



Preparing for drought



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FRONT COVER: Maize farmer Flora Mphimba, from Malawi, with her maize harvest, which will help feed herself and her family for the year. Photo: Abbie Trayler-Smith/Oxfam.

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From the Executive Director

Active citizenship. It's one of the central commitments of new strategic plan. But what do we mean by it and why is it so important?

Active citizenship is about creating more space for people to become involved in decisions that affect their lives. It's about ensuring they have a greater capacity to express their views and concerns.

We see this commitment to active citizenship as inter-related with our other central commitment of accountability. If more people are active as citizens, holding governments, corporations and indeed non-government groups like Oxfam to account for their actions, then more people are likely to enjoy their basic human rights. Two examples come to mind.

In October, Oxfam Australia hosted Kaleidoscope, the flagship event of Oxfam International Youth Partnerships. Over 300 young people came together for eight days to enhance their skills, knowledge and understanding. As a result of their experience, they'll become even more effective agents for change, more effective active citizens, and we'll be supporting them as they implement their action plans in their own communities.

Then there's our growing popular campaigning in Australia. We're seeking to mobilise as many people as possible to boost the case for changed policies and practices. Oxfam's involvement in the Close the Gap campaign — tackling Indigenous health inequality — is another way we are encouraging Australians to become active citizens.

Andrew Hewett
Executive Director

Fighting disease in war-torn Congo

Oxfam is supporting more than 150,000 people in the Democratic Republic of Congo who have fled ongoing conflict and violence in the troubled African country.

An estimated 3.9 million people have died since fighting erupted between government forces, militias and armed groups in 1998, and a further 1.5 million people have been displaced. Despite an official end to the war in 2003 and democratic elections in 2006, sporadic violence and unrest continues.

The situation is particularly dire in North Kivu, where chronic malnutrition is 45.4%, infant mortality is 43.7% and 83% of people have no access to clean water. Malaria, cholera and other gastro-intestinal diseases are rife and many people are experiencing severe food shortages.

Oxfam is working in about 50 communities in North Kivu, providing safe drinking water, basic sanitation and hygiene services to more than 150,000 displaced men, women and children. We are building 100 springs, 15 wells, four gravity flow water supply systems and 1,200 family toilets and are distributing 10,000 treated mosquito nets to pregnant women, infants

and people living with HIV. Water user committees will be set up and trained to operate and maintain the water facilities and communities will be trained in safe hygiene practices and malaria prevention.

As well, communal toilets, hand-washing facilities and placenta pits are being constructed at 20 health centres and semi-permanent latrines, rainwater catchment systems and hand-washing facilities installed at 40 primary schools. Hygiene clubs will also be set up at the schools.

Mbau camp president Ngabu Norbert said that people continued to stay in the camps because it was unsafe to return home or they had nothing to go back to.

"If we went home there'd be nothing for us," Mbau camp resident Michel said. "We don't have a house; we don't have anything. There's nothing to eat and there's no way to make a living. Everything we had has been lost."

For more information about any of the emergencies that Oxfam Australia is currently responding to visit www.oxfam.org.au/emergencies



One of the many families that have been displaced by ongoing conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Oxfam is helping the family with clean water, sanitation and hygiene education. Photo: Tineke D'haese/Oxfam Solidarité.

Gifts with a difference

Australians gave nearly \$1 billion in unwanted Christmas gifts last year — and among the least wanted gifts were socks and underwear.

To help ease the Christmas shopping nightmare, our popular Oxfam Unwrapped program has returned once more, offering a unique selection of gift ideas.

As well as the return of popular gifts such as goats, chickens, pigs, seeds and vegetable gardens, we have some great new items including donkeys, lambs, water and sanitation kits and even a mobile donkey library.

Available online, through a catalogue and in-store at Oxfam shops, Oxfam Unwrapped helps festive shoppers and the work of Oxfam at the same time. Your friend receives a card detailing the present you bought them, and the real gift goes to those in developing countries who need it most.



Of course we don't actually wrap up a donkey and send it overseas, but the donation you make when you buy a gift will help fund our agriculture, health, education, livelihoods, emergency or advocacy projects involving that particular item.

"Oxfam Unwrapped is a fantastic way to give great gifts and help the world's poorest people at the same time," Oxfam Australia's Executive Director Andrew Hewett says. "Every gift makes a difference, whether you spend \$10 or \$2,000."

If you order your gifts online by Monday 17th December, we will make sure your friend or loved one receives their cards in time for Christmas. If you miss the deadline, you can still buy cards in-store at Oxfam shops until Christmas Eve.

Buy your Oxfam Unwrapped gifts online now at www.oxfamunwrapped.com.au or call 1800 034 034 for a catalogue.



Photo: Jerry Galea/OxfamAUS.

Sydneysiders stride in

Local team Sydney Striders Foreign Legion, took line honours at Oxfam TRAILWALKER Sydney in August, outpacing 2006 winners the Sunshing Cosmo Boys from Hong Kong. It was the Sydney Striders' second Oxfam TRAILWALKER victory, after taking out the Melbourne event in 2006.

Despite the cold, wet conditions which confronted the 502 teams who set out in this year's event, more than 71% of starters finished the course. The trail took participants from Chowder Bay in Mosman to the banks of the Hawkesbury River in Brooklyn, taking in stunning harbour views along the way.

Oxfam TRAILWALKER Sydney is now in its ninth year. The first event raised \$176,000; this year's total has already topped \$3 million, a new event record. And while most people wouldn't jump at the chance to tackle a tough 100km course, every year Oxfam TRAILWALKER Sydney receives more entries than it can accept.

Among the participants in this year's event were Australian Labor Party President Senator John Faulkner, Deloitte Touche Thomatsu Chief Information Officer Tim Fleming and ultra-marathon runner Richard Green.

"While the original and main motivation is to raise money for the most disadvantaged people around the world, I found last year's walk to be a greatly rewarding physical and mental challenge. Getting fit, extending yourself and helping people at the same time — it's a win-win-win situation," Tim Fleming said.

Official starter for the event was General Peter Cosgrove who told participants, "Ending poverty takes determination and a massive, consistent effort — the same that the trailwalkers show."

An event of this magnitude would not have been possible without the support and contribution of principal sponsor State Street, all the other sponsors and the 580 volunteers who covered 700 shifts over the weekend.

Oxfam TRAILWALKER Melbourne 2008 will be held from 11–13 April, through the picturesque Dandenong Ranges. To find out how you can volunteer at the event visit www.oxfam.org.au/trailwalker/melbourne



The Origin Energy team was one of 502 teams who took part in Oxfam TRAILWALKER Sydney this year. Photo: Vanessa Chaperlin/OxfamAUS



Former Oxfam Australia Southern Africa Program Coordinator Liz Mann. Photo: Ponch Hawkes/OxfamAUS.

A woman of great empathy

Oxfam Australia staff and volunteers have paid tribute to former colleague Liz Mann who died in September at the age of 43 after a short illness.

Liz worked for Oxfam Australia from 1996 to 2003 on the agency's Africa program in both Mozambique and the Melbourne office.

Originally from Wodonga, Liz studied at the University of Melbourne, then worked as a teacher in Melbourne, before working as an Australian Volunteers International volunteer at a small rural school in Nhlambaloyi, Zimbabwe. It was this stint of volunteering which sparked her life-long passion for both Africa and development.

Following travel throughout Africa she returned to Melbourne, volunteered with Oxfam and then began paid employment on our Africa program. Initially she worked on our hand dug wells program in Ethiopia and later managed our program in Maputo, Mozambique for two years.

In 2004, Liz joined the International HIV-AIDS Alliance, based in the United Kingdom, where she also managed programs in Southern Africa. During this period she headed up the alliance's office in Lusaka, Zambia for three months and worked tirelessly to address stigma and discrimination against those affected by HIV and AIDS.

"It is fair to say that much of Oxfam's current work in Southern Africa, including the Mavume food security program in Mozambique and the joint Oxfam HIV and AIDS program in Zimbabwe are built on Liz's vision and inspiration," Executive Director Andrew Hewett said.

"Liz was a forthright colleague, sparky, passionate, knowledgeable and committed. Her passing has been felt by those who worked with her around the world."

A colleague from Alliance Lynnette Lowndes said Liz "loved Southern Africa and saw it as her other home. She was a committed and eloquent champion of the needy in the region".

Everyone at Oxfam Australia extends their sincere sympathies to Liz's family and her many friends.

Maize farmer and trader
Felicia Bailoni, from Malawi, with
her husband Steve. This year they
have produced 200 bags of maize —
100 for their family and 100 to sell.
Photo: Abbie Trayler-Smith/Oxfam.



Preparing for drought



Malawi is a country that fluctuates between drought and floods, which cripple poor farming communities and leave many rural families without enough food to eat. Editor Maureen Bathgate looks at how Oxfam is helping these communities become more resilient to disaster.

Erratic rainfall and HIV are a dangerous combination in Malawi — a country reliant on agriculture for its economy, food and workforce.

The small southern African nation swings between periodic drought and heavy rainfall — a situation expected to worsen as the effects of climate change take an even greater hold.

Variable rainfall is just a trigger of the crisis. A reduction in the amount of land available for farming and high HIV rates are also taking their toll.

HIV is cutting through the productive generation. HIV prevalence is at 14.1% and average life expectancy is just 39.8 years, one of the lowest in the world. The impact of this on the farming sector has been significant. Fathers become too weak to earn money; mothers stop working in the fields; large numbers of grandparents and teenagers who cannot support themselves are left to care for orphaned relatives; leaving a large part of the population without enough food to eat. And, when people are hungry and their immune systems are low, illnesses such as malaria and HIV race ahead with little resistance. Almost two in five children die before the age of five.

Meanwhile, the country's farming land is under pressure from rapid population growth and ever-increasing tea plantations. Tea plantations occupy about half of the arable land in some district, driving small farmers onto less productive soils where they continue to use traditional labour-intensive farming techniques that simply don't work on their new land.

Despite a turnaround in the last two years, which has seen Malawi's economy improve and its maize production go into surplus, many rural households still don't have enough food to last until the next harvesting season, let alone see them through the next, inevitable, drought.

This is where Oxfam and its local partners come in. As part of the Joint Oxfam Program in Malawi involving five Oxfam affiliates, we are working with rural communities to reduce the annual hungry period and build up their resilience to future droughts and floods.

Our approach is a holistic one. We are supporting agricultural projects that are aimed at increasing farm production by improving soil fertility, reducing soil erosion, economising water use, establishing better water supply and irrigation systems, restocking livestock, diversifying the types of crops grown, introducing more drought-tolerant species and increasing the number of harvests each year. We are also supporting local communities to lobby the Malawi government to enact new land legislation that recognises the needs of poor people whose livelihoods depend on land.

"Malawi's last drought was in 2005 and there will be more, that is the reality. We can't prevent them," Oxfam Australia's Southern Africa Regional Manager Andrew Hartwich says. "What we are trying to do, is have measures in place so that when there is a drought, the communities are better placed to respond to it and deal with it. It's about giving people the tools to lessen the impact of drought."



Orphans Dominique Mwitha, aged 16 years and his brother Lloyd, age 14 years, from the Thyolo District, in Malawi, are both at school. The family has received a goat from Oxfam's revolving goat scheme. Photo: Andrew Hartwich/OxfamAUS

Chaoneka is one village which is already seeing change. Oxfam has helped the community install an irrigation system which covers 15 hectares of land, eight of which are currently under crop. Local farmers have also been trained in irrigation layout, water management and system maintenance and repairs.



“What we are trying to do, is have measures in place so that when there is a drought, the communities are better placed to respond to it and deal with it. It's about giving people the tools to lessen the impact of drought.”



Mrs Enelesi Sailesi tends her sweet potato field in Tambala Village, Malawi. With Oxfam support and training she has learned more about cultivation and farming techniques which has enabled her family to produce higher yields from their crops. Photo: Carlo Heathcote/Oxfam.

Chaoneka Irrigation Scheme Secretary Rex Division says the irrigation system means that many households will now be able to grow two or three crops a year on the one plot of land, which will increase food production.

“Land is a very big problem in Thyolo [district] in general because most of it is under tea,” Rex says.

“By having this [irrigation] scheme it means that people will now be able to produce more than one crop in a year. With increased production, it means enough food as well as cash income to take care of other household necessities.”

Our agriculture projects are supported by broader programs aimed at reducing

food shortages each year — things like village grain stores, home vegetable gardens, communal gardens which support vulnerable families and solar racks for drying foods. We are also supporting alternative livelihood projects such as mushroom farming, bee-keeping and fish-farming to diversify people's income sources and home-based care programs to support vulnerable people in the community such as orphans and those who are sick or elderly.

Dora Yakobe, aged 65, lives alone in a grass-thatched house in Onga village, Chiradzulu district, following the death of her grandchildren. Being alone and elderly, she finds it difficult to grow enough food to eat each year,

especially as she is only able to do a limited amount of labour.

After receiving maize seed, fertilisers, herbicides and training from Oxfam, Dola has harvested 300kg of maize this season — compared to her last harvest of 100kg — using less labour-intensive techniques.

“I have harvested enough food this year and particularly, because I stay alone, this food will take me up to the next harvest season,” Dola says. “I will even have some surplus, which I can sell and get cash to buy other household necessities like soap, salt and other things.

Oxfam is also helping to rebuild stocks of farm animals that were wiped out in the 2005 drought when they had to be sold to buy food. Last year 7,463 female goats and 477 bucks were distributed to poor families in three districts, including households headed by women, orphans and elderly people. The first female kid that each goat produces is given to another poor family so that the benefit multiplies throughout the village. About 80% of these goats have already produced offspring. Recipients also receive training in animal health and care.

“Two years ago, only one or two people here had livestock — but Oxfam provided 10 goats and now almost everyone has a goat,” Tambala Village Committee Chair Simon Kafodya says

To help make sure that communities take responsibility for the activities that we support, we have helped them set up community committees comprising local men and women.

“If you're working in drought and flood prone communities you need mechanisms within each community to respond quickly to the situation; so that when there is a drought, the villages don't have to set up new structures, they can use the community committees that are already in place,” Andrew Hartwich explains.

“What we are trying to do is help community members be ready for the next big shock — the next drought or the next flood — so that the impacts might not be quite as crippling as they have been in the past.”

Can't beat a good book



Children from a remote mountain community in Laos are now receiving a better education as Editor Maureen Bathgate discovered during a recent visit.

Grade 5 student Bau Kiu enjoys reading the new books at library in his new primary school in Nong Por Village, Laos. Photo: Jerry Galea/OxfamAUS

It can be tough trying to get a good education when your school has no roof, walls, desks, chairs, blackboards or books. Even tougher, when you reach Grade 3 and have to spend up to two hours walking over a mountain to the nearest village just so you can continue going to school.

But that was daily reality for the children of Nong Por village, in northern Laos, until recently, when their new school opened its doors — the result of a partnership between Oxfam Australia, the district government and the local community.

Not only does the new school have five classrooms, complete with blackboards, desks, benches and teaching materials, but also a toilet block, sporting equipment, and a library filled with new books — something which has made Grade One student Sa Pa Wang particularly happy.

“I like learning; best of all I like reading books in the library,” she says. “I don't have a favourite [book], I like them all. When I finish school I want to be a doctor so I can help people.”

Bigger and better resources mean the school can now offer five grades, instead of two, and reach a greater number of local children. Student numbers have risen from 40 to 157,

including 68 girls, and its Grade One class is ranked second in the district.

“Before we had this school, children would go to the fields with their mother and work, or look after younger children at home while their parents go to the field,” village leader Gia Gio La says. “Now about 95%–96% of children come to school. The number of girls coming to school has especially increased.”

Nom Si Song, who has four children attending the school, believes it's important for her children to get a good education rather than work at home.

“We come from the Hmong ethnic minority group. We need our children to read, write and learn the Laolum language, so that they are equal with other children. If they get the same education as others, they can see everything and do everything that other children can do and get good jobs.”

A better resourced school, with teachers' houses and training also means that difficulties in attracting and keeping good quality teachers are things of the past.

“We now have a house for the teachers to live in, a good water supply system, toilets and solar power,” School Director Kham Luang says. “It is very easy to get

teachers here now. Teachers from other villages now want to come here to teach.”

Our work in Nong Por extends beyond education. Since our program began here in 2001, we have worked with the community to install gravity-fed clean water and irrigation systems, establish a development fund, support poultry and pig raising projects, and build a road to access local markets and health services.

“Our community now understands how to work together to get things done,” Gia Gio Loa says. “Before Oxfam started working here, it was very difficult to get the community to participate in activities, but Oxfam provided us with training in community participation and gender equality and now we understand that it is easier, and better for the community, to work together.

“Most importantly, the lives of people in our village have improved. Children can attend school, villagers can access the district market and hospital, livelihoods have improved and people have enough rice to eat. We are very happy.”



You can help the rural families in Malawi withstand future droughts and floods by donating to our 2007 Peace Appeal. Call 1800 088 110 or donate securely online at www.oxfam.org.au/donate



To find out more about our work in Laos visit www.oxfam.org.au/laos

Reality television Vietnamese style

Active citizenship and accountability are central to our new strategic plan. Oxfam Australia's Development Effectiveness Director Chris Roche shows how some poor communities are using these processes to achieve lasting change.

Reality television might be considered a relatively new concept in Australia, but back in 1995, a group of parents in Vietnam's Ha Tinh province used the concept to tackle an alarming drop in primary school attendance.

Parents from Ky Nam commune — well aware of the importance of education in breaking the poverty cycle — were gravely concerned when their children began to drop out of school and welcomed Oxfam's innovative approach to tackling the problem. In collaboration with the University of Reading in the United Kingdom, Oxfam helped communities to document the situation and find solutions through the use of participatory video.

The video that was produced revealed that children were being made to tend teachers' fields and collect firewood

during school hours and give teachers money. Interviews with parents also revealed that their previous attempts to address these issues at school meetings had resulted in children being threatened and blacklisted by teachers.

After much deliberation the parents decided to show their video to the school's headmaster. He was angered by the allegations and wanted a right of reply, so accepted the offer to record his response on video. In the resulting film he said that the parents had the wrong information and that labour laws permitted teachers to use children to tend land given to them by the commune. He also explained that if parents paid their outstanding school fees which were required by law, then the school would be able to function well and there would be no need to request children's labour.

The parents decided to meet with the village committee to show their video and seek explanations. The committee, concluding that both parties had right on their side, agreed that further discussion was needed among parents, the school and commune authorities to establish clear rules on cash and labour contributions. They also recommended that the video should be shown to the District Chairman who responded positively:

"It's no shame to talk about our problems and it's the only way to find solutions ... The issue of transparency should be addressed by the headmaster in front of the parents' meeting and the expenditure should be explained for next year, and there should be careful monitoring of expenditure during the year, so our film will make the parents, school, children and community closer..."

A follow up visit by an Oxfam fieldworker one year later revealed marked improvements in relationships and parents' satisfaction with the school. During the year, three parent teacher meetings were held; local authorities had to agree to any contributions sought by the school; the practice of children collecting firewood and cutting grass for teachers stopped; and teachers were sent to talk to villagers about the value of education and to persuade them to send their children back to school. Attendance improved.

As one mother put it: "Now facts are recorded on video and it's people's opinion and everybody can look at it, and the school no longer dares do the wrong things. They are made accountable, because they fear that outsiders may come back and check. At the school meetings [in the past] we would not



Children in the Grade 3 class at Ngu Lac primary school, Vietnam. Photo: Jim Holmes/Panos.

“Accountability is fundamentally a relationship of power. When accountability works, citizens are able to make demands on powerful institutions, and ensure those demands are met.”

dare to express our views so directly. Here it can be recorded on video and shown to others, and we are not afraid because it is the truth.”

This participatory video project in Vietnam is only one of thousands of examples of citizens becoming active in holding governments, corporations and non-government organisations to account. Participatory budgeting in Brazil, budget monitoring in East Africa, and the “right to information” movement and use of citizen report cards in India are all initiatives which show that active citizenship can move beyond the local to influence national planning and budgeting processes. The results are encouraging.

For example, in Uganda increased transparency and accountability in the education sector has led to a dramatic increase in the proportion of budgeted funds reaching schools — from 24% in 1995 to 82% in 2001. In Brazil, budget expenditure on pro-poor enterprises such as health and education has increased dramatically.

More recently, in Papua New Guinea's Central province, Oxfam Australia's work with communities living along a river contaminated by tailings from the Australian-owned Tolukuma Gold mine has resulted in the mining company agreeing to provide clean, safe and adequate water supplies to affected communities. It is a unique process which has involved full community participation, local partner organisations, Oxfam public health and water specialists, the Oxfam Australia Mining Ombudsman and mining company representatives.

The first two villages to participate in the process will be involved in installing household rainwater tanks for clean water, wells with solar pumps to ensure that women are not required to walk for hours to collect water, bio-sand filters to ensure that householders can self-manage water quality and training in hygiene promotion and soap production.

More than 50 members of each community, including traditional leaders, have developed detailed plans describing

how all parties will work together to achieve these objectives. The community physically holds the plans and will use them to hold the mining company to account, while the mining company has electronic copies. The company has already attempted to reduce the emphasis and resources allocated to hygiene promotion training, but the communities and local partner organisations have used the plans to reject those suggestions.

“Accountability is fundamentally a relationship of power. When accountability works, citizens are able to make demands on powerful institutions, and ensure those demands are met.”¹ This is why active citizenship and accountability are central to Oxfam Australia's new strategic plan, *For a just world without poverty*. We believe they are consistent with our commitment to helping people to help themselves and to ensuring their human rights are upheld. These processes also empower people living in poverty to effectively express how organisations such as ours can support them as well as tell us when we get it wrong.

Community members affected by the Tolukuma gold mine in Papua New Guinea discuss their water supply needs. Photo: Leon Miles/OxfamAUS.



To obtain a copy of our strategic plan *For a just world without poverty* visit www.oxfam.org.au/strategic_plan or call 1800 088 110.

¹ Peter Newell and Joanna Wheeler, ID21 Focus July 2007 'Making Accountability Count', <http://www.id21.org/focus/citizenship/art05.html>

Three hundred remarkable young people from all over the world gathered in Sydney in October for eight days of learning at Oxfam International Youth Partnerships' Kaleidoscope 2007. Dorothy Griffiths gives us the inside scoop.

Changing the world in a week

For the third time since its inception in 2000, Oxfam International Youth Partnerships (OIYP) is enabling a new generation of young people to learn skills and make connections so they can develop and implement projects to improve conditions in their own countries.

OIYP is a global network of young people, known as action partners, who are working for positive, equitable and sustainable change. Kaleidoscope 2007 — held over eight days in Sydney in October — brought 300 new action partners from 89 countries together for a range of workshops, discussions, and activities. Over the next three years, they will be supported in their work and personal growth as community leaders to become a global force for change.

True to its name, Kaleidoscope — a continually changing pattern of shapes and colours — represented infinite possibilities. The vision of one young person working for a better life in a community, was multiplied by 300 others, brought together to learn, challenge, discuss and plan; creating a chain reaction of positive change across communities, countries and regions.

WELCOME

Kaleidoscope's week of intense activity began on a balmy Sunday evening. Action partners, volunteers and Oxfam staff following a lantern lit trail were greeted by Darug elder Uncle Des Dyer with the customary welcome to country.

A smoking ceremony cleansed the site to ensure the next eight days would be full of positive experiences and understanding.

Action partners responded with dances from Cameroon, Palestine, and Pacific Islanders. Then a solo performance by Arpit Christian from India quickly became a chorus joined by others from India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Symbolic gift-giving and the melding of waters from different countries into a single vessel celebrated the coming together of young people from countries worldwide.

The same eager readiness to share ideas and cultures was repeated at every session throughout the week's packed program of activities. As Nader Houella from Lebanon said, "It is so nice to be talking, laughing, dancing with people who don't know my language, barely know where my country is and have nothing to do with my culture. How could such a chemistry be created? We would dance salsa or Arabic 'dabke', but in the end we all feel human above everything else."

SAFE SPACES

Work started early on Monday in home room sessions that started each day's activities. Designed to be safe spaces for action partners to think out loud and shape the plans to be implemented back home, the 12 home rooms were guided by "mentors and motivators" who had been action partners in 2004.

Speaking for his fellow mentors, Lamin Camara from Gambia expressed their commitment to helping the 2007 action partners realise that change is possible. "Being an action partner was the defining moment for me in linking my community experience to the global scale," Lamin said.

Pieces of the Kaleidoscope

I listen to the poetry and the languages and the voices.

I hear the voices of the past, present and future and see the hands guiding footsteps.

I see minds speaking to hearts and listen to the souls that answer.

The music plays over this and many lands.

Each one a note joining to create the song of change.

From pain and hurt and frustration grows resilience and confidence and power.

The power to change.

The courage to embrace the change and the audacity to face what we are.

We are the future.

We are the change.

Written by Tsitsi Mhlanga
OIYP action partner from Zimbabwe

At the welcome ceremony, a solo performance by Arpit Christian from India quickly became a chorus joined by others from India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Photo: Nic Walker/OxfamAUS.



Action partners from across the globe make their entrance at the Kaleidoscope 2007 opening celebration. Photo: Branco Gacia/OxfamAUS.



LEARNING AND CHALLENGING

At the heart of the Kaleidoscope experience was the learning marketplace — opportunities for action partners to learn skills such as basic project management, strategies for access to essential services and producing films for social change, as well as taking part in facilitated discussions on topics such as “peace and conflict” and “gender, culture and religion”.

“We asked action partners what they wanted — the learning marketplace reflects the skills and topics they identified in planning their own projects,” OIYP Learning and Development Coordinator Anna Powell said.

Learning new approaches built bridges across many barriers. In the session on land rights, action partners from Israel and Indigenous Australia found similarities on the importance of cultural links to land.

Regional differences were put aside in peace and conflict sessions that looked at ways to break the cycle of fear, helplessness and anger that led to violence. Daniel Zepico from Spain and Nancy Emil from Egypt spoke on the conflicts in the Mediterranean region and the importance of empowering youth to actively work for peace in their communities.

In an intense human rights session, action partners found they differed in prioritising rights such as gender equity or the rights of refugees, yet gained valuable insights into other cultures’ beliefs. In a “rights in

crisis” session, a Zimbabwean action partner described the dangers involved with speaking freely when a government acts against its own people.

Gender justice, violence against women and the spread of HIV and AIDS were interwoven themes running through many learning marketplace discussions.

Edmund Baganizi from Rwanda said that rebuilding the country post-genocide “needs men to learn to respect women’s views”. Khalida Brohi, from Pakistan is clear that violence against women needs to be stopped and is working to eradicate the practice of honour killing in her country.

Six plenary sessions brought action partners together to consider the key themes of Kaleidoscope — gender justice, peace and conflict, economic justice and access to essential services — and how their relationship with Oxfam would work over the next three years.

The final session, Beyond Kaleidoscope 2007 looked at next steps in the OIYP program. Tatat Tatat from Indonesia said, “Before coming here, I thought changing would be so difficult. Now I see that there is power in little steps — small projects to bring education, to make our roads better. Small changes in the community will lead a bigger movement and real change.”

CELEBRATING CREATIVITY

A full program of arts and cultural activities supported the whole Kaleidoscope

learning experience, stimulating creative expression and providing a welcome break to the intensity of new experiences.

Rap artist Morganics, a passionate community worker with socially disadvantaged people, inspired action partners in interactive sessions, encouraging them to “speak in your own language, speak how you talk”. Action partners from Zimbabwe and Aotearoa shared the stage with Morganics, displaying their beatbox and breakdancing talents to loud cheers.

The mid-week Pieces of the Kaleidoscope home room activity enabled action partners to express their experiences through through songs, dances and riotous skits representing themes of strength in diversity, standing up to injustice and leading by example.

Likewise, a daily art installation, The Storyboard, provided action partners with an artistic outlet to express their feelings, thoughts and experiences in personal and varied ways. At the emotion-charged closing ceremony, all eight storyboards were paraded on stage.

Kaleidoscope would not have been possible without the enthusiasm, hard work and dedication of the 300 volunteers of all ages and backgrounds who put in tireless hours, both in the lead-up to the event and throughout the week.

Dorothy Griffiths was OIYP Media Coordinator for Kaleidoscope 2007.

A battle of mines

A small farming community in the Philippines is battling to stop a huge gold and copper mine. Oxfam Australia’s Extractive Industries Advocacy Officer Christina Hill shares their story.



Juanita Cut-ing remembers the day when two armed soldiers came to her home, accompanied by mining company representatives and tried to force her to sell her land.

“They tried to force us to sign the receipt [of an offer to buy land] but we refused. I was afraid because they saw the ‘no to mining’ sign outside my house. The military men were there with their fingers on the trigger and were peering behind the house and in the bathroom,” she recalls.

Juanita’s story is one of many outlined in Oxfam Australia’s latest Mining Ombudsman case report, which focuses on the proposed Didipio gold and copper mine in North Central Luzon, the Philippines. The Didipio area is a fertile agricultural region, with farmers growing food for consumption or cash crops such as citrus trees, both of which rely on clean water from the nearby river.

The report outlines the tactics Australian mining company OceanaGold has used in trying to develop the mine, despite opposition from many community members. As recently as October, the Didipio community elected a new local council dominated by councillors opposed to the mining project. The mine is expected to begin production by 2009.

Our Mining Ombudsman became involved with the proposed mine at the request of local community members, who claimed the company was trying to force through the mine’s development without listening to community concerns. Over the past five years, the Mining Ombudsman has conducted interviews and participated in community meetings involving hundreds of villagers from Didipio, as well as meeting with government officials, local councillors and mining company representatives.



Juanita Cut-ing and her son Roldan express their opposition to the proposed Didipio mine and their desire for a continuation of long-term sustainable agricultural development in the Didipio area. Photo: Jason McLeod/OxfamAUS

The results of those investigations are alarming — allegations of harassment and intimidation and attempts to undermine the local council which has consistently opposed the proposed mine. Alleged tactics include attempting to pressure people to sell their land at a company-determined price, threatening legal proceedings against illiterate farmers, offering money, employment and inflated land prices to democratically-elected councillors, and deliberately inciting an adversarial atmosphere that has fuelled community division over the proposed mine operation.

Didipio Barangay councillor, Kagawad Peter Duyapat alleged that he had refused an offer of money in return for his support for the mine. “A company executive told me that if I allowed mining and would help him, he would give me much money. He said that as long as I was alive I would not be able to consume this money.”

At the heart of this case is the right of all indigenous people and local community members to be heard and to be able to influence decisions that will affect their lives. For the people of Didipio, this means having the opportunity to approve or reject the mine, without coercion or manipulation, and with all the facts at hand.

While we believe that Australian mining companies can contribute to local development and poverty eradication, the Didipio case highlights the need to establish a formal independent complaints mechanism for communities affected by Australian mining companies overseas.

Such a mechanism would ensure that individual and community rights are protected, force less ethical companies to improve their practices and enable companies to be more accountable to communities affected by mining. More importantly, it would make sure that communities like Didipio are listened to.



For more information about Oxfam International Youth Partnerships and Kaleidoscope 2007 visit www.iyp.oxfam.org

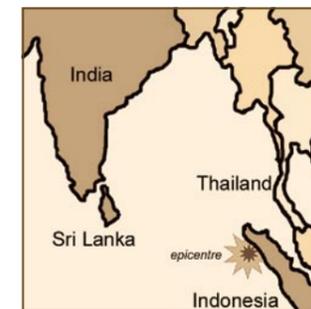


To download a copy of the Didipio case report or to sign the online petition demanding that OceanaGold implement the report’s recommendations visit www.oxfam.org.au/didipio



Ponnomma and her two daughters, Letcha, 17 and Nishanthini, 13, at their new house which Oxfam Australia and local partner Affected Women's Forum are building in Navatkadu village, Sri Lanka. Photo: Jim Holmes/Oxfam.

It's been almost three years since a massive tsunami devastated coastal communities across the Indian Ocean. Three-quarters of the way through Oxfam's response, we look at how Oxfam has been helping to rebuild shattered lives.



Rebuilding for a better future

It was always going to be a mammoth exercise — helping to rebuild the lives of millions of people who were left devastated by the Boxing Day tsunami of 2004. In all, more than 242,000 people died, 350,000 homes were destroyed and millions of livelihoods wiped out.

Three years on, Oxfam affiliates and partner organisations are estimated to have assisted more than two million tsunami-affected people in seven countries — Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, Burma, Somalia and the Maldives.

We said from the outset that it would take time to help rebuild shattered lives, livelihoods and communities, and that has been the case.

In the weeks and months immediately after the disaster, our priority was to save lives by providing food, household items, clean water, sanitation, hygiene education and shelter and restoring assets such as roads, bridges and farming land. As the response has evolved, the focus has shifted towards working with communities to find longer-term solutions to their problems, establishing sustainable livelihoods and better preparing communities for future emergencies.

Our work has gone beyond merely restoring things to how they were before the tsunami, replacing what was lost, and rebuilding what was damaged. We are trying to ensure our projects in tsunami-affected communities are equitable and don't fuel tensions or exacerbate relative

poverty. This approach means ensuring that poor and marginalised people who might not have suffered damage in the tsunami, but experience ongoing daily hardship, are included in our work.

In Sri Lanka, we have built 2,215 transitional and permanent shelters for families who lost their homes in the tsunami, with another 200 permanent homes currently under construction. We are also building low-cost houses for 490 poor families living in tsunami-affected areas who didn't lose their homes in the tsunami, but live in sub-standard conditions. Many of the families receiving these low-cost houses are already benefiting from Oxfam livelihood loans. It is part of our rights-based approach to ensure that all people in tsunami-affected communities have equal access to housing, regardless of whether or not the tsunami destroyed their homes.

Ponnomma, a 54-year-old widow and mother of eight, from Navatkadu village, in Ampara district, has spent her life living in cramped and flimsy shacks. In January next year, she and her family will move into their new cement brick house which is being built by local partner organization Affected Women's Forum (AWF).

Oxfam and AWF are building five such houses in the village and put in place a rigorous consultation and selection process to ensure that the right people were being targeted for assistance. Once selected, the families were then consulted about the types of houses they wanted.



Oxfam Australia partner Social Awareness Society for Youth, is helping tsunami-affected tribal communities near Cuddalore in southeast India, with income-generating projects. Photo: Martin Wurt/OxfamAUS.

"I wanted a small kitchen, and I liked the direction the entrance was facing — it is auspicious to have it facing east," Ponnomma explains.

"We never imagined we'd be able to move into such a house in our lifetime," Ponnomma's daughter Letcha, aged 17, says.

We have also encouraged greater involvement of women in livelihood activities through self-help groups, non-traditional skills and new ventures such as mushroom farming, fishing and cement



“We never imagined we'd be able to move into such a house in our lifetime.”

Abduraman and his wife, Lumi Kassum, started this small but successful café in Kreung Itam village in Aceh Province, Indonesia. Oxfam helped them to build up the business which now supports their whole family. Photo: Jim Holmes/Oxfam.



brick-making. By targeting women, we aim to not only increase household incomes, but give them a stronger voice in their families and communities. In eastern Sri Lanka Muslim and Tamil communities which have long experienced tension are now working together in groups on livelihood projects, breaking down cultural and ethnic barriers.

In Aceh, in Indonesia, Oxfam's tsunami response is winding down, as projects are completed and local non-government organisations take over. Four of Oxfam's seven offices in Aceh have now closed, with the remaining offices now developing their own effective and responsible exit strategies in consultation with beneficiaries, partner organisations and local authorities.

Our work in Aceh has had a large public health focus — building new water supply systems, wells, toilets, washing facilities, distributing hygiene kits and conducting widespread hygiene education. In 2007 alone, we have dug more than 2,500 wells, built or desludged 1,241 septic tanks and installed water supply systems for 16 villages, including one in Lhokseumawe which will deliver clean water to almost 10,000 people. On top of this, we have also built 1,443 homes, 30 schools and helped 52,000 people with start or rebuild small businesses and other income-generating projects.

In India, Oxfam's focus has been to provide poor and marginalised people in the fishing and agriculture sectors, especially women, and lower-caste and marginalised tribal groups, with alternate livelihood opportunities and market access. This has primarily been done by organising community members into

self-help groups, and providing them with cash grants, loans and training to establish their own small loans and savings programs and establish links with banks.

The tsunami response has tested Oxfam — both in terms of systems and capacity to respond — as much as it has tested local partner organisations. Lack of access to areas of northern and eastern Sri Lanka due to renewed civil conflict has hampered our livelihoods and rebuilding programs. Many of the homes, livelihoods and community facilities that we helped rebuild in these areas after the tsunami have once again been destroyed. Families displaced by the tsunami in 2004 now find themselves displaced by conflict. We have been working to support these families with food, clean water, sanitation and hygiene education.

As well, local partner organisations in all countries have found it a challenge to scale up their programming, and Oxfam has had to work hard with them to ensure that adequate financial management and governance structures are in place to ensure accountability.

For example in India, some of the earlier livelihood grants and loans were delayed and some women who received loans did not always get the advice and support they needed to build truly sustainable income generating activities. As a result, we thoroughly reviewed our India tsunami program and assessed partners' capacity and support needs. We have since changed how the project is managed and introduced stronger risk management structures and improved partner appraisal processes.

Another key lesson we have learned from the tsunami is that we need to work harder with communities on disaster risk reduction and step up our work with partners and local governments to be better prepared to respond to disasters — especially as the world faces an increasing frequency and scale of disasters as a result of climate change.

We have already started to address this — working with communities to establish rapid emergency response plans, rehabilitate coastal ecosystems and providing training to vulnerable communities, partner organisations and government authorities to improve infrastructure and disaster response mechanisms.

So far, 85% of the total funds received into the Oxfam International Tsunami Fund have been spent with all remaining funds to be spent or transferred to the implementing Oxfam affiliates by December 2008. We currently estimate that only 6% of money raised will be needed for administration and fundraising costs, well below our promised level of 10%, leaving more funds to be spent on programs.

While Oxfam's four year post-tsunami program is nearing an end, our aim is to ensure that the effects of our work with affected communities last for many decades to come.

Story compiled from the Oxfam International Tsunami Fund third-year report and other Oxfam reports.

A push for change

Sex workers in Indonesia have very little control over their own reproductive health, placing them at high risk of HIV infection, as Oxfam Australia's Indonesia Program Officer Natalie Purcell writes.



Kedung Banteng is a small village set amongst rice fields against a backdrop of mountains in the Ponorogo district, in East Java, Indonesia. Only accessible via a small dirt road and characterised by large numbers of migrant workers, Kedung Banteng has become the district's *lokalisasi*, the Indonesian name given to a location for sex workers.

The presence of *lokalisasi* throughout Indonesia, particularly in East Java, is contrary to the public face of traditionalist Islam, the country's main religion. Sex work is still a taboo topic amid a dominant public morality which frowns upon pre-marital sex or sex outside of marriage. Yet it exists quite openly throughout the region and is loosely regulated and taxed by local governments.

Muslim Women Initiatives for Human Rights or DIFAA (an Arabic term meaning women defenders) is a local organisation that Oxfam Australia is currently supporting to undertake research, through public forums and focus groups, about the issues sex workers face and the prevalence and risk of HIV in the community. DIFAA will use the research to develop a project to educate the community about HIV — a project which will be based on the actual needs and reality of those who work and live in Kedung Banteng.

On a recent trip to Indonesia, I arrived at DIFAA's office in Madiun one day before the Muslim holy month of Ramadan began. Luluk and Farida — two young Muslim women from the new young generation of women activists in Indonesia — greeted me at the door with beaming smiles.

In no time I was packed into the car and we headed off to visit the *lokalisasi*, about 45 minutes away. Luluk and Farida explained that about 150 women sex workers live in the *lokalisasi* which is separated from surrounding villages by a



Ari and Farida discuss the importance of correct condom use with their colleagues at DIFAA, in Madiun, Indonesia. DIFAA is currently undertaking research that will be used to develop a project to combat the spread of HIV and AIDS in the local community of Kedung Banteng. Photo: Natalie Purcell/OxfamAUS.

two-metre high wall. Inside there are about 40 houses which are run as small brothels by "mummies". The houses have a brothel and bar at the front and a living area for the "mummy's" family at the back. Each "mummy" manages a group of younger women, usually about five per house.

Almost all the women had returned to their villages for Ramadan, partially due to the fact that all *lokalisasi* are closed down by local government regulations for the month. We met with one of the "mummies" who allowed us to walk around the village.

Apart from prominent beer signs out the front of every house, it appeared no different to any other village.

Farida explained that although the district government carries out health checks every three months including blood tests, it is unclear where the blood is sent or how

it is tested. The women are also injected every Thursday according to government regulations, although they are not told what the injections contain. Some are under the impression that it will prevent HIV, but most likely it is some form of contraception to prevent them falling pregnant.

It is clear from DIFAA's preliminary discussions that the women working in this *lokalisasi* do not understand the risks of HIV; have very limited ability to insist that clients use condoms; and are having their reproductive health controlled by district government regulations without their consent or knowledge.

We are hoping that DIFAA's model to approach HIV education from a rights-based perspective will be a model that can be used elsewhere in Indonesia, particularly through the credibility and momentum that Islamic-based organisations can harness in the broader Indonesian community.



To download a copy of the Oxfam International Tsunami Fund third-year report and read more about our tsunami response visit www.oxfam.org.au/tsunami



For more information about our work in Indonesia visit www.oxfam.org.au/indonesia

A confronting moment

It was only after travelling to another continent and experiencing the cultures of other young people from around the world, that young Aboriginal woman Jirra Harvey realised she knew so little about her own.

It is a confronting moment, the first time you see yourself as a product of attempted cultural genocide. Even more so when you have just witnessed the very acts that almost wiped out your own people being committed against our Indigenous brothers and sisters from the Asia-Pacific.

I consider myself pretty educated on the Aboriginal civil rights movement, on my ancestors' struggles to keep our culture strong. I've given many talks on the Australian Government's assimilation policies and how they affect our communities today. But it was in a Filipino province that the personal effects of colonisation truly hit me.

It was the final night of the Asia Pacific Indigenous Youth Network (APIYN) Forum in Baguio City, Philippines, which Oxfam

Australia sponsored me to attend. I was sitting around a fire with my new friends from various Indigenous communities, of whom I had been completely ignorant just 10 days before.

The local Cordillera community had taken us in, cooked up a big feed and were now singing the songs of their struggle, catchy tunes sang in traditional dialects. Then it was our turn. Each international delegate performed proudly, eager to share their own culture with the group. But I couldn't. I don't know any of my language, my songs, or my people's traditional dances.

My ancestors were punished with beatings, or even death, for passing on cultural traditions. But language was passed on in whispers, symbols drawn in the sand. Today, we have language revival programs

and performing arts schools; it is partly my own complacency that has prevented my learning. Sitting next to that fire, sipping on homemade rice wine, I made a promise to myself. I will not represent my people again on an international scale until I can utter a greeting in my language. Until I can stand up at a solidarity night and share the traditions that my ancestors fought so hard to protect.

I grew up knowing the stories of colonisation that have been hidden from mainstream Australia; knowing of "games" played by settlers who buried black babies neck deep in the sand before kicking their heads off. Twenty years and a university degree later, I hadn't realised the extent to which this kind of genocide was still occurring. Listening to fellow delegates from Burma, Thailand and the Philippines was like staring into the eyes of my ancestors. I have heard the stories, but I, like most Australians, saw them as belonging to yesterday.

The conference was run by a group of young, full-time volunteers. The APIYN Secretariat have a kind of passion driven by desperate need, the kind of dedication that our Aunties and Uncles must have possessed in order to win us the right to vote, the right to education and health care.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the 1967 referendum. Let's pay tribute to the Aboriginal activists that fought diligently for the rights we now enjoy. And as we honour their struggles, let's not forget that our Indigenous brothers and sisters are today fighting that very same war in disadvantaged communities across the globe.

"United, the people will never be defeated."

Oxfam Australia supported Jirra Harvey to attend the Asia Pacific Indigenous Youth Network (APIYN) Forum in The Philippines, as part of its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth leadership program. Jirra has also been selected as one of 300 Oxfam International Youth Partnership Action Partners for 2007–2010.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Australia



Photo: Tony McDonough/OxfamAUS.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have occupied Australia for at least 40,000 years.

European settlement in 1788 brought rapid changes to Aboriginal society — with a combination of disease, loss of land and direct violence decimating the Indigenous population.

Today, Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders comprise about 2.3% of Australia's total population; and while Australia's overall population ages, Indigenous Australians are getting younger, with 40% aged less than 15 years. They are also the country's most disadvantaged group in terms of life expectancy, education, income, unemployment, imprisonment, child protection and health and wellbeing.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Oxfam Australia has been working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, organisations, individuals and groups for more than 30 years to support initiatives in health and wellbeing, youth, and self-determination.

We also advocate and campaign for the rights of Indigenous Australians, such as through the Close the Gap campaign, which is calling on governments to take action to achieve health equality for Indigenous Australians within 25 years.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We help communities to identify their needs, the gaps in services and the ways that services can be made more

culturally appropriate. We support partner organisations and Aboriginal community controlled health services in reducing levels of chronic illness, preventable diseases and mental and physical disability.

INDIGENOUS YOUTH

We work with Indigenous youth in urban, rural and remote areas to develop their leadership skills and strengthen their cultural identity, responsibility and rights. We encourage them to become actively involved in their communities and wider society.

SELF-DETERMINATION

We work to ensure that Indigenous Australians have genuine opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their lives. We provide communities with information about their rights and strengthen their organisations through training and advocacy support.

GULF REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

The Gulf Regional Health Service, supported by Oxfam Australia and the Federal Government, aims to improve the health of people living in Normanton, Mornington Island and Doomagee. Staffed by Aboriginal people, the program is based on the principle that health improves when communities are given a voice in planning and in prioritising culturally appropriate health and wellbeing services.

Fast Facts

Population

455,031 cf. 19,855,288

Life expectancy

Women: 64.8 cf. 83.6 years
Men: 59.4 cf. 77.7 years

Infant mortality rate

1,304 cf. 445 per
100,000 live births

Low birth-weight babies

13% cf. 6%

Completed Year 12

18.5% cf. 43.5%

Unemployment rate

20.3% cf. 5.8%

Average weekly income

\$394 cf. \$665

English as second language

14.1% cf. 15.8%

Home owners or buyers

30% cf. 70%

* The first figure attests to the Indigenous Australian population while the second is non-Indigenous or all-Australian population figures.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics National Census 2006, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey 2002 and the Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples 2005



To find out more about our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Program visit www.oxfam.org.au/australia

The reality of being a refugee

Imagine being forced to flee from war. How would you survive?

Oxfam Australia is giving Australians the chance to experience the tough and perilous life of a refugee with its new Refugee Realities project.

In 1982, at the age of five, Mawien Kuol fled into the night with his mother when cattle raiders came and destroyed the village where they lived in Southern Sudan. They moved to Sudan's capital Khartoum to start a new life, but in 1995 Mawien was forced to flee again after being wrongly accused of spying for the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army.

"I had to escape. My life was at risk," Mawien explains "Along the border I met some friends from the south who had the same problem. We were told not to carry anything, no clothes or albums. I pretended to be a farmer and walked into Ethiopia."

Once in Ethiopia, Mawien went to the Dima Refugee Camp where he stayed for one year, before again being forced to flee. This time it was because of his Dinka ethnicity that he was violently targeted by other people in the camp. Mawien fled to a nearby hospital where he was protected for three months, before walking the long road back to Sudan and fleeing again to Kenya.

"I escaped Dima refugee camp at night with my half brother, cousin and nephew and other people who knew the direction," he recalls. "We walked only at night through the bush. There were wild animals. We had no drinking water, and I was sick with malaria but had no medicine. We ate wild foods."

"We then went to Polataka camp which was attacked by gunfire. The room where I was living was destroyed. We were lucky it was rainy season; we survived by hiding in the long grass and the crops."

For many Australians, it is hard to fathom what life as a refugee must be like. To bring that experience to life, Oxfam Australia is launching a new project, Refugee Realities, to draw attention to the rights and experiences of refugees and other displaced people around the world.

Refugee Realities is an interactive simulation exercise that will recreate the experience of a refugee, from becoming displaced to finding permanent settlement. A refugee camp, fitted out with humanitarian supplies and materials sourced from actual emergencies, will be created in Melbourne's Gasworks Arts Park. Visitors will have to navigate a land mine field, learn about family separation and how to register to receive humanitarian assistance. Volunteers, who include humanitarian workers and former refugees, will guide groups through the experience.

One of the guides will be Mawien Kuol who, after nine years travelling between camps is now settled in Australia with his wife Veronica and their three children. Mawien is volunteering as the logistics coordinator for Refugee Realities — part of a team of eight interns and countless volunteers who are bringing the project to life.

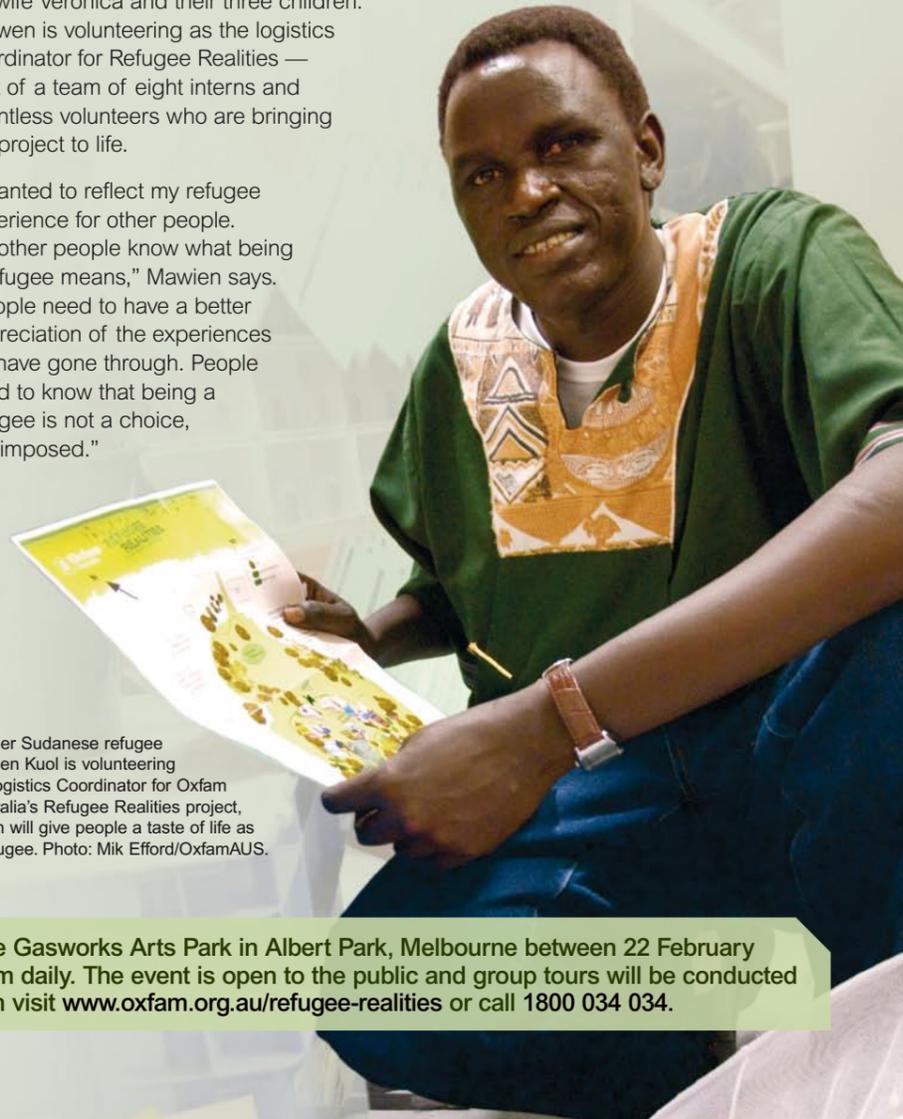
"I wanted to reflect my refugee experience for other people. Let other people know what being a refugee means," Mawien says. "People need to have a better appreciation of the experiences we have gone through. People need to know that being a refugee is not a choice, it is imposed."

Former Sudanese refugee Mawien Kuol is volunteering as Logistics Coordinator for Oxfam Australia's Refugee Realities project, which will give people a taste of life as a refugee. Photo: Mik Efford/OxfamAUS.

While Mawien's experiences are unique, like most refugees his story is about a journey — a perilous journey that has taken almost a lifetime, crossed country borders and involved incredible strength and resourcefulness to survive.

There are more than 34 million people around the world who, like Mawien, have been forced to flee their homes because of war and conflict. Around 7 million of these people have been living in refugee camps and temporary settlements for more than 10 years.

Story by Oxfam Australia's Refugee Realities Project Coordinator Steph Cousins.



Refugee Realities will be held at the Gasworks Arts Park in Albert Park, Melbourne between 22 February and 13 March 2008, from 10am-6pm daily. The event is open to the public and group tours will be conducted upon request. For more information visit www.oxfam.org.au/refugee-realities or call 1800 034 034.

IN BRIEF

Become a voting Member

If you're an Oxfam Australia supporter or volunteer and want to take your involvement a step further, then apply to become a voting member. Voting members provide input and feedback on national policies; contribute to redrafting state constitutions; vote in the national Oxfam Australia Board elections; and elect members of the respective state committees. They are also eligible to stand for positions on the Board and the relevant state committee.

Membership is open to Oxfam group members, supporters who have donated \$100 or more in the past year, students or non-wage earners who have donated at least \$50 in the past year, or volunteers who have provided 10 hours service in the past year.

For more information or a member application form visit www.oxfam.org.au/member or call 1800 088 110.



New Oxfam Shops

Shoppers in Sydney, Newcastle, Melbourne, Brisbane and Canberra are in for a treat, with five new Oxfam shops opening in time for Christmas. New stores have already opened at Chatswood Chase in Sydney, the Kotara centre in Newcastle, Knox City in Melbourne, and the Canberra Centre in Canberra, with a new Queensland shop opening at the Chirnside centre in Brisbane, within the next few weeks. The new stores come hot on the heels of the opening of a small Oxfam Shop at our new national office in Carlton, Melbourne.

To check out the latest Oxfam Shop catalogue or find your nearest store visit www.oxfamshop.org.au or call 1800 088 455.

Be a Groupie

Four new Oxfam groups have started up in South Australia and Western Australia recently, bringing the total number of groups across Australia to 54. The Oxfam University of Adelaide Group celebrated its first meeting with Fairtrade chocolate

tastings, while the Geraldton Group in Western Australia has arranged library displays, guest speakers and Make Poverty History stalls. The new Mandurah Group in WA has already run a Walk against Want, a fundraising dinner and a charity concert, while the WA Fair Trade Group has been busy promoting and selling Fairtrade products.

For more information about Oxfam groups visit www.oxfam.org.au/getactive/groups

Queen's Birthday honour

Long-standing Oxfam Australia Trading Board Member Peter Brokensha was awarded an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in the Queen's Birthday Honours in June. Peter received the honour for his services to arts administration, particularly through the establishment of the Argyle Arts Centre in Sydney, to programs supporting indigenous arts and crafts people and to the wider community. Peter served as Chair of the Oxfam Australia Trading Board for many years and is a key member of the St Mary's Oxfam Group in Adelaide.

Look at what you've done!

With over 19 Oxfam Shops Australia wide, your ongoing support means we can continue to do our thing for Fair Trade. So thank you, and lets keep going! Visit online at www.oxfamshop.org.au to see the new Oxfam Shop catalogue or call 1800 088 455 to receive a copy. You'll discover a whole new range of homewares, jewellery gifts and more Fair Trade products from our amazing designers around the world.



Oxfam shop
FAIR TRADE

The new Oxfam Shop catalogue is online now.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Sydney Shop C20 Centrepoint, Castlereagh Street Level, 100 Market Street (02) 9231 4016
Warringah Mall Shop 521 Arena Cove, 145 Old Pittwater, Brookvale (02) 9939 3488

Broadway Shop G15 Broadway Shopping Centre, 1 Bay Street, Broadway (02) 9280 3411

Macquarie Shop 12A Macquarie Centre, Corner Herring & Waterloo Roads, North Ryde (02) 9887 4295

Chatswood Chase G2B Chatswood Shopping Centre 345 Victoria Avenue, Chatswood NSW (02) 9410 3764

ACT

Canberra Shop AG20 The Canberra Centre, 148 Bunda Street, Canberra ACT (02) 6262 8760

Belconnen Shop 141 Level 3, Westfield Shopping Town, Belconnen (02) 6251 7045

VICTORIA

Camberwell Shop 5 & 6 Camberwell Arcade, 600 - 606 Burke Road, Camberwell (03) 9882 9599

Melbourne Shop 45 Walk Arcade, Bourke Street Mall (03) 9650 6060

Cheltenham Shop 3060 Westfield Southland, 1239 Nepean Highway, Cheltenham (03) 9584 8540

Carlton 132 Leicester Street, Carlton (03) 9347 2299 Limited stocks available

Knox City Shop 3111 Knox City Shopping Centre OPENS November 1800 088 455

QUEENSLAND

Brisbane Shop 230 Level 2, The Myer Centre, Queen Street, Brisbane (07) 3221 4451

Upper Mt Gravatt Shop 2047 Upper Level, Garden City Shopping Centre, Cnr Logan & Kessels Roads, Upper Mount Gravatt (07) 3349 4796

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Adelaide Shop 24 Charles Street Plaza, Charles Street (opposite David Jones) (08) 8223 1782

Marion Shop 2018 Level 2, Westfield Shoppingtown Marion, 297 Diagonal Road, Oaklands Park (08) 8296 5477

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Perth 872 Hay Street (near Shafto Lane), Perth (08) 9321 3784

Fremantle 22 Queen Street Cnr Adelaide Street, Fremantle (08) 9336 3111

TASMANIA

Launceston Centreway Arcade, Launceston TAS (03) 6331 7760

Coming soon to **Knox City in Victoria, Kotara in Newcastle and Chermiside in Queensland.** call 1800 088 455 for details.

www.oxfamshop.org.au

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(or how to avoid those last minute socks and jocks)

Oxfam
Unwrapped



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