

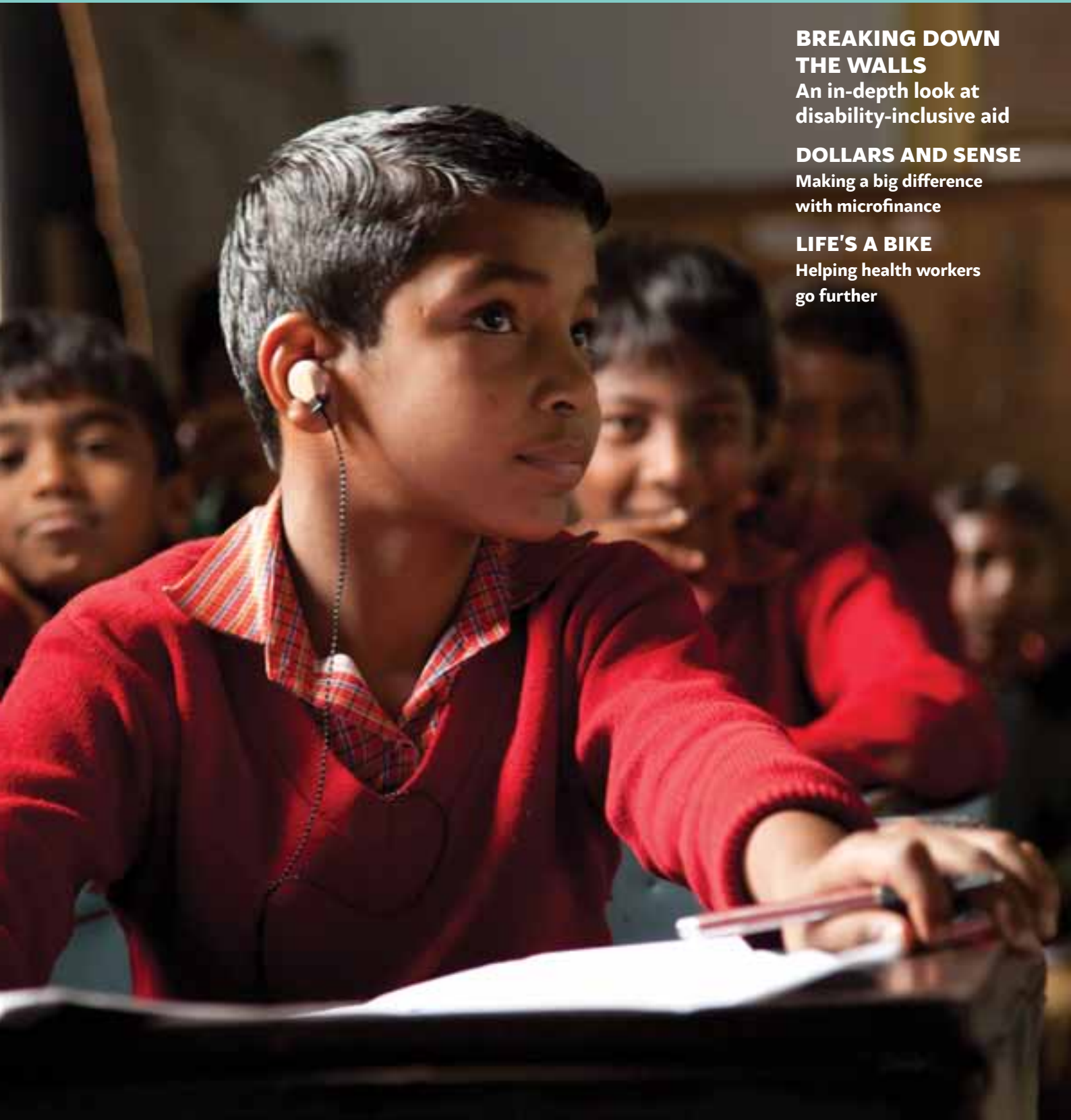


Australian Government
AusAID

FOCUS



THE MAGAZINE OF AUSTRALIA'S
OVERSEAS AID PROGRAM
VOL 28 NO 1 FEB-MAY 2013



BREAKING DOWN THE WALLS

An in-depth look at
disability-inclusive aid

DOLLARS AND SENSE

Making a big difference
with microfinance

LIFE'S A BIKE

Helping health workers
go further

About AusAID

The fundamental purpose of Australian aid is to help people overcome poverty. This also serves Australia's national interests by promoting stability and prosperity in our region and beyond.

The Australian Agency for International Development, AusAID, manages the Australian aid program using methods and partners that are effective in achieving results and efficient in delivering value for money.

WHAT WE FOCUS ON

Our goals are:

- > saving lives
- > promoting opportunities for all
- > sustainable economic development
- > effective governance
- > humanitarian and disaster response

WHERE OUR AID GOES

Most of our assistance goes to developing countries in the Pacific, East, West and South Asia. We also provide aid to Africa and the Middle East and a small amount to parts of Latin America and the Caribbean where needs are also high.

CONTRIBUTE TO FOCUS

Do you have an article idea for a future edition? The *Focus* team would love to hear from you. Visit www.ausaid.gov.au for submission guidelines, or contact the *Focus* Editor on +61 2 6178 5857 or email focus@ausaid.gov.au

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COVER: Poov is using a hearing aid to assist him to participate in class at his school in India. Poov also uses sign language with his friends in the playground and loves to play cricket. Photo: Erin Johnson/CBM Australia



Editorial

Well, the first issue of *Focus* for 2013 is here!

International aid is such a complex, challenging, uplifting, inspiring field, as well as an incredibly important responsibility. So many wonderful stories. Some from this issue may move you to tears—the incredible story of a labouring mother in danger in Papua New Guinea, people with disability forging futures, fighting stigma, demanding education and opportunity against incredible odds or amazingly resilient female health workers in Zimbabwe, thrilled with new bicycles from UNICEF. These are the people that AusAID is helping. This is YOUR aid program at work.

Not long ago, the United Nations launched its '1000 Days of Action' campaign, marking 1000 days until the deadline for meeting the Millennium Development Goals. Extreme poverty has been halved since they were agreed in 2000. Millions more children have been immunised. Millions more children, many girls, are in school. But I think about how much more there is to do. Consider this one sobering fact: despite vast improvements, around 30 000 children still die each DAY, mainly from preventable causes.

Australia has an aid program to be proud of. And we're all stakeholders. Enjoy this edition of *Focus*. Tell people about what we're doing. Encourage your friends, your family and colleagues to read, to learn, and to engage with what the aid program is achieving. There's a lot at stake.

As always, we ask for feedback and ideas—just drop a line to focus@ausaid.gov.au

SARAH TIFFEN, *Focus* Editor

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HELP US TELL AUSAID'S STORY

AusAID has been delivering the Australian aid program for nearly 40 years, and the time has come to share our story. We're looking for photos, videos, audio files, old merchandise and souvenirs so we can create a richer portrait of AusAID's history.

All photos must be captioned, attributed and include permission for us to use them in the future. Submissions will be acknowledged upon receipt, and returned once a copy has been made. Email history@ausaid.gov.au for a copy of the submission form or for further information.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2013

International Women's Day (IWD) 2013 saw many events held across the country as the achievements of women were celebrated, and the focus was brought once again onto the urgent need to end violence against women worldwide.

At events sponsored jointly by UN Women Australia and AusAID, guest speakers included Sally Sara AM, award winning journalist and foreign correspondent with the ABC, Senior Magistrate Rosie Johnson from Papua New Guinea, Dr Anne Summers AO, bestselling author and journalist and Justice Catherine Davani of the Papua New Guinea Supreme and National Courts. In sometimes emotional presentations, these women leaders spoke of their experiences, their wisdom, and what is needed to ensure bright, safe and healthy futures for women across the globe.

The Australian aid program is investing in programs to promote gender equality, empower women as leaders, educate women and eliminate violence against women.

IWD has been celebrated for more than a century—and this year women spoke of how much has been won, and how much is left to do. **F**

LAUREN HERNANDEZ

ABOVE: Margot Firth, Julie McKay, Executive Director of UN Women Australia, Justice Catherine Davani and Donelle Wheeler, President of the Australian National Committee of UN Women, at the International Women's Day luncheon in Canberra. Photo: UN Women Australia

GLOBAL NEWS



AUSTRALIA-CHINA PARTNERSHIP

In April 2013, Australia and China signed the *Australia-China Development Cooperation Memorandum of Understanding*. This is only the second such agreement signed by China, and outlines how the two countries will deliver aid together in the Asia-Pacific.

The Foreign Minister, Senator Bob Carr, was on hand to sign the MOU with the Chinese Minister of Commerce HE Gao Hucheng during the Australian Government delegation to China. Under the agreement, China, once a recipient of Australian aid, will now partner with Australia to deliver

aid in the region. The two countries will cooperate on initiatives including regional health issues, such as malaria and HIV/AIDS, and water resource management.

The first project is already under way. It is investigating new ways of responding to drug-resistant malaria in Papua New Guinea.

Since 2011 the Australian Government has been phasing out its bilateral aid program to China because of that country's strong and sustained economic growth.

Under the MOU, joint aid initiatives will be agreed on a case-by-case basis. **F**

ABOVE: Foreign Minister Senator Bob Carr (right) during his visit to China, with Prime Minister Julia Gillard, Craig Emerson, Australian Minister for Trade and Competitiveness, and Fortescue Metals Chair Andrew Forrest (left).

NEW WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE PROGRAM

RIGHT: Margaret McKinnon, First Assistant Director General for Africa and Community Programs, launched the UNICEF Small Towns Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Program in Harare, Zimbabwe, on 6 February 2013. With her are the Honourable Dr Samuel Sipepa Nkomo (left), Zimbabwean Minister for Water Resources Development and Management, and Mr Peter Lindenmeyer (right), head of AusAID in Zimbabwe. Australia's contribution to UNICEF will support the provision of safe water and sanitation and improved hygiene practices (WASH) to 500 000 people in 14 small and medium sized towns. Photo: Craig Chikerema/UNICEF Zimbabwe




BOPHA RECOVERY



Indigenous and Muslim students in the Philippines affected by last year's devastating Typhoon Bopha are now able to get back to school, thanks partly to the AusAID supported education program, the Philippines' Response to Indigenous Peoples' and Muslim Education (PRIME).

The PRIME program's aim is to improve the quality of and access to basic education in disadvantaged Muslim and Indigenous schools. These schools were some of the hardest hit when Category 5 'super typhoon' Bopha made landfall in Eastern Mindanao just before Christmas 2012. Bopha brought with it torrential rains and winds of up to 260km/h, with more than five million people affected and over 1000 killed.

The Philippine Government's Department of Education, in partnership with Australian aid through the PRIME program, utilised almost \$100 000 to respond to education needs in the worst hit areas. As a result, five schools were able to repair major damage, while minor repairs also benefited an estimated 1000 students. Funds went towards setting up tents as temporary classrooms, printing and photocopying teaching materials and purchasing stationery, training mobile teachers, providing student lunches and offering psychological support for teachers, parents and children.

To date, Australia has provided a total of \$10.3 million in humanitarian assistance for the victims of Typhoon Bopha. 

MATTHEW THOMAS
GRM INTERNATIONAL

ABOVE: Camansa Elementary School students from New Corella, Davao del Norte, move wooden chairs out of their classroom, which was damaged during Typhoon Bopha. Photo: Coicoi Nacario

PARTNERSHIP FOR REFORM



Prime Minister Julia Gillard announced in March that Australia will provide \$20 million over two years for the first phase of the new Myanmar–Australia Partnership for Reform.

The announcement came during an historic visit to Australia by the President of Myanmar, His Excellency U Thein Sein —the first visit to Australia by a head of state from Myanmar since 1974.

This new partnership will support the Myanmar Government to deliver its reform agenda by strengthening democratic institutions, promoting human rights, improving economic governance and advancing the rule of law.

Australia's commitment to expand its engagement with Myanmar recognises the unprecedented process of change underway there towards political freedom and the new opportunity this brings to help promote the prosperity of Myanmar and its people.

It recognises too President Thein Sein's leadership in driving these critical reforms.

During his visit, President Thein Sein also met with students from Myanmar studying in Australia on

Australia Awards Scholarships. There are currently 33 Australia Awards recipients from Myanmar completing degrees at Australian universities in fields crucial to furthering Myanmar's development and reform including health, education and governance.

**This year alone
Australian aid will
help more than
34 000 children
access early childhood
education in Myanmar.**

The provision of Australia Awards to Myanmar is an important part of Australia's \$80 million commitment to supporting basic education and scholarships in Myanmar, announced by Senator Carr in June last year. 

ABOVE: Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard and the President of Myanmar, His Excellency U Thein Sein announce the Myanmar–Australia Partnership for Reform, March 2013. Photo: Prime Minister's Office



In the dust, a group of women settle down to serious business. The chair of the group looks critically at the contents of the cash box. Shares are traded, currency is changing hands, interest is quickly decided on and hefty fines are levied for late payments. Here, trade rules are adhered to.

It is a far cry from Wall Street, but these women control the economy of Thondolo village in rural Malawi. Among them is the lead supplier of a local version of home-made fritters, the renowned local traditional beer brewer and the tailor who sews most of the village's school uniforms. And this group of women is happy to share their trade secrets with the whole community. The Village Savings and Loans (VSL) Scheme has transformed their lives.

The VSL Scheme has two components:

- > a social fund where members contribute a fixed amount each fortnight that can be used for unexpected expenses such as funeral expenses or hospital costs
- > a savings fund where members agree on a share value as a means of a savings and loans scheme. Following the accrual of sizeable savings from the shares which

members have bought, it is then loaned out to the group and community members at interest. The interest accrued from the loans under the savings fund is declared dividend among the shareholders in the VSL at the end of the year.

Barely a year after the group was established the transformation is being felt by members.

"A year ago, I did not have 50 kwacha to my name, but things have changed. My children who had dropped out of school are back in school, my household has three meals per day and from the sale of fritters I have some savings," says 52-year-old Khirstina Yona. For this grandmother who is sending her last three children through high school and supports a household of seventeen, the change is immense and visible.

The support is helping these strong self-reliant women provide for their families. Dolesi Alex, 32, a young mother of five who was abandoned by her husband, has built a thriving business brewing local beer, and can now look after her children, send them to school and reinvest.

RAISING WOMEN OUT OF POVERTY

Women in rural Malawi are trying out new ways to manage money.



ABOVE: VSL members' gathering in Lilongwe District, Malawi. Photo: Tracey Newbury/AusAID

Across rural Malawi, more than 600 VSL groups have been established under the Australian aid supported Australia Africa Community Engagement Scheme (AACES) and many more are being formed by villagers on their own. It makes financial sense. In agrarian economies such as Malawi, villagers receive cash once or twice a year, at the end of a harvest, and then have no good way to save it. The risk of it losing its value through devaluation or being squandered is high.


"It is evident that the VSL scheme is redefining development for rural women across Malawi. I have seen how this scheme can improve the social and economic status of marginalised women," said Lisa Staruszkiewicz, AusAID's First Secretary for Civil Society and Scholarships.

For Malawi, ranked 170 out of 186 countries on the Human Development Index and one of the poorest countries in the world, support to these rural households is critical. Over 52 per cent of Malawians, the majority living in female-headed households, live below the poverty line. Agriculture is central to the economy. Nine out of 10 Malawians are subsistence farmers, but land

distribution is unequal and crops are highly vulnerable to frequent droughts.

Under the Malawi program, Village Agents are trained to support the formation and training of VSL clubs and coach VSL members in income-generating projects. Adult literacy support to improve numeracy and reading skills is also part of the package offered to VSL members.

"The basket of intervention we are providing to these women is not only transformative, but importantly it is development that is self-sustaining," said Lemekeza Mokiwa, Care Malawi's Assistant Program Director for Food Security and Economic Development.

Back under the acacia tree in Thondolo village, the story goes on, telling the tale of how marginalised women were lifted from poverty to become beacons of genuine self-reliance. 

TSITSI SINGIZI

For more information on AACES, please visit www.ausaid.gov.au/countries/sub-saharan-africa/ The AACES Annual Report 2011–12 has just been published and is available on the AusAID website.

INFORMATION IS POWER

The Government of Papua New Guinea is doing lots of things to improve access to quality education, knowing the transformative power of education to change lives and lift communities out of poverty.



4.1m

Number of textbooks expected to be bought and delivered in PNG by AusAID from 2011–16

A major initiative of the Government of Papua New Guinea (PNG) to improve access to education is the Tuition Fee Free Education policy, which AusAID has supported since 2010. The inability of parents to pay tuition fees is one reason so many children in PNG have missed out on basic education in the past. Providing tuition fee subsidies to schools relieves parents of the burden of having to find money for tuition fees. International evidence shows that removing financial barriers to education also increases girls' participation in school.

But it's important to ensure that every kina makes it to the schools and is managed well, so Australia and PNG have agreed to reforms to increase transparency and accountability of the subsidy payments. One of these reforms is a new system where the Government of PNG publishes a list of schools receiving school fee subsidies and the amounts in the newspaper. Communities can monitor the subsidy payments and report instances where subsidies are being paid incorrectly through an AusAID funded *Tuition Fee Free Hotline*.

.....

In 2012, 100 new classrooms, 50 teacher houses and 50 ablution blocks were built across the country by AusAID.


.....

This has already been a success for one community in the province of Madang. The government paid tuition fee subsidies based on information the school had supposedly submitted. However, it turned out that the school in question had actually been closed. Community residents contacted officers at the Department of Education through the hotline and told them about the school's closure and lack of teachers. As a result of this community reporting, the Department of Education is taking steps to recover the money.

The school fee subsidy program has been in place since 2010 and continues to expand. In 2013, the Government of PNG will pay approximately \$300 million in school subsidies and equipment. Australia will contribute a further \$12 million to help provide free tuition to students in more than 4300 elementary schools. All of Australia's contribution is carefully monitored including through spot checks.

Australia is also helping schools in PNG by providing school buildings.

In 2012, 100 new classrooms, 50 teacher houses and 50 ablution blocks were built across the country by AusAID. Many were built at schools that have not had any new infrastructure for over 20 years.

By 2016, 1100 double classrooms and 450 teacher houses will be purchased and delivered. Local communities benefit from these projects, as local people are hired to help build the new classrooms and buildings. 

CASE STUDY: Empowerment through education

Australian support for the only all-girls school in the Highlands Region is set to further empower young women with the opening of new facilities at the Notre Dame Secondary School in Mount Hagen.

The expansion was made possible with \$2.4 million from AusAID through the PNG–Australia Incentive Fund.

The project includes three staff house duplexes, a 52-bed dormitory, two double storey classrooms, a kitchen and dining hall, a two-storey administration building and an upgrade to the water system.



ABOVE: Students from Marianville Secondary School.
LEFT: Hohola Youth Development Centre.
Photos: Michael Wightman/AusAID

IN FOCUS: Books, books, books

Reading materials are so important to the learning process, but at many schools, there are just not enough books to go around. Since 2011, AusAID has purchased and delivered more than 1.6 million textbooks around PNG. As many children do not have books at home, it is vital that they have access to them at school. By 2016, a further 2.5 million textbooks will be bought and delivered to schools.

LIFE'S A BIKE

On their new bicycles, health workers in Harare are able to go further and help more people than ever before.

On a grey morning in a dusty village outside Harare I meet some unrecognised heroes. Working quietly and conscientiously for a meagre monthly stipend, thousands of women—village health workers—are striving to maintain and extend the primary health care system. Their warmth and hope in the face of adversity leaves a life-changing impression.

Sporting new uniforms, hats and kits, they set off for the day to visit households in their villages, spreading messages on disease prevention as they check the health of the men, women and children in their village.

Previously, the only people they could meet were those within walking distance. But bicycles, provided by UNICEF, have been life-changing, empowering female health workers and enriching the community.

Australia, through its aid program and the support of UNICEF, has taken a leading role in helping rebuild Zimbabwe's health system through the village health workers program.

From the outside, Zimbabwe appears to be burdened with some enormous challenges. And the road ahead is certainly rocky. Almost 15 per cent of the population is living with HIV, over 1.3 million children are orphans and 100 children under five die every day, mostly from preventable causes.

Yet this story of health workers on bikes shows that effective aid can, with simple interventions, foster positive change.

The bicycles have increased the mobility of Zimbabwe's village health workers. They can now cover three times the distance they used to reach on foot, and treat many more patients.

Netsayi Bote is one such health worker. Elected to this position by the community ten years ago, Netsayi is a formidable force whose rumbling laugh belies her determination.

"They chose me because I laugh with everybody, I like everybody, I can hear some issues from someone and I [can] keep the secret," she says before her steely expression breaks to form a broad smile. "They chose me because I have a heart." It is a job she will hold for life.

Village health workers are the important link between rural communities and local health services.


From household to health facility, Netsayi and her fellow health workers mobilise households and communities by making them aware of simple disease prevention strategies, improving health awareness and making referrals to the local health centre. She knows every man, woman and child in her village.

Despite the progress being made, one of the main challenges she faces in her community is a reluctance to be tested for HIV, particularly among males.

"Some people are scared to be tested for HIV. They think if they know they are HIV positive, that then they are dying," she says.

In reality, HIV is no longer a death sentence. Advances in medication and access to treatment are ensuring women, men and children can live strong healthy lives despite the virus. Yet stigma and a lingering lack of awareness in communities prevent many villagers from getting tested.

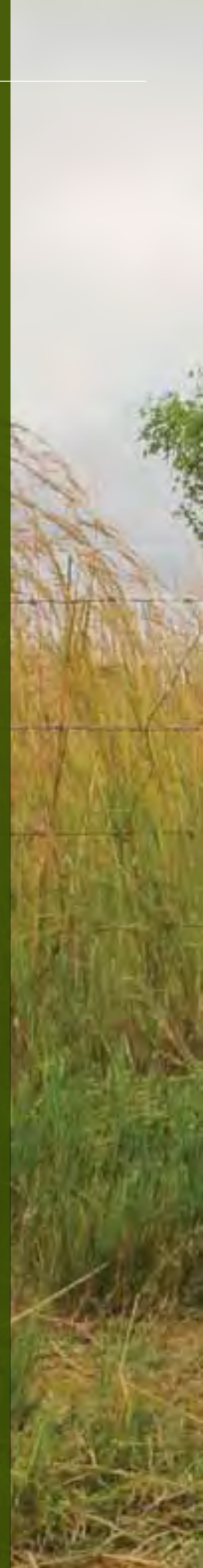
UNICEF will provide bikes to more than 17 000 village health workers in Zimbabwe by the end of 2013.

"Thank you. We have bicycles and uniforms. You will see we are now smart, we have got something which is tangible." With an eye on the future, Netsayi hopes that a new dawn is in sight for her homeland. 

MARTHA TATTERSALL

RIGHT: Netsayi Bote sets off on her bike to treat patients further afield than she has ever been able before.

Photo: Martha Tattersall/UNICEF





17 000

.....
Number of bicycles UNICEF will provide to village health workers in Zimbabwe by the end of 2013



ARTIST AT WORK

Stevie Wills is a performance poet, public speaker and writer. She works for CBM Australia, as a Community Education Officer, advocating for people with disability who live in poverty. In 2011 she travelled with CBM to South Africa and Zambia to meet people with disability who live in poverty, and to observe what life is like for them.

Having cerebral palsy, Stevie would like all people with disability to have opportunities to reach their full potential, just as she has had. The trip had a profound impact on her and inspired the following poem.



Dear Langtham

(excerpt from a poem by Stevie Wills)

The world between us a
commonality we share—
Not an unfortunate affliction
Nor some spiritual retribution...

No, our bodies dance to a different beat
Our tongues to a different tune...
Your song is beautiful...
May your life be poetry...

If you should be ignored
Insulted, excluded, avoided
Because you stagger and fall
May you be one of grace
Not hate
Taking root in the truth
That their spirits stagger and fall

May your spirit
Stand courageous, tall
Strong, perceptive, aware
The mountains declare
Each soul to be precious.



From the streets to employment in Bangladesh: a street hawker with a disability and his transport business. Photo: Andy Isaacson/DRF



DIS ABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT

Disability means different things to different people, and those with disability know the challenges, and rewards, that this can bring.

For people with disability in developing countries—estimated to number around 1 billion—the challenges can be far greater. People with disability in some places face exclusion and stigma, with all kinds of social and physical barriers to participation—from being unable to access buildings to being denied access to information, from being deprived of an education to being prevented from gaining opportunities to work and be independent.

Stereotypes and lack of community understanding around disability can also lead to discrimination and shame. Sometimes even within families, exclusion can occur for people with disability.

However, the solutions are often so simple to achieve.

AusAID's work focuses on inclusion and supporting people with disability to become leaders and advocates in their own right. The *Development for All* strategy places people with disability in a central development role, requiring all development to be disability-inclusive. We focus on a few key countries—Samoa, Cambodia and Papua New Guinea—and on key sectors, like education and infrastructure, where we can make a lasting impact. And we work with partners, particularly with Disabled People's Organisations, to create opportunity for all.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities enshrines the fundamental human rights of those with disability. As well, 2013 has been declared the start of the 'Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities'. In this context, Australia is proud to continue its leadership role in disability-inclusion.

The following stories will give you an insight into the lives of people with disability in developing countries and how, with support from Australia and our partners, their futures are looking brighter.

Competing in snowshoeing, meeting the President of Korea and experiencing Korean culture was an unforgettable adventure for Rosa Nega. Rosa, from Papua New Guinea (PNG), was in Korea to compete in the Special Olympics World Winter Games in 2013. Her mother Helen, who accompanied her, saw firsthand how the Special Olympics works and now wants to be part of the Family Support Network. This network furthers the message of inclusion for families with children with intellectual disabilities.

Sophia Tuna, a founding committee member of Special Olympics PNG, remembers Rosa fondly, and shares an exciting moment—when Tim Shriver, CEO of Special Olympics International, marched into the stadium with Rosa during the opening ceremony.

Sophia recounts, "Tim suddenly shows up, says hi to Rosa with a big smile and says we'll be walking in together. The applause and cheers rang so loud as we marched down the walkway. What an unforgettable feeling!"

While at the Special Olympics World Winter Games in Korea, Rosa attended a Healthy Athletes screening, where her eyes were checked (and new glasses provided), her ears and teeth were checked and she was referred for further dental work back at home in PNG. It is a free service for all participating athletes, and is currently offered in over 100 countries throughout the world.

Rosa's parents felt incredibly privileged to be part of the Games, and are now founding members of the Special Olympics PNG movement. They hope to share their newfound knowledge with parents at Rosa's school, and hope that other children can, like Rosa, use sport to become more confident, more outgoing and more independent.

It is estimated that there are over 200 million people with intellectual disability in the world, and the majority live in developing countries. This is reflected in the Special Olympics participation with most of their athletes now coming from developing countries.

Sport plays a major role in changing attitudes towards people with disability. Children playing sport, regardless of

ability, speak the same 'sport' language and work as a team—disability ceases to be important. This creates an inclusive atmosphere and fosters positive attitudes from an early age. This helps individuals and their families. They become part of support networks and have access to services they otherwise would not be exposed to.

Bishwa Nidal, Chair of Special Olympics Fiji says, "In Fiji sport is played, watched and enjoyed by nearly everyone. If our people with an intellectual disability are able to participate in various sports we can showcase the abilities of these special athletes and their families. It provides an opportunity for everyone to be involved. Inclusive sports programs create a lot of awareness and break down the existing barriers."

The Australian aid program's Development through Sport strategy identified improving the lives of people with disability as one of its two core objectives. Currently Australian aid program activities in Fiji and Vanuatu are using sport as a vehicle to change how people with disability think and feel about themselves, and address barriers to inclusion in society.

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Sport plays a major role in changing attitudes towards people with disability.

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Since 2011 Australia has committed up to \$3 million to use sport as a vehicle to improve the quality of life for people with disability in the Pacific.

Helen Nega cried when telling what sport had done for Rosa. "It's not just about people with intellectual disabilities playing sport, it's about their development and wellbeing and also the support programs they have for parents, carers and coaches as well. I am really excited because I want to go back to Rosa's school and tell all the parents about the firsthand experience I had with my daughter. I will also encourage them to be involved with the Special Olympic Movement in PNG." 

BEN EXTON



BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

In developing countries, sport is being used to break down barriers and remove stigmas about people with intellectual disabilities.

For the first time, an athlete from Papua New Guinea, Rosa Nega, took part in a Special Olympics World Winter Games. Papua New Guinea is not yet an accredited Special Olympics program participant but was invited to attend by the Republic of Korea, along with several other countries that had not attended a Winter Games. Photo: Special Olympics International



\$3m

Amount committed to the
Development through Sport
strategy since 2011



Ipul Powesau.
Photo: CBM Australia
BELOW: Setareki Macanawi.
Photo: Nicholson Piakal

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"I am privileged to have received an education but there are so many other people with disabilities out there who are struggling."
.....



CASE STUDY: Setareki Macanawi CEO, Pacific Disability Forum

When Setareki Macanawi applied for an AusAID scholarship in 1995, he didn't think he had much of a chance. Scholarships are highly competitive and, being blind, he had an extra barrier to overcome. But to his surprise, he was awarded the scholarship to undertake a Masters Degree in Educational Administration. "Happily," Setareki recalls, "the scholarship also covered my guide dog, Dusty, my wife Ana, and our two young children, Finau and Brian." Support was provided to Setareki through mobility training, guide dog services and computer training.

Outstanding academic results supported Setareki's request to upgrade his study program. He graduated with a Bachelor Degree in Education (Special Education), Masters Degree in Educational Administration (through course work) and a Masters Degree in Educational Administration (Honours).

Setareki has worked as the head of the Fiji School for the Blind, was Executive Director of the Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons, and is now the Chief Executive Officer of the Pacific Disability Forum, an umbrella organisation of 29 Pacific-based Disabled People's Organisations. Setareki played a lead role in supporting AusAID in the initial design of the *Development for All* strategy for disability-inclusive development and regularly gives advice to AusAID on our work. "The fact that I am a person with a disability is no longer a barrier," he says. In 2008 Setareki was awarded the Pacific Human Rights Special Citations Award for advancing the rights of people with disability. "Undoubtedly, the success and achievements I have been able to attain to date can be attributed to the scholarship I was awarded, enabling me to study at the University of New England," says Setareki.

.....
There are currently over 30 Australia Awards Scholarship holders who identify as having disability. Australia provides support based on individual requirements and tertiary institutions. In 2013 there were 39 people with disability from 20 countries selected for Australia Awards Scholarships, who have either started or will begin studies in Australia by January 2014.

FIGHTING FOR RIGHTS

Education provided Ipul Powesau with the courage and drive to fight for the rights of people with disability in Papua New Guinea.

When Ipul Powesau wanted to go to school in Grade One, her parents did not want her to go. Ipul was affected by polio at an early age and used her left hand to support her leg to walk. Her parents were fearful of the stigma and discrimination their daughter would face as a person with a disability. But Ipul loved school and challenged her parent's decision.

Ipul not only finished school but completed a Bachelor of Science and Master of Business and went on to become a highly regarded researcher.

"I persevered and showed them I could do it," Ipul says. "I faced a lot of challenges from the discrimination around me but the students at the university I attended saw me as part of them. I had friends who would carry my books and supervisors that would hold me if it was slippery—I always had friends along the way." Reflecting on her experience, Ipul says, "I am privileged to have received an education but there are so many other people with disabilities out there who are struggling."

Stigma, negative attitudes and discrimination pervade the lives of people with disability in Papua New Guinea (PNG). However, as Ipul points out, changing attitudes means that organisations and governments need to work with Disabled People's Organisations, rather than in isolation, to help meet the needs of people with disability. Disabled People's Organisations are unique because they are people with disability exercising their own voice, increasing public awareness and advocating for change.

Ipul is now in a key leadership role, as the Chair of the PNG

Assembly of Disabled Persons, which represents national Disabled People's Organisations throughout PNG. The Assembly delivers training to decision makers and service providers and builds the capacity of people with disability.

The assembly also works with the PNG Government through the National Advisory Committee on Disability, to progress the National Disability Policy. It has advocated for the PNG Government to sign the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and to ensure people with disability are included in and benefit from programs.

It has grown through initial seed funding provided in 2009 (through to 2012) from the Disability Rights Advocacy Fund to raise awareness on the barriers faced by people with disability.

Ipul says, "The small grant from the Disability Rights Fund helped us to reach provinces and understand the various barriers faced by people with disability. For example, in West Sepik Province, training was delivered to leaders of Disabled People's Organisations, and outreach included a radio campaign that reached over 300 people."

In addition to her formal education, Ipul attributes much of her skills and experience in disability rights to the Pacific Disability Forum—a Pacific regional umbrella organisation funded through AusAID and made up of Pacific Disabled People's Organisations. As a board member of the Forum who has participated in training, Ipul says, "I have a broader understanding of not only disability in the region but also a broader perception of how we need to work together with

.....


In February 2013 the Government of Papua New Guinea signed the certificate of ratification for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

.....

leaders, governments, partners and service providers to include people with disabilities."

AusAID will provide \$4.5 million to the Pacific Disability Forum during the period 2012–2016 and \$6.2 million to Disability Rights Advocacy Fund during the period 2009–2016.

When asked to describe the change she has seen for people with disability in her lifetime, Ipul says, "People with disability are now their own change agents in realising their rights. They are becoming more visible and speaking for themselves."

And as for her vision for people with disability in PNG into the future, Ipul says, "My hope is that in 10 years people with disability are regarded as equal citizens and given the rights to express themselves rather than be spoken for, and to hold a rightful place in communities rather than being seen as objects of charity." 

NICOLE SMITH



TRIPLE JEOPARDY

Innovative research in Cambodia highlights lessons and a 'triple jeopardy' faced by women with disability.

Recent ground-breaking findings from an AusAID Development Research Award are changing the lives of women in Cambodia by changing the way we see things.

The research has revealed the levels and nature of violence and discrimination experienced by women with disability in Cambodia.

The *Triple Jeopardy* project—the first of its kind in Cambodia—has contributed to a small but growing body of evidence in this under-researched area. The three-year project found that women with disability experience a threefold impact—a 'triple jeopardy' of threat—from the interplay between gender inequality, disability and poverty, that magnifies the disadvantages they face.

The research also shows that while women with disability face levels of sexual, physical and emotional violence from their partners comparable to

other women, they endure much higher levels of violence perpetrated by other family members. A quarter of women with disability who were surveyed reported that their family members had been physically violent to them, compared to 11 per cent of women without disability. More than half the women with disability who participated in the study had been subjected to emotional violence by their family, compared to 35 per cent of other women.

The findings were made possible by the creation of a unique research tool to collect and analyse this kind of sensitive information—the *Triple Jeopardy* survey tool. This is based on two World Health Organization tools that measure rates of violence against women, and mental health. It also incorporates established questions on disability developed by the UN-authorized body on disability statistics, the Washington Group.

Policy makers and other researchers will now be able to use this tool to capture credible and accurate information more widely. This is a major step forward, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, where only a handful of studies have disaggregated disability data on violence against women.

The findings are strengthening the design of AusAID programs like the Violence Against Women in Cambodia program. They also contribute to the growing global debate about how to stop violence against women, and contributed to discussion at this year's United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York.

New data and new tools for analysis, like those developed through *Triple Jeopardy*, give us new understanding of development problems and allow us to better make a difference. **F**

MATT CLANCY

ABOVE: Participants in focus group discussions in Cambodia in 2011 as part of the *Triple Jeopardy* research project. Photo: Kathy Oliver/IWDA



HAPPY FEET AND BETTER DAYS

Meet the exceptional children of Kampot, whose potential is just being discovered.

ABOVE: Kob Vy is walking with the aid of a walking frame. AVID volunteer Emma Glenn worked on an intake and assessment process to help children like Kob Vy to access appropriate care and support. Photo: Tiet Ho/ Australian Red Cross

He's surrounded by other children—all picking up leaves in the yard, yelling out answers to maths problems, eating fruit and rice wrapped in palm leaves, washing their dishes under the tap.

These simple activities are still new to the forgotten children of Kampot Province in Cambodia. Until recently, they were confined to their homes and seen as a karmic curse on their families, a burden to their community.


Komar Pikar Foundation, a small NGO supported by AusAID and Australian Red Cross, aims to demonstrate how targeted interventions can radically change the lives of children with moderate to severe disabilities. As Director Kong Vichetra explains, "We saw the big gap in services for these children and their families so we started Komar Pikar to help them become independent and self-reliant."

Komar Pikar runs day centres for children and offers disability awareness, parent self-help groups, counselling and home-based care services in Kampot and Phnom Penh. To be sustainable, these services need good planning and clear processes that can be replicated across the country. For this, Vichetra has sought the support of two Australian Volunteers for International Development. Occupational therapist Emma Glenn helped standardise a process for how children are assessed and programs designed to suit their needs. Capacity Development Officer Kelly Dawe is working on a broader plan for human resources and training.

The stories emerging from Komar Pikar clients are genuinely life-altering. A 20-year-old woman learns to make her own bed and eat independently. Through a parent self-help group, a single mother starts a cake-making

business to support her family. A 15-year-old with cerebral palsy discovers his love for maths, to the delight of his teachers. And Kob Vy, born with multiple impairments, is walking for the first time in his life.

Vichetra is determined to continue. "There are thousands of children with disabilities still waiting for support. When Komar Pikar Foundation has more expertise, we can transfer our knowledge to parents and other communities as well as our partners and stakeholders, so we have more resources to support children together."

They'll do it too, just the way Kob Vy does—slowly and determinedly, smiling with every step achieved. 

ZAYNE D'CRUS
AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS

PROFESSOR RON MCCALLUM: **LEADING THE WAY**

Professor Ron McCallum is currently Professor Emeritus at the University of Sydney. He holds the honour of being the first totally blind person to have been appointed to a full professorship at an Australian university. In 2006, he was designated an Officer in the Order of Australia (AO) for his work in industrial law and also for his contributions to social justice. In 2011 he was Senior Australian of the Year for his work campaigning for equal rights for all people. In 2008 he was elected to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and in 2010 he became the Chair of the Committee. He was re-elected to the Committee in 2010, and in April 2011 was once again elected Chair.



What are some of the barriers people with disability face?

Persons with disabilities face many barriers, such as access to buildings, access to transport and for we blind persons, access to information. Perhaps the biggest barriers are the old and worn out stereotypes which people often have about persons with disabilities.

How do these challenges differ in first world and developing countries?

It is difficult to draw a line between developed and developing countries. Painting with a broad brush, developing countries don't have the same kind of infrastructure, and access is more difficult. Educational opportunities are far less, and perhaps some stereotypes are more long lasting.

What makes the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities unique?

The uniqueness of the Convention is that it gives we persons with disabilities the same human rights and inherent dignity which most Australians take for granted. It does not give us any new rights: rather, it ensures that we have the same human rights as do others.

Article 32 of the Convention is about international assistance and cooperation—how have you worked with AusAID to address disability in developing countries?

AusAID's *Development for All* is an extraordinary strategy which assists persons with disabilities, especially in the Pacific and in South Asia. The University of Sydney Law School team of Professors including myself are working on an AusAID funded project looking at the link between refugees and disability. Many refugees and persons at risk are also persons with disabilities. Often, they are not recognised as persons with disabilities and their special needs are not met. We have already begun work in Indonesia and in Malaysia. We are truly grateful to AusAID for its assistance.

This was the most rapidly signed Convention ever—can you tell me more about why this was so and how it happened?

Yes, perhaps unexpectedly. It was open for signature on 30 March 2007 and after signature, countries were able to ratify, that is to adopt it. It now has 129 countries which have ratified it, as well as the European Union. I believe that ratification has been so rapid because

governments recognise that there is a gap in the human rights of persons with disabilities.

Can you explain your role as the Chair of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities?

We are the treaty body which monitors the implementation of the Convention around the world. Countries ratifying the Convention must write a report and forward it to us within two years of ratification. We meet in Geneva and have what are called 'constructive dialogues' with reporting countries. There, we discuss their report with them and with relevant NGOs. We write up our concluding observations at the conclusion of every constructive dialogue. To date, we have dialogued with Tunisia, Spain, Peru, Argentina, China and Hungary. In April we will dialogue with Paraguay, and in September this year we will dialogue with Australia, Austria and El Salvador. The Committee also hears complaints from individuals under the Convention's Optional Protocol, when their country has not upheld their Convention rights. 📍

REBECCA LOSIK

SAVING LIVES ON THE KOKODA



It's nearly midday on Monday 4 March 2013. The Community Health Worker at Efogi Health Centre, Jackson Fred, has just received a radio distress call. A woman in the neighbouring village of Kagi is in labour and facing life-threatening complications.

ABOVE: Mother and daughter—after life threatening labour, these two were saved by the team effort of staff of the joint AusAID–PNG Government Kokoda Development Program (KDP).

TOP RIGHT: Jackson Fred, Efogi Health Centre Community Health Worker. Jackson is a Kokoda local who uses his training to save lives with support under the KDP.

Photos: Vicki Assenheim/KDP

Jackson is at the health centre alone, his colleague in Port Moresby, waiting for a flight home. A tuberculosis patient has also been admitted earlier in the day. Jackson's hands are full. But his training has prepared him for this moment. Responding quickly, he gets to work.

Efogi and Kagi villages are located along the narrow Kokoda Track that runs 96km through the rugged Owen Stanley Range in Papua New Guinea (PNG). This is the track of Australian war mythology and a place of deep bonding between the two countries.

A Joint Understanding was signed in 2008 between the Australian and PNG Governments, and the Kokoda Initiative began. Since then the Kokoda

Development Program (KDP) has been saving and changing lives.

Through the KDP, Efogi's health centre got running water and solar lights, upgraded clinical equipment and radio network. Newly trained community health workers and village health volunteers are supported. On this March Monday, this essential health infrastructure is about to be put to the test.

Jackson sends village health volunteers to bring the labouring mother to the health centre. Through rugged terrain, over steep escarpments, fast flowing rivers and log bridges, they carry the patient on a makeshift stretcher made from two poles and a 50kg flour sack.

While he waits, Jackson sends



out another radio call to other health centres. KDP staff in Port Moresby respond. KDP Team Leader, Vicki Assenheim, guides Jackson through the medical procedures for labour complications over a two-way radio.

Hiri District Health Manager, Michael Musket authorises the rapid response medical evacuation. 'No Roads Expeditions', a trekking company that operates along the Kokoda Track, diverts an air charter en-route from Popondetta to transport both patients and Jackson to Port Moresby. An ambulance meets them on the tarmac. Everyone is transferred to Port Moresby General Hospital, and a healthy baby girl is delivered safely by caesarean section around 1pm on Tuesday 5 March. The precious lives of both mother and child are saved.

Jackson Fred is an example of the remarkable people who live and work in the rugged and unique Kokoda region. Health workers like him face incredible challenges, with vulnerable lives at risk. Jackson has a simple solution: train locals.

"Moving to a remote place is very daunting but if you've been living there for your whole life, it's ok. I think locals like me should be supported to go for further studies—so we can come home and run these health centres ourselves." 📍

AARON ENGLISH

Avoidable blindness programs are helping to reduce the prevalence of avoidable blindness and, through our disability-inclusive development work, to improve the quality of life for people with low vision and who are blind.


Sokcheng teaches Khmer literature at a high school a short distance from Phnom Penh. She noticed six months ago some of her daily teaching tasks had become more difficult. For example, after she had written up the day's lesson on the whiteboard and moved to the back of the classroom to start teaching, the writing was hard for her to read.

"Less than a year ago I noticed my eyes were increasingly blurry for long distance vision, but I didn't know of any local place where I could have my eyes checked," says Sokcheng. "I also was worried if I used glasses that my eyes would get much worse over time. I heard others say it's not good to wear glasses. So I just kept trying very hard to see the letters on the whiteboard while teaching the students," she says.

Luckily for Sokcheng, the Brien Holden Vision Institute was running a school screening and eye care program

for students at the school. Sokcheng described her vision problem to the eye care team, and had her eyes examined for the first time in her life.

"My eye examination showed that I have myopia and needed glasses. Now I have my glasses on and I love them. They fit me so well and I can see the whiteboard and everything around me so clearly," she says smiling. "I can be a more effective teacher."

Brien Holden Vision Institute is a member of the Vision 2020 Australia Global Consortium which is working in partnership to eliminate avoidable blindness in Asia and the Pacific. In partnership with AusAID, the Consortium consists of eight leading non-government organisations from across the eye health and vision care sector. 

RIGHT AND BELOW: Sokcheng gets her eyes tested. Photos: Brien Holden Vision Institute

A CLEARER VISION



IN FOCUS: Making eye health accessible for all

Cambodia has seen strong progress in recent years in the field of eye health and avoidable blindness. Through the support of the Avoidable Blindness Initiative, Vision 2020 Australia Global Consortium programs are successfully ensuring that eye health programs are accessible to, and inclusive of, people with a range of disabilities. CBM Australia and the University of Melbourne's Nossal Institute for Global Health, have trained staff at Cambodia's Takeo Eye Hospital and conducted workshops on disability-inclusive practices with the National Program for Eye Health. The Takeo Eye Hospital has adopted universal design principles, including installing ramps. This aligns with Australia's broader work on physical accessibility with the release of the *Accessibility Design Guide*. As a result of this proactive approach, last year also saw around four per cent of patients reporting hearing or other impairments. A manual for disability-inclusive practices in eye health has been translated and distributed to local health centres in the Takeo province and will be reissued in 2013.

Courtesy of CBM Australia

GLAUCOMA TRAINING

Australian training is an opportunity for Dr Deki Trong to learn new skills, which will help promote health and restore sight in her native Bhutan.



TOP: Supervisor Professor Bob Casson and Dr Deki, at the Royal Adelaide Hospital.

ABOVE: Dr Deki examines a patient at the Royal Adelaide Hospital.

Photo: Flinders Medical Centre

South Australia feels a long way from Thimpu in Bhutan for Dr Deki Trong. Dr Deki left her three-year-old daughter at home to undertake a 12-month Australia Awards Fellowship in the treatment of glaucoma.

It will all be worth it though. When she returns she will be Bhutan's only trained specialist treating glaucoma.

"It has been a great learning experience for me," says Dr Deki, an ophthalmologist at the National Referral Hospital.

"Bhutan is a developing country. We still struggle to provide the basic health and education facilities."

IN FOCUS: Australia Awards Fellowships

Round 14 of the Australia Awards Fellowships will open for submissions on Monday 13 May 2013 and close on Wednesday 19 June 2013. For more information visit www.ausaid.gov.au/australia-awards/pages/fellowships

"The clinical and surgical knowledge and skills I've gained are going to make a massive difference in preventing the people of my country from going blind from treatable causes," she says.

After her training Dr Deki will manage all referred cases of glaucoma at the National Referral Hospital.

She says she has a big responsibility when she returns to her role in the Ministry of Health to share her world-class skills and knowledge with colleagues.

She plans to train her own local glaucoma fellows and participate in collaborative glaucoma research.

"I want to promote health, and to restore the sight of the people.

"Ten years from now I would like to see my country as a self-sufficient, happy nation with ... treatable or preventable causes of blindness being addressed," says Dr Deki.

"It is a big challenge but not totally impossible to achieve."

Dr Deki is undertaking the fellowship at the South Australian Institute of Ophthalmology, Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Flinders Medical Centre.

She is registered with the Medical Board of South Australia and is receiving comprehensive training in the clinical and surgical management of glaucoma and acute care training from five internationally renowned glaucoma specialists.

Dr Deki also attended the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologist's Annual Congress where she learned the latest developments in the field of glaucoma and built her network with specialists from Australia, Asia and beyond, for future support.

The fellowship is co-funded by AusAID's Australia Awards Fellowships, Bhutan's Ministry of Health, and Sight for All, an Australian non-government organisation.

The Australia Awards Fellowships program has supported more than nine fellowships, involving 55 fellows from the Asia-Pacific region, related to addressing avoidable blindness. **F**

ANGUS BRAITHWAITE

MARY ELLEN ISKENDERIAN WOMEN AND BANKING: MAKING A REAL DIFFERENCE

Mary Ellen Iskenderian is President and CEO of Women's World Banking (WWB). She has more than 20 years of experience building global financial systems throughout the developing world. The WWB is the world's largest network of microfinance institutions and banks. It is the only global network focused on women.

Mary Ellen was recently in Australia, and we took the opportunity to speak to her about financial inclusion and empowering women.

What is microfinance?

Microfinance is the provision of financial services and products to low income people. It started as a credit-only product, but in recent years it's really expanded to savings, insurance and pensions, and a whole range of other kinds of loans that are packaged and priced in a way that is affordable for low income people.

Why is microfinance important to women?

Women are naturally, even in very conservative societies, the keepers of the household finances. When women have control over money they typically

spend it on intergenerational things that can bring families and communities out of poverty. What's fascinating to me is they are the same things everywhere in the world: the education of their children, the healthcare of their families and improving their housing. Financial inclusion is about giving women the tools to manage their financial lives more holistically, to protect from emergencies and other financial shocks; to reduce some of the vulnerability that comes with being poor.

How challenging is it to manage the WWB network, which is so diverse in geography, size and structure?

WWB is unique in that it is a network not bound by ownership or obligation, but by a shared

vision and common values. Each member institution of the WWB network believes that women are the gateway to household security and are key to the success of microfinance. The WWB is comprised of 39 financial institutions in 28 developing countries and one of the huge strengths of such a diverse network is the ability of the institutions to learn from each other. The institutions really do want to learn from each other regionally and there's something about a commonality of culture and experience that deepens that pure learning experience.

You have said that savings is the future for microfinance. Why is this so?

One of the most important products we can offer women is

access to a safe place to save. We know from our research that poor women, those living on less than US\$2 a day, are inherent savers but are forced to save informally in unreliable ways: under a mattress, or through buying livestock because they don't have access to savings accounts. Beyond meeting the basic financial needs of the poor, several studies have shown that access to formal savings accounts can lead to female empowerment, and changes in behaviour that affect health and nutrition. We know that for poor families, if money is in the house it gets spent on immediate needs, so allowing women to deposit regularly, as often as weekly, can really help them save.





.....

When women control their family's finances, the world over they spend it on things that can lift their families and communities out of poverty—educating their children, healthcare and housing.

.....

How important is it that people in developing countries are agents of their own change?

Nothing ever really gets done sustainably if it's done for you. That is what's so exciting about working in economic empowerment ... it's really giving someone the tools and confidence to be their own agent of change. 📌

ABOVE: Customers from network member Shakti Foundation for Disadvantaged Women in Bangladesh, at a group meeting, Women's World Banking, 2008.

RIGHT: Mary Ellen Iskenderian visited AusAID in Canberra and spoke to staff in February.



IN FOCUS: Improving access to banking

- > There are as many as 2.7 billion adults in developing countries who do not have access to banking services.
- > WWB is testing ways to use local merchants to accept deposits through point-of-sale terminals, and to build on mobile phone banking with products that resonate with women so this technological innovation becomes a real tool for savings. This is the future of microfinance—a full suite of financial services accessible to women regardless of their proximity to a bank branch.

SPOTLIGHT **PHILIPPINES**

The Philippines is one of our close neighbours in the Asia-Pacific and a major development partner. The country gained international prominence through the 'People Power' revolution of 1986, when democracy was restored to the country. Almost three decades later, the Philippines has achieved political stability and seen sustained economic growth, despite the global economic downturns.

However, despite these successes, challenges remain. There are more than 94 million people in the Philippines, almost half of whom live on less than US\$2 per day. Economic growth has been unequal across sectors of the economy, and poverty in the Philippines has actually increased since 2003.

Australia's aid program is working with the Philippines Government to reverse these trends. Australia is one of the Philippines' three largest bilateral grant aid donors, with more than \$113 million in official development assistance in 2012–13. Australia's aid program in the Philippines is focused on strengthening basic services for the poor and reducing vulnerabilities arising from climate change and conflict.



EDUCATION

Australia is working with the Philippines Government to provide a pathway out of poverty by investing in education and emphasising the delivery of quality education.

Australia is helping improve learning outcomes of Filipino school children and ensuring that more children finish primary and secondary education. We are working with our partners to train teachers, build educational facilities like classrooms and day care centres, strengthen school-based management practice, improve education planning and management systems, and provide teaching and learning materials. Results for 2012–13 include:

- > assisting the Philippines to introduce three additional years of schooling—a key reform priority of the Philippines Department of Education
- > better administration of school funds as 45 000 schools implemented their own management systems
- > more than 22 000 children now have access to pre-school education through 410 community learning centres.

22 000+

Number of extra children who now have access to pre-school education in Mindanao

CASE STUDY:

A future BEAMing bright

The BEAM (Basic Education Assistance for Muslim Mindanao) program aims to improve access and quality of basic education, especially for the most disadvantaged children in conflict-affected areas in Mindanao. Through BEAM, more than 22 000 Muslim children in conflict-affected and remote communities in Mindanao now have access to pre-school education and a culturally-relevant curriculum. With Australian support, 410 community learning centres have been set up in 301 remote communities that do not have schools.

CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT

Supporting accountable, transparent and effective governance is crucial to building prosperity in the Philippines.

In partnership with The Asia Foundation, AusAID is providing financial and technical support to strengthen collaboration between government, civil society and the private sector.

Known as the Coalitions for Change program, areas such as basic education, disaster risk reduction, climate change, conflict, local service delivery, and public financial management are being targeted.

\$796m

Projected revenue collected in 2013 from increase in tobacco and alcohol excise to cover health care

CASE STUDY:

Civil society at work

The Coalitions for Change program has helped achieve reforms through supporting local coalitions. Initial results include:

- > increasing excise tax for tobacco and alcohol, expected to improve overall health outcomes and to generate additional revenues of about \$796 million in 2013 alone to cover universal health care
- > general re-registration of voters from Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) including delisting about 0.5 million 'illegitimate' voters to reduce election fraud
- > increased election registration of persons with disabilities, from 350 000 to 416 000 (and counting).

ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT

The governments of Australia and the Philippines have agreed to a long-term partnership to improve the efficiency, accountability and transparency of public fund use in the Philippines.

Australia has committed \$30 million to the Philippines—Australia Public Financial Management Program (PFMP) through to 2016. The comprehensive PFM reform agenda aims to clarify, simplify, improve and harmonise the financial management processes and information systems of the civil service in the Philippines.

Things like practical budgeting and expenditure management reforms are part of the program. In this way, people in decision-making roles can do their jobs more effectively and Filipinos benefit from improved delivery of goods and services.

CASE STUDY:

Better use of public funds

Good management of public funds improves development outcomes—from better distributed resources, better services, and more effective mechanisms to target poverty.

The governments of Australia and the Philippines are working together to modernise the Philippines public financial management systems—making them more streamlined, transparent and accountable.

- Reforms include:
- > designing a Government Integrated Financial Management Information System
 - > centralising cash management with a Treasury Single Account
 - > streamlining government reporting
 - > supporting greater cooperation between the government and civil society through the Citizen Participatory Audit Project.

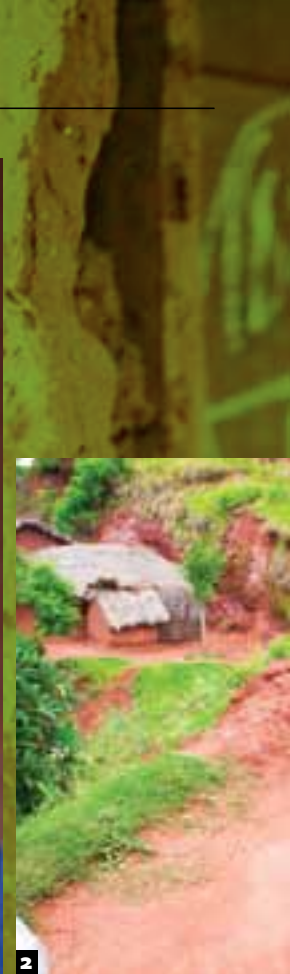
\$30m

Amount Australia has committed to the Philippines–Australia Public Financial Management Program

LEFT: A farmer beaming with his harvest of the day—watermelons. Guimaras, an island-province, is well-known for its agricultural crops and among its major industries are tourism and fruit processing. Photo: AusAID/PRMF



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1 Dzambo! (Hello in Swahili.) My name is Mama Filomena and I'm from Kalemí in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). I'm a farmer—I have a small field that I work on all year round cultivating vegetables for sale on the local market. When the vaccination campaign begins, I leave my job, go to the local hospital and I register as a volunteer. I'm 52 years old now and I've been working as a vaccinator for eight years."

2 "My sister's daughter was eight years old, when she suddenly became paralysed. We had no idea what happened to her. We couldn't treat her for days so we started to believe it's a black magic—that someone wants to harm our family. When we finally decided to go to the

hospital with her, the doctor explained to us it was vundja-vundja, that's how we call polio here. She is 15 years old now and lives in special housing in Bukawu. This experience pushed me to become a vaccinator—I want to combat polio in my own way and help my community."

3 "During this mass campaign we vaccinated every child under five years old. Despite some refusals and missed kids, we vaccinated more than 90 per cent of children."

4 "No worries. Look, how easy it is! It's only two drops and it doesn't taste bad at all".

Photos: Diana Mrazikova/UNICEF DRC

"I'm doing this work with a real joy, because I want to ensure that no child suffers or dies needlessly from polio ever again."

Mama Filomena

IN THE FIELD WITH **MAMA FILOMENA**

Meet one of the field vaccinators who runs the polio campaign at the grassroots level in rural areas in the Democratic Republic of Congo.



.....
"No other sector affects the lives of more people in the Pacific than agriculture. It is the main source of livelihood ... But farming is mainly at a subsistence level ... If only productivity could be improved, the benefits would be substantial."



Back in 2006, Focus did a feature on rural communities in the Pacific and Timor-Leste. We wrote about how agriculture was the key to the lives of the people in these often very vulnerable communities.

REWIND: SEEDS OF LIFE



Seeds of Life (SoL), a sustainable agricultural development program running in Timor-Leste since 2001, has been tackling the critical issue of food security in communities with great success.


Rob Williams, then team leader of the joint AusAID–Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research's (ACIAR) Seeds of Life program said in 2006 that putting food in bowls is what matters. "Timor-Leste has three seasons, a dry season, a wet season and a hungry season," he explains. "The hungry season can last up to five months. Seeds of Life wants to eliminate it." Last year, Rob, now Research Adviser, was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his contribution to supporting food security in Timor-Leste. Since

2006, we have seen many changes, as the program continues to work closely with the Government of Timor-Leste.

Then

- > Active in four of 13 districts
- > On-farm trials were about to begin, with local farmers trialling new crop varieties.
- > SoL was working to reduce the impact of the hungry season by evaluating and testing high yielding seed varieties of five staple crops (maize, rice, cassava, peanut, sweet potato).
- > AusAID had joined ACIAR in supporting this research-oriented activity, with phase two beginning.
- > SoL was employing 11 young local agricultural graduates to help with on-farm trials

Now

- > Expanded to 12 of 13 districts in 2012, and will expand into final district (Cova Lima) in 2013–14.
- > On-farm trials are now a successful ongoing component of the program, working closely with Timor-Leste's Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF).
- > The focus of the current phase is community seed producer groups, who are planting, multiplying and distributing seed. Currently, there are 680 groups supported by SoL and MAF, and an additional 350 supported by NGOs. Many are women-only groups.
- > Around 31 500 farmers across Timor-Leste are currently growing at least one Seeds of Life variety.
- > These varieties give yields that are between 20 and 80 per cent better than existing varieties for most crops, with gains in yield of up to 140 per cent for sweet potato.
- > With increased yields farmers are often able to sell some of the surplus and use the money to buy other food and improve family nutrition.
- > By the end of 2015, around 65 000 farmers (50 per cent of all farmers in the country) will be using higher-yielding crop varieties as a result of the SoL program.
- > Phase three, the 'impact phase', has been running for two years— AusAID is contributing \$22m and ACIAR \$3m.
- > SoL is one of the largest and most important AusAID programs in Timor-Leste with international recognition. 

DARRELL HAWKINS

ABOVE: Rob Williams, Adviser for Research with Seeds of Life, received a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) last year. Williams (right) and On-farm demonstration trial officer Inacio Savio Pereira proudly display an improved variety of sweet potato.

GLOBAL EDUCATION: SUMMER SCHOOL

BELOW: Participants at the University of Tasmania Global Education Summer School. Photo: Arthur Burch/AusAID



Global education was at the forefront of everyone's minds at the Global Education Summer School, held in Tasmania from 15–17 January 2013. It helped to 'connect the dots' for participants and give them a more concrete knowledge base for furthering their global education teaching.

"I thought you would like to know that I have made that step. It has been amazing how so many things that I have done in the past are making a lot more sense and connecting," says Michael Zeuschner, Principal of Belimba State Primary School in Queensland.

Sessions ranged from contemporary understandings of Australia's close neighbour

countries (eg Timor-Leste and Vanuatu) to peace, education and ways of measuring the 'peacefulness' of countries (eg The Global Peace Index). Participants had the opportunity to discover the extent of available education materials and resources from AusAID, as well as a number of NGOs (World Vision, Red Cross, Caritas) active in the education area.

Panel sessions led to lively discussions such as: How important is global education to Australians in the 21st century? What are the key global issues in our region? and How do NGOs and the Australian Government work together?

The workshops focused on practical teaching and learning

issues including methods, resources and ideas for teaching global education and global citizenship in primary and secondary classrooms.

Conference participants included teachers from schools not only from Tasmania, but also from schools across the country, from as far afield as Rockhampton, Bundaberg and Townsville.

"For me, it was a great experience to be surrounded by a passionate group of inspiring individuals who also see the value in global education and developing global citizenship within our students and curriculum. I came away from the experience with a renewed drive for my global educational endeavours, with a

more concrete knowledge base and theoretical understanding to enhance my teaching practices," says Chris Gauthier, a science teacher from Cleveland District State High School in Queensland.

The summer school was part of the University of Tasmania Certificate and Masters in Global Education, and offered three days of presentations, discussions and workshops. This program provides a full specialisation in Global Education (unique in Australia). Two of the specialist Global Education Masters units—*Global Citizenship and Education* and *Issues in Global Education*—were run in conjunction with the conference. 

ARTHUR BURCH



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