



Building a sustainable future: Inclusive communities



Giving all people within a community a sense of equality and empowerment is essential to overcoming poverty and building stable, prosperous and sustainable communities. The ability to actively participate in community life and decision-making processes gives individuals the means to affect change in their own lives, and make an important economic and social contribution to their communities.

Australia is working with partner countries to address issues of social exclusion through programs to empower women, people with disability and other marginalised groups to participate fully in their societies. Fully inclusive societies enable all citizens to access health services, earn a living, and make decisions in family, community and political life—all of which benefit both citizens and the economy.



Photo: Rob MacColl, AusAID

Supporting education in Indonesia

Education is crucial to helping people overcome poverty. Globally, at least 67 million children, including 35 million girls, do not go to school. Around 27 million of these children are in Asia and 560,000 in the Pacific, with the majority in Papua New Guinea.

Promoting access to education means enabling more children—particularly girls—to attend school for a longer, and better, education, so they have the skills to build their own futures and break the cycle of poverty.

Australia has built more than 2000 junior secondary schools in Indonesia since 2005, creating 330,000 new school places. More than 130,000 children—50 per cent girls—are already enrolled and attending these schools. Australia's new education partnership will build on this success with a further 2,000 schools to be built across the archipelago. This construction program will see an additional 300,000 school places created.



Photo: Australian Sports Commission



Photo: Rob MacColl, AusAID

Empowering women in Bangladesh

Addressing barriers to participation is critical to reducing poverty, enhancing economic growth and democratic governance, and increasing the well-being of whole communities.

In Bangladesh, Australia supports 12 “women friendly” hospitals to bolster women’s confidence in the formal health system. All of these hospitals have information desks, waiting rooms and drug dispensing facilities, and examination rooms have been set up to treat women who have been subject to violence. In addition, links to legal services have been established to help women access legal assistance.

By 2011, 50,000 women had been trained as community health workers. Together, they provided antenatal care to more than 500,000 pregnant women, birthing assistance to more than 220,000 women and postnatal care to almost 320,000 mothers.

Opportunities for all in Sri Lanka

Evidence shows that the increased participation of women generates faster and more equitable income growth. Australia’s Rural and Community Development Program in Sri Lanka has raised awareness about violence against women and provided more than 15,000 women—including some 2,000 households headed by women—with training, loans and productive assets. This has helped women to establish new enterprises to support their families, such as par-boiling rice while caring for their children at home, then selling the rice to the local mills.

Good governance for people living with disabilities in East Timor

An estimated 15 per cent of the global population, or 1 billion people, have a disability. It is widely recognised that people with a disability are among the poorest and most vulnerable in developing countries, and comprise the world’s largest and most disadvantaged minority.

Australia has shown international leadership in improving the lives of people living with disability. In East Timor, Australia worked with the Government to create East Timor’s disability strategy and is providing support to expand community-based rehabilitation, and promote collaboration between local leaders, people with disabilities, their families and other concerned citizens.



Photo: J.Vas