNICEF and non-government organisations to support demining activities in Laos.

In Viet Nam, the government believes a total of 16,478 sq km have been affected by mines and unexploded ordnance. It is estimated that 350,000 tons remain hidden.

Large numbers of mines remain in northern and southern provinces from border conflicts

with China and Cambodia in the later 1970s and 1980s.

The toll on the population since the end of the war until 1998 has been heavy. A survey completed in 1998 found 38,248 people had been killed and 64,064 injured. The figure will continue to climb until all landmines and unexploded ordnance have been destroyed.

Australia is one of a few countries helping the Vietnamese Government with mine clearance. Through AusAID, two teams of 10 technicians are receiving equipment and training to deal with mines and unexploded ordnance in the Thua Thien Hue Province, removing the threat of landmines for 35,000 men, women and children and at the same time, improve agricultural production.

Agricultural production is also being expanded through a community credit fund, demonstration plots and nurseries and small infrastructure projects. Vietnamese agricultural experts are providing technical training and advice in agricultural production.

Nearly 6,700 farming households in the selected communes who presently live with the threat of unexploded ordnance will benefit from the \$3.59 million project. It will run for three years until 2005 and will be implemented by Australian Volunteers International and the Mines Advisory Group, an international humanitarian mine action organisation. EJ

Source: *Landmine Monitor Report 2000: Toward a mine-free world*, International Campaign to Ban Landmines <www.icbl.org>
Rodney Evans <www.allangles.com.au>



UXO IN LAOS – FACT SHEET

- » The Lao People's Democratic Republic suffered intense ground battles as well as extensive bombing during the Indochina war period from 1964 to 1973.
- » More than two million tons of ordnance fell on Laos during the war, or the equivalent of one plane-load of bombs every eight minutes around the clock for nine full years.
- » Such fighting has left a legacy of widespread contamination by UXO that still causes death and injury more than 25 years after the war ended.
- » Approximately 25 per cent of villages suffer UXO contamination and all but two of the 18 provinces report UXO contamination.
- » An average of 200 people per year in Laos are UXO victims. About one UXO accident occurs every two days. Approximately half of these victims are children.

Source: UNICEF <www.unicef.org>



Former Khmer Rouge soldier Aki-Ra has dedicated his life to ridding his country of landmines. Photos: Rodney Evans



STEALING A MARCH ON THE HIDDEN ENEMY

An inspiring journey to Cambodia led Sydney photographer Rodney Evans to wage his own war against a pitiless foe.

Rodney Evans, a professional photographer from Sydney, was an unlikely – even accidental – recruit to the forces ranged against ‘the hidden enemy’. But when he saw the devastating effects of this enemy’s cruel power, he was quick to join up.

‘The hidden enemy’ is landmines, which Evans first encountered in Cambodia when on a routine assignment to photograph landmarks such as the ruins of Angkor Wat.

As he travelled the Cambodian countryside, Evans met and photographed landmine victims – men, women and children who had lost limbs and suffered other hideous injuries.

While taking pictures of Angkor kingdom ruins in the Siem Reap area in the north of Cambodia, Evans met and befriended Aki-Ra, a 29-year-old former Khmer Rouge soldier who is engaged in a private crusade to clear landmines.

From Aki-Ra the Australian photographer learned first-hand of Cambodia’s recent turbulent past

including detailed accounts of major battles and the cruel excesses of the Pol Pot regime.

Aki-Ra’s intimate knowledge of the area, including the locations of minefields, was to prove invaluable to the demining teams that were brought in to begin the task of clearing the estimated four to six million lethal devices sown in the Cambodian countryside.

Evans accompanied Aki-Ra on landmine clearing expeditions and compiled a photographic record of Aki-Ra’s landmine detection and clearing skills.

Evans was so moved by his experiences that he resolved to mount his own campaign against landmines. This would be an exhibition of his Cambodian photographs at a Sydney gallery to



SPORT IN A BOX

Games are a source of joy for most children, promising hours of fun. But in Laos, some games can be lethal.

Many areas of Laos are heavily contaminated by unexploded ordnance and mines from previous conflicts and the threat of being maimed or killed is very real for children. In very poor areas children have to forage in the forest for food and firewood. Too often, small, unexploded objects lying in fields or forests are picked up by children who think they are toys. The consequences are frightful.

UNICEF and AusAID have been working together in six provinces of Laos to provide safe play areas for children through games and sports. These games both entertain and warn of the dangers of unexploded ordnance such as 'bombies'.

Bombies are about the size and weight of a cricket ball and spray out a lethal dose of shrapnel if struck. If children crowd close to look, more than one is likely to die, and others may be maimed.

Trainers from the Lao Youth Union and village volunteers are working in 64 villages to provide

safe play alternatives for children. Villages receive a box containing skipping ropes, volleyballs, badminton sets, hoola hoops and basketballs. While trainers teach children new games they also teach them how to identify and be safe around unexploded ordnance.

The results are promising with more children now reporting suspicious objects to the village headman or teacher than picking them up. Their lives have become more secure thanks to 'Sport in a box' – a simple but effective project. EJ

raise funds for the 'Destroy-A-Minefield – Rebuild Lives' campaign, known as DAM.

An initiative of the Australian Government, DAM was launched in 1999 as a unique partnership between the Government, the Australian public and overseas development non-government organisations, initially Austcare and later World Vision.

Under the DAM initiative, Cambodian land is gradually being won back from landmines and returned to communities for their use – for schools and health care centres, orchards and farms.

World Vision has set its sights on raising \$800,000 for DAM over two years. Once this target is reached, the Australian Government, through AusAID, will provide matching funds of \$1 for every \$2 raised, striking yet another blow against the hidden enemy. GE

Find out more about Destroy-A-Minefield – Rebuild Lives (DAM) by visiting www.worldvision.com.au <www.worldvision.com.au>
Rodney Evans <www.allangles.com.au>

NIVIO'S STORY



Nivio Magalhaes (right), an Australian scholarship holder, describing the scholarship program to Dursila Belo Ung at an interactive display set up by the Australian Government at the National Exhibition and Community Centre, Dili.

Nivio Leite Magalhaes is a quietly-spoken, 21-year-old East Timorese student at Victoria University.

His father, Manuel Magalhaes, was killed during the post-ballot violence in East Timor. But before he died he told his son to 'build a country of peace'.

Nivio is in Australia thanks to an Australian Government scholarship administered by AusAID and the EDUKA Scholarship program, supported by AusAID, the Department of Education, Science and Training, and 21 Australian universities.

He keeps in almost daily contact with his mother Regina and his siblings – three brothers and five sisters. They live in the town of Maliana, 20 km from the West Timor border, but had fled to Dili in April of 1999 when Manuel was arrested and their house destroyed.

When the waves of violence swept through East Timor following its vote for independence in August, Nivio and his family sought refuge in the hills outside Dili.

'We ate cassava roots and drank whatever clean water we could find,' recalled Nivio. 'We made shelter from the leaves of coconut trees.'

The family stayed in the hills until the arrival of UN forces in late September.

Nivio plans to return to East Timor when he completes his studies. 'I want to work for the people. My future ambition is to be a politician. My dream is for East Timor to be prosperous, to flourish. I know this is not easy, but it is not impossible.' Nivio is building a country of peace. VM

Source: Courtesy Nexus, June 2002, Victoria University

WOMEN AND WAR

War is one of the prime reasons people become refugees and internally displaced people. Although war affects all segments of a population, women are especially at risk of becoming refugees.

UNIFEM, the United Nations development fund for women, recently appointed two Independent Experts, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Elisabeth Rehn, to undertake a global, field-based assessment on the impact of armed conflict on women and women's role in peace-building.

Over the past year, the Independent Experts have travelled to 14 conflict areas. Among their initial findings and recommendations are the following:

PROTECTION

The experts were overwhelmed by the magnitude of violence suffered by women before, during and after conflict. Yet, impunity prevailed for widespread crimes against women in war. The experts said that the glaring gaps in women's protection must be addressed.

HIV/AIDS

Wherever a woman lives with conflict and upheaval, the threat of HIV/AIDS and its effects are multiplied. HIV/AIDS feasts on this deadly alliance. These were precisely the conditions in which peacekeepers could make a difference – in promoting awareness and providing support to local communities.

PEACE PROCESSES

Formal negotiations that excluded half the population from the political process have little hope of popular support. The whole peace process suffered when women were absent. Quotas have brought women into the political process. In the short run, quotas were the only way to ensure women's participation, and therefore a more democratic, representative, and sustainable peace.

DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILISATION AND REINTEGRATION (DDR)

The beneficiaries of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programs must not be limited to male combatants. Female combatants, wives, widows and other dependents of ex-fighters must be included explicitly. Without gender-focused DDR, women and girls may be left with little choice but to exchange sexual favours for food, shelter, safe passage and other needs. •

Source: <www.unifem.org>

HOPE FOR LIVING

A new drop-in centre for people living with HIV/AIDS at Gorobe Settlement in Port Moresby is just one example of AusAID's increasing support for people living with HIV/AIDS in PNG.



Max and Maura Mea know exactly what it's like to live with HIV/AIDS. Both are HIV positive. The devastating effect of the virus on them has included the loss of their two young children to the disease.

But rather than letting the disease defeat them, both are committed to contributing to raising community awareness about HIV. With the support of the Australian Government and PNG's National AIDS Council, Max and Maura are doing just that.

The couple successfully applied for funding through AusAID's National HIV/AIDS Support Project (NHASP) to build a drop-in centre for people living with HIV at Gorobe Settlement in Port Moresby.

The new centre will enable Max and Maura to conduct an awareness campaign and provide a

place where people living with HIV/AIDS can come and receive counselling and information on preventing the further spread of the disease.

'People who are HIV positive can contribute a lot to PNG by sharing their experiences of the disease and by educating others about its dangers,' says Maura. 'When Max and I are sitting round with our peers we talk to them about the dangers of HIV, on how to protect themselves, and on the economic impact that the disease can have on their lives.'

Max is quick to agree: 'Our big aim is to inform the generations that come after us about the sickness. We have to educate the children before it is too late. It is too late for us, but while we are alive we are committed to helping our community. The drop-in centre is a place people can come to seek counselling on how to best deal with the disease.'

Max and Maura are one of more than 20 groups that receive Australian Government funding to conduct community awareness, prevention and care programs across PNG. DM

ABOVE: Max and Maura Mea in their garden at Port Moresby.

Photo: Carolyn Ive

UPDATE ON HIV/AIDS

- » More than 36 million people throughout the world are affected by HIV/AIDS. AIDS has killed more than 3.8 million children and orphaned another 13 million.
- » In the last five years HIV/AIDS has become the greatest threat to children, especially in countries ravaged by war. In the worst affected countries, it is estimated that as many as half of today's 15-year-olds will die from the disease.
- » Combating this deadly disease is one of the Australian aid program's highest priorities. From the earliest stages of the epidemic, Australia has been a leader in international efforts to contain it. About 12 per cent of health funding through the aid program is spent on HIV/AIDS projects.
- » In Papua New Guinea, where up to 15,000 people are estimated to be infected with HIV, Australian aid, totalling \$60 million over five years, is being used to reach people in many communities.
- » Awareness and prevention activities such as comic drama shows are being staged to inform villagers about the taboo subjects of sex and condoms. This funding is part of Australia's global \$200 million HIV/AIDS initiative.
- » An estimated six million people in South and South-East Asia are now living with HIV/AIDS. Discussions at the recent World AIDS conference in Barcelona identified injecting drug use as a key factor in the rapid spread of the epidemic worldwide.
- » Over the past 20–30 years injecting drug use has risen steeply in Asia and accounts for up to two thirds of all reported cases of HIV infection. A new, major project to combat HIV-related harm caused by injecting drug use will run over four years at a total cost of \$9 million and operate in Burma, Viet Nam, and Yunnan Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in China.
- » The project, funded by Australia and developed in collaboration with the ASEAN Secretariat and countries in the Asia region, is designed to strengthen the capacity of government institutions, such as law enforcement and public health agencies, to address HIV/AIDS issues arising from widespread drug injecting.
- » Australia will also provide over \$1 million to establish the Asia Pacific Leadership Forum on HIV/AIDS and Development, as part of Australia's commitment to fighting HIV/AIDS in the region.

Source: UNHCR, AusAID

A HELPING HAND

FOR THE MENTALLY ILL

She was a common sight in the streets of Los Palos, East Timor – a dishevelled woman in her 40s, wandering around naked, screaming out loud at no-one in particular.

Maria (not her real name) was at best laughed at, at worse labelled a witch and shunned. Her past was grim, her future would have been no brighter had it not been for East Timor's new mental health service. Because of it, the woman found herself in the care of newly trained local mental health workers.

She was looked after, diagnosed and given medication for her severe psychosis.

Six weeks later, Maria was a different person. She no longer looked wild, she was no longer dishevelled. Her behaviour was no longer bizarre. While she still has a mental illness, she now has a far more promising future. She is no longer feared or treated as an outcast.

Mental health services were almost unknown in East Timor before 1999, even though large numbers of people had been exposed to trauma, abuse and displacement, extending many

years back into the country's history. But thanks to the new program, set up with Australian funding, people suffering from mental illness and trauma are being helped for the first time.

Following the violent aftermath of the 1999 independence referendum, Australia was one of the first countries to step in to offer hope and professional help.

With funding from the Australian aid program, a group of Australian agencies with experience in dealing with torture and trauma survivors mapped out a plan that would help those most in need with the few resources and skills that were available.

The Program for Psychosocial Recovery and Development in East Timor set about training a core group of East Timorese mental health workers, mainly from nursing backgrounds, who would provide home care for patients and conduct outreach clinics in many areas.

The group is trained by visiting teams of Australian psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers. The teams run workshops with police, prison officers, teachers and other groups in recognising the basic symptoms of mental disorders. And the approach is working.

The new East Timorese Government has recognised the importance and the need for a longer-term, broader mental health project. For the next three years, AusAID and the East Timor Ministry of Health will further develop the country's fledgling mental health service with more training for health care workers, community involvement in the care of people with mental illnesses, support for their families and more intervention programs.

For the first time, there is hope and help is within reach for those who desperately need it. EJ

LIFE, HEALTH AT RISK

One consequence when warring factions target entire communities and their livelihoods is the large numbers of displaced people. Refugees and internally displaced people are at high risk of death, especially in the period immediately after their migration.

Deaths from malnutrition, diarrhoea and infectious diseases especially occur among children, while some communicable diseases, such as malaria, tuberculosis and HIV infection, as well as a range of non-communicable diseases, injuries and violence, typically affect adults.

Existing health problems may also be greatly worsened when populations are displaced. Infant mortality often rises because of reduced access to health services and poorer nutrition of children and their mothers.

Conflict and displacement creates high-risk situations for HIV transmission for women and girls in particular, who may be raped or forced to engage in unsafe sex in order to maintain livelihoods. SN

Source: Lee, Buse and Fustukian 2002, *Health policy in a globalising world*, Cambridge University Press <<http://uk.cambridge.org/>>



COMBATING POVERTY ONLINE

It's hard to imagine how high tech. can benefit poor farmers in developing countries, but a revolutionary new project called Australian Development Gateway is doing just that.



Imagine this scenario. Farmers in Viet Nam discover that an army of caterpillars has invaded their vegetable gardens and is threatening the season's harvest.

The produce from the gardens makes up the bulk of their already meagre livelihoods and they can't afford to lose any income. They are already living just on the poverty line.

The farmers need help. They could spray the plots heavily with pesticides but would rather not. They are expensive and can cause other environmental problems further down the track.

Instead, they consider an integrated pest management program which they've heard about but until now have had no reason to investigate.

The farmers discover that Australian researchers have done a lot of work in this area and can offer sound, practical advice on how to deal with the problem.

They learn about a new Australian website which contains a wealth of information about agricultural issues and research.

With assistance from officials, they log on to the website, track down the relevant details and use the information to help rid their gardens of the caterpillar pest.

Their harvest is spared from widespread destruction because the farmers had quick and easy access to good quality advice.

Such a scenario in one of the world's poorest nations is no longer necessarily fanciful thanks

to new information and computer technologies.

In Australia, a new website is being set up so that developing countries can have access to the latest research and to services in agriculture, health and distance education and e-learning.

The new website is called the Australian Development Gateway. It is part of the Australian Government's commitment under the Virtual Colombo Plan to provide developing countries with affordable and widespread access to Australian knowledge and expertise.

The Gateway is part of an overall objective by the Development Gateway Foundation in New York to encourage the world-wide sharing of information and knowledge on sustainable development and poverty reduction. Australia will contribute \$10 million over the next three years to the Foundation to support this objective. **EJ**

The Australian Development Gateway can be found at www.developmentgateway.com.au

THE VIRTUAL COLOMBO PLAN TURNS ONE

The Virtual Colombo Plan was set up in August 2001 by the Australian Government and the World Bank to bridge the 'digital divide' – the growing gap between information-rich and information-poor countries.

Since its launch it has captured the imagination of people in many

countries in Australia's region and beyond.

Over the next year, the VCP will introduce a range of measures including projects to enhance teacher education in several countries, including PNG and Indonesia, and make it cheaper and easier for people to use

information and computer technologies.

It will offer 200 virtual scholarships to students in the region and courses developed in Australia specifically for students in Africa.

These are just some of the exciting developments taking

shape under the Australian Government's \$200 million contribution to the Virtual Colombo Plan. **EJ**

Go to www.ausaid.gov.au/hottopics/ and follow links to Virtual Colombo Plan Initiative

VOLUNTEERING

MAKING SUSTAINABLE CHANGE HAPPEN

In a diverse 20-year career that has included teaching, conflict resolution and mediation, community development and management, Dimity Fifer brings a broad range of experience to her new position heading up Australian Volunteers International.



AVI's new head Dimity Fifer (front row, centre) enjoys the company of a group of children during a recent visit to Indonesia. Photo: Australian Volunteers International

Dimity Fifer, recently appointed as CEO with Australian Volunteers International, says her new job with Australia's oldest and most experienced international volunteer sending agency 'would have to be the most exciting job in Australia.

'I'm pleased to be working in a constructive and positive role that contributes to the development of communities and people because I believe that this is where long-term, sustainable change happens,' says Dimity.

Dimity Fifer was Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Council of Social Service for almost five years before taking up her new role in July this year. She has also lived and worked in Sydney and Darwin.

Australian Volunteers International grew out of the Volunteer Graduate Scheme to Indonesia, which began in the 1950s, and now places skilled volunteers in more than 50 countries in Asia, the Pacific, Africa, the Middle East and Africa. In the last financial year, supported by funding worth \$10.83 million from the Australian Government, AVI had close to 900 volunteers overseas.

As well, the organisation is funded by the Australian aid program to operate key technical assistance projects overseas. It also runs a recruitment service for indigenous communities in Australia and provides a cross-cultural training service.

'With such a history and a returned volunteer alumni of more than 5,000, we have a truly unique collective knowledge base. The challenge is to pull together what volunteers, employers, the organisation itself and the nation have achieved and learnt through this particular type of community development work, and how it can contribute to our multicultural community and relationships across the global family.

'Developing communities have a good memory of Australia through this program and the creativeness and flexibility of Australians is widely appreciated,' she says. AMcC

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PEACE-BUILDERS

ACKNOWLEDGED ACROSS AUSTRALIA



From Alice Springs in central Australia, to Brisbane in the east and Perth in the west, otherwise ordinary Australian citizens are being singled out for special recognition for helping to build peace in Australia's immediate region.



TOP: Rebekah Walker of Bundaberg at the peace-builders recognition ceremony at Childers, Qld. Photo: Susan Nicholls

ABOVE: Mrs Chris Gallus MP talks to one of the artists at an exhibition of student art on the theme of peace at the Alice Springs peace-builders ceremony. Photo: Anita Dodds

The 'peace-builders', as they are called, have each played their part in helping to resolve conflict and build peace, literally on Australia's doorstep – in East Timor, the Solomon Islands and Bougainville.

Organised by AusAID, the unique ceremonies in towns and cities around Australia are also designed to raise public awareness of the importance of overseas aid.

'In 2002, peace-building in our region is a priority for the aid program,' said Chris Gallus MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, when addressing the first of 14 celebration events with the theme 'Australians Making Peace Last.'

Mrs Gallus, who has responsibility for the Australian Government's aid portfolio, was speaking at Alice Springs at a ceremony in the Rydges Plaza Hotel at the beginning of a community celebration event that included a local students' art competition and a major exhibition by Australian photographer, Mathias Heng.

'The Australian Government has supported volunteer programs

for more than 30 years,' Mrs Gallus said. 'During this time we estimate more than 6,000 Australian volunteers have participated in overseas development activities.'

Who are the peace-builders? They are Australian citizens, with or without specialist skills, who have volunteered their time to assist a peace-building process, either working from their own homes or by travelling to the particular place where there has been conflict.

In the case of East Timor, for instance, hundreds of Australian volunteers made themselves available to help the East Timorese rebuild their lives after the events of 1999. The peace-builders filled every role imaginable, from social workers to sanitation engineers. There were those who were able to spend several months, a year, or more, while many simply used their annual holidays or took some long-service leave.

However they came to be there, and whatever role they filled, each and every volunteer made a contribution to building peace.

As Mrs Gallus said of these Australians when addressing the peace-builders ceremony in Alice Springs: 'To all our peace-builders, you have made a big difference to the lives of others in our region and you can be very proud of what you have achieved.' GE



BUSINESSNEWS

A LONG WAY FROM BYRON BAY

Ray Coughran from Byron Bay on the NSW north coast is a technical coordinator based in Quetta in Pakistan. Since May he's been working to help improve water supplies to refugee camps in the province of Baluchistan on the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Ray Coughran knows what drought is. 'Baluchistan is a desert. There has been a drought for five years. Virtually not a drop of rain has fallen. Supplies of underground water are being heavily used for drinking water, irrigation and for stock. There's now great concern about the rapid rate at which the water is being used.'

Ray is in Baluchistan working for an organisation called Red R Australia, a humanitarian agency which relieves suffering in disasters. Red R selects, trains and provides professional and technical specialists to frontline aid agencies worldwide. In Australia it is funded primarily by the Australian Government through AusAID.

Providing water and sanitation facilities to thousands of people in camps is difficult especially when the facilities are likely to be needed for a long time and each person requires about 15 litres a day.

'Some camps have underground water which can be pumped and

put into storage before being piped throughout a camp. This is the ideal. Other camps aren't so fortunate. Underground water has to be pumped and trucked distances up to 20 km. This is far less effective and much more expensive,' Ray says.

'Temperatures in recent months have been in the high 40s and people dehydrate very quickly, so water is critical.

'While people in the camps have always had enough drinking water, until now they haven't had enough to wash in and people have suffered from diarrhoea. There has also been a high mortality rate from diseases caused by lack of hygiene. The extra water is changing that.

'When new water supplies appear, there's a visible sense of relief in the camps. It eases pressure and is a big morale booster. The same thing happens when extra food or medicine arrives.'

Red R estimates there are 160,000 Afghan refugees in

camps in Baluchistan and another 26,000 are in a waiting area at the border at Chaman.

The technical team led by Ray includes a site planner, a water and sanitation specialist and a civil engineer.

Maintaining communications in such a climate is a constant challenge.

'The things that make life difficult are the unreliable nature of the telephones and Internet access. Dust, heat, no air-conditioning and regular power failures often prove fatal for computers. It's often hard to communicate in the field and that can be frustrating but all in all it's immensely interesting and rewarding work.' EJ

ABOVE: A refugee camp spreads across the dry landscape of Baluchistan.

Photo: Courtesy Ray Coughran

AUSTRALIA AND Red R

Australia has funded Red R Australia to supply engineers and technical staff at short notice for United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees emergency operations to the value of \$2.7 million. During the past five years, Australia has contributed nearly \$102 million to UNHCR projects, including almost \$25.8 million in 2001-02.



HELP FOR AFGHAN RETURNEES

Australia will provide \$1.03 million to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to assist displaced Afghans return to their homes.

The IOM had earlier been forced to suspend its internal transport networks because of funding shortages, due in part to larger than expected numbers of returnees. New funding pledges from Australia and other donors means the transport networks can operate again.

Total assistance allocated to Afghanistan between September 2001 and 1 July 2002 amounted to \$44.43 million.

and prison systems and improve police–community relations.

The aid program will retain its focus on peace-building through support for the work of the Solomon Islands Peace Monitoring Council and other community, church-based, youth and women's organisations.

BANGLADESH EDUCATION

More than 70 per cent of children in schools around Bangladesh – more than half of them girls – are completing Grade 5, thanks to the Intensive District Approach to Education for All Project, funded by Australia.

About 700,000 children in north-west Bangladesh are benefiting from the program, aimed at giving very poor children in rural areas access to basic education. The program is improving primary education in Bangladesh through better teaching and improved attendance and retention rates, especially for girls.

Extra funding worth \$3.9 million for the project was announced recently by Mrs Gallus to coincide with the 30th anniversary this year of Australia's aid program with Bangladesh, one of the poorest nations in Asia.

FORESTRY AID IN CHINA

New Australian techniques and technologies are being brought to China's Qinghai provincial and local government forestry agencies and communities to help local people halt the cycle of poverty and environmental degradation.

Once densely forested, the project area was substantially cleared of trees 150 years ago. Since then, increasing pressure from cultivation and grazing has resulted in land overuse and erosion.

Australia will provide up to \$12.25 million for the Qinghai Forestry Resources Management Project. The five-year project will address poverty from a natural resources management and community perspective.

Announcing the funding, Mrs Gallus said that as well as transferring Australian skills and technologies to local institutions, the project would help to win local acceptance for conservation and resource management by imparting teaching skills and techniques that can be passed on to other communities.

INBRIEF

Waters from swollen Yangtze River inundate houses in Wuhan, capital of China's Hubei province. An Australian aid project has significantly improved flood prediction systems in the region.

Photo: Claro Cortes IV/Reuters

HELPING TO TAME THE YANGTZE

An AusAID flood mitigation project in China that is less than one third complete has already won praise for helping to keep the mighty Yangtze River under control.

According to Chinese officials, a new flood measuring system supplied by the project resulted in significantly improved hydrological reporting and flood peak predictions when used for the first time during the recent (August 2002) floods.

'The recently installed instruments played a vital role,' said Jiang Zhongxiang, deputy Director, Hubei Bureau of Foreign Affairs, when delivering his report on the crisis.

Jiang said the instrumentation, known as a hydro data transmission system, meant that 'flood measuring was more expedient and accurate... with adoption of innovative measurement techniques.'

The floods, the worst in the Yangtze since 1998, at one stage put nearly a million residents in danger when the critical Dongting Lake appeared likely to breach.

The Yangtze River Flood Control and Management Project, worth more than \$15 million and expected to take five years to complete, got underway in February 2001.

The project is being undertaken for AusAID by Australian companies, SAGRIC International Pty Ltd, Coffey MPW Pty Ltd and Water Studies Pty Ltd.

EVACUATION AFTER VOLCANO ERUPTS

About 12,000 people have been moved to temporary camps following evacuation of villages around the base of the erupting volcano Mt Pago, in the West New Britain Province of Papua New Guinea.

Australia is providing up to \$1 million to help communities affected by the eruption. The emergency assistance followed a formal request from the PNG Government.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mrs Chris Gallus, said Australia was funding three disaster coordinators to assess the situation, provide advice to the national and provincial governments and help coordinate the aid effort.

'Their focus is on the provision of relief supplies including shelter, water supply and sanitation,' she said.

Australian experts are working with international volcano disaster teams assisting PNG authorities to monitor the volcano.

SOLOMON ISLANDS AID TO CONTINUE

Australia and other international donors will remain engaged with the Solomon Islands following a decision made at a meeting in Honiara in June. At the meeting donors agreed to restart or modestly expand assistance to the nation.

During 2002–03 Australian aid to Solomon Islands will total approximately \$36.2 million. This will include continued support to rebuild basic police services, reform the judiciary

BIES LEADS THE FIELD

A \$38,300 Australian Government project to place the entire collection of the *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* journals onto CD-ROM has recently been completed. Contact the Division of Economics in the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies at the Australian National University for a copy.

OBITUARY

PROFESSOR HEINZ ARNDT

The sudden death of Professor Heinz Arndt earlier this year is a sad loss to Australia and our region. Professor Arndt was this country's leading scholar on Australian/Indonesian economic relations and Indonesia's economic role in Asia.



firmly established in Australia through the transition of government in Indonesia in 1966 and 1967, which led to the long Suharto era.

His work – reflected in the academic journal *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies (BIES)* and through the team of researchers he nurtured – has developed an international reputation of excellence. BIES is the only international journal on the Indonesian economy. Professor Arndt's post-retirement project, the editing of a key journal (*Asian-Pacific Economic Literature*), has received similar recognition.

Professor Arndt will be sorely missed. However, his work will be carried forward through the Australian Government's support for the placement of the entire collection of the BIES journal onto a special CD-ROM. Professor Arndt's legacy will enable people to continue to benefit from his valuable contribution. JE

We are indebted to Professor Arndt's foresight, passion and energy, which served to contribute to the advancement of quality debate on Indonesian economic issues and position Australia as a world leader in the field of Indonesian economic relations.

Professor Arndt's interest began with his work on the Indonesia Project at the Australian National University in the mid 1960s – a particularly difficult time for Australian/Indonesian relations. However, his commitment and hard work meant Indonesian economic studies were



YOUTH AMBASSADOR IN EAST TIMOR

Young Queensland barrister Rachael Moore has the distinction of being one of the first lawyers to help develop East Timor's new justice system.

Rachael was selected as an Australian Youth Ambassador for Development to work in East Timor with Liberta, a non-profit

Rachael Moore prepares rice in her home at Comoro, Dili, where she lives with an East Timorese family. Photo: Mathias Heng

organisation promoting equitable conflict resolution and equality of justice.

The Australian Youth Ambassadors program is an Australian Government initiative that selects and funds young Australians to take up assignments in developing countries to share skills and knowledge, often in partnership with Australian business.

'I lived with an East Timorese family and had the benefit of

being immersed in the East Timorese culture which is very accommodating and caring,' said Rachael.

During her assignment Rachael worked on a training program dealing with rights and responsibilities relating to border control, human rights, criminal procedure and land title. EJ

GLOBAL EDUCATION



These four posters celebrating peace are now available from the Global Education Program <http://globaled.usaid.gov.au> or tel (02) 6206 4969

Global education is a valuable investment in our future. It is only through teaching our children about the issues around us that we can ensure a better world for them and future generations. AusAID's global education program delivers high-quality curriculum material and professional development to teachers and trainees throughout Australia to help them to teach our children well.

TEACHING GOVERNANCE

Governance. What is it, and why is good governance a key issue in reducing world poverty? The South Australian Global Education Project has published a secondary text that explains why it is essential to the reduction of world poverty. The resource is available from your state professional development provider.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Are you interested in professional development around the topic of refugees and displaced persons, or more generally on global education? The Global Education Program supports the professional development of teachers throughout Australia. Contact details for AusAID's professional development consultant in your state can be found at

<<http://globaled.usaid.gov.au/devcentre-addresses.html>>, or you can call (02) 6206 4969

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE SERIES

In April 2002 the Global Education Project and the Curriculum Centre will publish A *Global Studies Statement for Australian Schools*. This is the fourth in the Global Perspectives series and presents the background and rationale for global education.

The three teacher resource books already produced are, *Think Global* (early years of schooling), *Look Global* (upper primary) and *Go Global* (lower to middle secondary). These publications seek to develop students' understandings of ecological, social, economic, technological and political interdependence on a global scale.

Each book has a comprehensive range of activities designed to suit different learning styles, students' interests and ability levels, and to support civics and citizenship education initiatives. A number of more specialist texts on Viet Nam and the Mekong basin are also available.

CASE STUDIES AND VIDEO

AusAID has a range of curriculum material available on refugees and displaced persons. This includes case studies for both primary and secondary school classes, and a primary and secondary version of a refugee video.

Primary

<<http://globaled.usaid.gov.au/primary/casestud/palestine/1/palestine.html>>

Secondary

<<http://globaled.usaid.gov.au/secondary/casestud/palestine/1/palestine.html>>

The video is available from Classroom video, Unit 1, No 1 Vuko Place, Warriewood NSW 2102, phone (02) 9913 8700.

POSTERS

AusAID has produced series of four A2-size peace posters featuring striking images of Bougainville. They are available from <books@ausaid.gov.au>

For more details and information, go to the Globaled website, <<http://globaled.usaid.gov.au>> or call (02) 6206 4969. AB



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