

VOICES



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TOGETHER TO
SAVE WATER**

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LASTING LEGACY**

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OXFAM
Australia



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Our life-changing development programs and life-saving humanitarian efforts are made possible by the generous support of donors like you and the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.



Oxfam Australia acknowledges the First Peoples of Australia as the original custodians of the land, and respects the rights they hold as the Traditional Custodians.

We also recognise the dispossession of the land and its ongoing effects on First Nations Peoples today.

First Peoples readers should be aware that this publication may contain images or names of people who have since passed away.



Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Cover photo: Pak Ou, Lao PDR: Members of the native chicken production group (from left), Mon, Somchan and Bouathong. Photo: Patrick Moran/Oxfam. Oxfam acknowledges the support of the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

Connections

with Dr Chrisanta Muli,
Acting Chief Executive

Welcome to this edition of Voices. I'm so pleased to be able to share these stories of hope and resilience, particularly at a time when our world is facing such profound challenges and turmoil.

We've followed the progress of the Vanuatu Climate Action Network over the past few years as they advanced their fight through the United Nations, and now the International Court of Justice. You can read an update on page 7. We are proud to have stood alongside and worked with these incredible climate warriors.

You can also read about Anusha from Sri Lanka, who transformed her inherited pepper farm into a thriving business, exporting internationally after attending Oxfam-supported training on organic farming. And Somchan in Laos, whose family battled the hard times during COVID and are now thriving, thanks to her success in raising high-quality chickens.

These stories – and so many others – are only possible because of your continued support. Thank you for being a part of this journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chrisanta Muli".

DR CHRISANTA MULI

A vigil for children

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a dark blue winter jacket and a patterned scarf, stands at night on a grassy lawn. She is holding a book and looking down at it. In the background, the illuminated facade of Parliament House in Canberra is visible, with a flagpole and a flag to the left. The scene is lit with warm yellow light from the building and cooler blue and green lights from the night sky.

In July, Oxfam Australia joined eight other aid agencies on the lawns of Parliament House in Canberra for a 24-hour vigil to honour the 17,000 children who have died as a result of Israel's assault on Gaza.

The name of each child was read out by members of parliament, doctors, journalists, academics, actors, writers and members of the public. While we are facing severe restrictions on getting aid into Gaza, the Oxfam Confederation and our partners on the ground have managed to reach more than 1.4 million people across Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon with food, water and sanitation services, cash, essential basic items, and protection to the people most affected. We have also progressed critical efforts to advocate for an immediate, permanent ceasefire and unrestricted access to humanitarian aid.

Water is life in Timor-Leste

For the people of Naimeco village in Timor-Leste, water is a precious and scarce resource. A local spring called Mat-Hitu provides a small amount of water, but it's not consistent, and water is only available for two to three days at a time.

The local villagers have been able to protect Mat-Hitu by constructing a fence around it, and they also planted trees nearby, hoping their efforts would sustain the water source and protect it from degradation.

"Often, there isn't enough water to fill our jars," said Lucia, who has lived here for her whole life. "We're forced to find water elsewhere, which sometimes means walking long distances to other sources."

Thanks to our generous supporters, and with the support of the Australian Government through the Australian Humanitarian Partnership, Lucia and her neighbours are working with the Disaster Ready program and engaging with local authorities and non-governmental organisations to raise awareness of their needs. They hope that by making their voices heard, they might attract support for a more stable water supply system.

The community also initiated plans to build a larger water tank in Naimeco to collect and store enough water to bridge the gaps in the irregular supply from Mat-Hitu.

"We know that building the tank is only the first step," Lucia said. "Water is life. We will keep working and hoping. We know that one day, all this effort will bring a better future for our village."





Naimeco village, Timor-Leste: Lucia fills her bucket at the village tap. Photo: Aderito do Rosario da Cunha Mambar/Oxfam.



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Vanuatu: Young climate activists and VCAN members celebrating after their win. They never gave up on their quest for justice for people in the Pacific. Photo: Supplied. Inset: Cynthia Houniuhi, President of Pacific Island Students Fighting Climate Change.



A win for climate campaigners

After years of grassroots campaigning, dedicated young climate activists from across the Pacific were rewarded in July when the International Court of Justice in The Hague ruled that governments must phase out fossil fuels, rapidly reduce emissions, provide remedy to communities facing climate damage and provide climate finance to developing countries.

We have kept you up to date with the work of Oxfam's partner organisation, the Vanuatu Climate Action Network as it has fought for justice in the highest court in the world. Thanks to your support, the young activists' efforts have paid off.

Oxfam International's Climate Change Policy Lead, Nafkote Dabi, said the ruling provided a powerful tool for holding countries to account.

"Oxfam is proud to have supported young climate defenders from the Pacific and elsewhere who bravely took their fight for justice from a classroom in Vanuatu to the world's highest court. They won the world a tremendous victory today."

Oxfam in the Pacific's Director of Programs, Impact and Partnerships, Ilisapeci Masivesi, said the ruling was historic.

"I'm sure there are many who would have thought that a group of young Pacific Islanders wouldn't be able to take this campaign all the way to the International Court of Justice, but today's historic ruling changes that, and is a reminder to young people all over the world that we can hold big polluters to account in our fight for the phase out of fossil fuels, a just energy transition and fair climate financing for all."

Chickens, posters and a whole lot of heart

If you visited a JB Hi-Fi retail store in April this year, chances are you would have seen huge chicken posters hanging from the rafters.

The Peck It Forward campaign was part of the company's Helping Hands workplace giving program and there was no shortage of enthusiasm, with the wonderful staff creating all manner of decorations.

The challenge was to raise \$150,000 to support Oxfam's work with Rohingya refugees living in camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, and they did it!

Oxfam is working with a local organisation, MUKTI Cox's Bazar, on a climate-smart gardening and food production project in the camps. Oxfam Australia Acting Chief Executive Chrisanta Muli said the money raised would increase the availability and diversity of food for Rohingya refugee families.

"This \$150,000 will make a remarkable difference to the Rohingya people living in the Cox's Bazar refugee camp in Bangladesh," she said. "It will allow

us to enrol up to 600 more families and also help us further improve the project so we can support families to raise chickens. Eggs from the chickens will add much-needed protein to people's diets.

"What can I say? Thank you hardly seems enough. We are just so very grateful."



Melbourne, Australia: The team at JB Hi-Fi South Wharf got behind the campaign. Photo: Supplied.



Sydney, Australia: Just one of the many banners JB Hi-Fi staff made to support the Peck It Forward campaign. Photo: Supplied.

Resilience and determination pay off for Anusha

When mother-of-three Anusha inherited her father's three-acre pepper farm in Sri Lanka in 2012, she initially sold her produce at wholesale prices. Thanks to our dedicated supporters, Anusha's business improved when Oxfam's partner organisation, DevPro, began a training program through the Resilient and Gender Inclusive Enterprise Systems project.

Anusha attended every training session at the Matale Institute, learning about organic fertilisers, trimming, and how to balance work with motherhood. The program helped farmers maximise their time and connected them with mass pepper buyers.

Many farmers, including Anusha, invested in wood fired dehydrators using a 30% grant. Anusha bought two dehydrators to dry jackfruit, mango and pepper, which she sold locally for a good price.

"I take great care to deliver only the best quality and safe-to-consume products, ensuring complete customer satisfaction," Anusha said.

Encouraged by DevPro trainers, Anusha registered her business, created a plan and secured the necessary licenses. With the new dehydrators, production time has plummeted from several days to just two. Her business has grown and she is now sending turmeric samples to China and Korea. She also plans to expand into the Malaysian market.



Mawanella, Sri Lanka: Anusha has expanded her business and plans to move into other markets. Photo: Manta Ray Productions/Oxfam. Oxfam acknowledges the support of the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).

Vale Bruce Wilson OAM

In late December 2024, Oxfam Australia was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of one of our most dedicated supporters, Bruce Wilson OAM. Bruce was a long-standing and committed friend, having been active since the days when we were known as Community Aid Abroad (CAA).

Bruce's wife, Marie, remembers her husband as someone who truly lived his beliefs.

"Bruce's interest in CAA started in the late 60's, and he was involved when he was in Whyalla, SA, in the early 70's," Marie said. "I remember when he went to a state meeting and came home saying we didn't need two cars when so many people had nothing. So, we sold the Holden station wagon and ended up with just a mini by the time our second child arrived."

In Western Australia, Bruce was one of the founding members of Friends of CAA Inc, which was formed in 1986. Its first building was purchased in 1987, and from that time on Bruce took the management of the association and its buildings as his primary responsibility. He was also a key participant in any Oxfam community fundraising and campaigning events.

Joe Courtney is a member of the Friends of Oxfam WA committee, working for many years with Bruce. Joe's words, below, speak to the dedication of Bruce Wilson.

"Bruce has been the cornerstone of Friends of Oxfam since its formation in 1986. His dedication, perseverance, skills, knowledge and attention to detail have been phenomenal. Whether it be attending to leaky toilets, paying bills, organising tradies, sharing chocolates and connecting with tenants, Bruce has been relied upon to always be there when needed. Underlying this work was his fundamental value of making the world a better place, to which we can all aspire. His contribution cannot be overstated, and he will be sorely missed."

Everyone at Oxfam Australia is grateful for the unwavering devotion Bruce displayed to his fellow humans, and to a world where everyone is equal and no-one lives in poverty.



Photo: Supplied.

A thank you from our staff on the ground

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, Oxfam South Sudan has been operating in Renk, a border town between Sudan and South Sudan, since the start of the Sudan war in April 2023.

Thousands of people are living in the transit centre in Renk, which is operating at four times its capacity. Overcrowding increases the risk of diseases like cholera spreading through the camp.

With your support, in just one month alone we were able to instal water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in the transit centre, educate almost 10,000 people on safe water consumption, handwashing techniques and the proper disposal of human waste, distribute 2,500 bars of soap to help prevent disease, and deliver 40,000 litres of clean water every day.

Our emergency response is being led by Vincent Ogira, who is working tirelessly with his team to meet the ever-growing needs of families in the centre.

“This camp alone was initially designed for around 2,750 individuals. But it is now hosting more than ... four times ... its actual capacity,” Vincent said. “The shower facilities still remain a major gap. There are not enough for people to be able to use.”

Despite the ever-increasing need, Vincent said Oxfam’s work had helped the refugees in the centre.

“We have been able to instal emergency water supply and distribution systems,” he said.

Oxfam is working on getting safe, clean water to everyone in an effort to stop the spread of cholera.



Renk, South Sudan: Vincent Ogira, response lead for Oxfam in Renk. Photo: Herison Philip Osfaldo/Oxfam.

GIFTS THAT DO ~~GOOD~~ GREAT

Happy birthday to.... us!

Your special someone will be wrapped with this limited edition collector's card!

For two glorious decades, our community has given gifts that are weird, wonderful and wildly impactful. Pick your faves and join the party!

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Everyone's favourite goat has just turned 20!

This year marks 20 years of fun and frivolity, punny lines and ever-so-cute pics, all in the name of equality. Thanks to our wonderful supporters, Oxfam's Unwrapped campaign has just celebrated its 20th anniversary.

For two decades, you've been contributing to Oxfam's programs around the world by buying cards for your loved ones. And boy, have you bought, and bought, and bought – more than 500,000 cards, raising more than \$58 million dollars in 20 years.

You may remember our goat, Charlie, who retired a few years ago. Well, it seems you can't keep a good goat down, because what do you know, Charlie has been popping up all over the Oxfam office.

"I tried my hoof at relaxing and playing golf," Charlie bleated as he butted his head into a co-worker, "but it just didn't stimulate me the way being part of the Oxfamily did. So here I am, volunteering on the regular and feeling like I never left."

While working side by side with Charlie undoubtedly motivates staff in the office, it's the chicken cards that prove most popular year after year. There is just something about those fluffy little fellas that we all love.

Luckily, Charlie isn't the jealous type.

"I don't mind that the chickens win every year. Every. Single. Year," Charlie muttered under his breath.



Melbourne, Australia: Charlie offers advice about the chicken cards to Oxfam's Volunteer Engagement Lead, Jordan Steiner. Jordan said he couldn't repeat what Charlie said. Photo: Heidi Demond/Oxfam.

"As long as our supporters get on board with Unwrapped, I'm totally fine with playing second fiddle to a chook.

"And anyway," he added, idly pawing the chicken cards, "I think we all know who the G.O.A.T. is."

Whichever card is your favourite, we are so grateful for your continued support and can't wait to launch our Christmas cards this year.

From loss to livelihood: Building a future with chickens

For 60 million people living along the lower Mekong River Basin, water is more than a resource — it is the lifeblood of their existence. But the Mekong River is under growing threat from climate change, with flash floods, droughts and shifting rains now devastatingly frequent.

Thanks to supporters like you, Oxfam Australia's Mekong Regional Water Governance Program works in partnership with 31 local civil society organisations and 12 regional networks across the Mekong and Salween basins. The program offers training on agricultural practices that increase and enhance production, and enables people to create businesses and improve their income. The goal is to protect ecosystems, defend rights and help people adapt to a changing climate. We spoke to Somchan, who joined the program in Laos.

"My name is Somchan, and I lead the production group in Hat Khor village, focusing on agriculture and animal husbandry. I used to raise chickens on my own and fish for a living, but everything changed after the dam was built. Fish stocks dropped drastically, and we lost our main source of income. That's when I joined the project supporting youth and affected villagers through farming activities.

I've now been part of the group for over two years. We have 12 members — eight women and four men. The project taught us better chicken-raising techniques: vaccinations, sanitation, proper feeding and care. It's made a huge difference. Our chickens survive and grow better, and we've become more confident.

We save part of our profits to reinvest, with hopes to expand and include more members. Many in the village want to join, especially to raise native chickens, which are in high demand during festivals. I dream of building a bigger coop, raising up to 2,000 chickens, and turning Hat Khor into a known source for quality poultry.

Life is still hard. My husband works in construction, and I stay home to care for the kids and chickens. During COVID, we had to forage to survive. But now, I feel proud — proud of my family staying together, my children helping out, and our growing success with chickens. I want our village to thrive, so that when people think of chickens, they think of Hat Khor."



Pak Ou, Lao PDR: Somchan proudly displays one of the chickens she has reared. Photo: Patrick Moran/Oxfam. Oxfam acknowledges the support of the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

Stand up for future generations.

By leaving a gift in your Will, you can help challenge the systems that keep people living with poverty and injustice. It's a powerful way to create lasting change and build a fairer, more equal world.

To learn more go to oxfam.org.au/wills

The future is equal



East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia: Yuli is a leader at the Indonesian Women with Disability Association. Working with local partner Adara, Oxfam's Indonesian Women in Leadership Project supported civil society organisations to promote gender equality by increasing women's economic empowerment and political participation, decision-making and leadership, and reducing violence against women and girls. Photo: M. Nugie and Andito Wasi/Oxfam. Oxfam acknowledges the support of the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).



Jenni's drawing on her passion, to leave a lasting legacy

For retired researcher Jenni, the decision to leave a gift to Oxfam in her Will was fuelled by her passion for social justice and women's empowerment.

"For a long time I've really thought I had this passion for social justice," Jenni said. "We have it so comfortably here ... But there are so many people in the world who don't even have fresh drinking water. And I felt a bit guilty, actually, I felt I should do something about it."

Jenni worked at the University of Western Australia, mainly researching women's health and prevention of pre-term birth.

"I really think empowering women is crucial, and Oxfam does a lot of work in that area as part of the core mission."

Jenni thought long and hard about who she would leave her legacy to.

"I looked around for the organisations that I thought were responsible, spent their money wisely, and gave money to the areas that I was really interested in, like social justice. And Oxfam fit the bill," she said.

Jenni also offers support through campaigns. "I don't do much protesting or anything like that, but I do write letters, which I think are really important, and sign petitions."

Jenni had some words of encouragement for anyone thinking of leaving a gift in their will.



Perth, Western Australia: Jenni is leaving gift in her Will to Oxfam. Photo: Heidi Demond/Oxfam.

"It's really easy to do," she said. "Go for it. You'll leave a lasting memory of yourself."

Thank you, Jenni. Generations to come will benefit from your generosity and dedication.

For more information about leaving a gift in your Will, go to oxfam.org.au/wills or call **1800 088 110**.

A diamond anniversary and a fond farewell



Cathie Roby.

After 61 years of fundraising, friendship and an unwavering commitment to global justice, the Diamond Valley Oxfam group met for the final time in late 2024.

From the beginning, the group was driven by compassion and a commitment to creating a more equal world. They raised money through book fairs, theatre nights, community dinners, advocacy campaigns and the annual Walk Against Want, among many other activities.

Held for decades, the book fairs not only raised funds for Oxfam's programs around the world, they also brought people together in solidarity. Long-time group member Cathie Roby said people got together twice a week to sort through the books, which created a sense of community.

"The book fairs were the group's greatest achievement," Cathie said. "It was not just the money they raised but the community involvement, with extra volunteers brought in to help."

World Food Day was another tradition, where members hosted themed dinners each year in their homes. There were bold moments too, like a fundraising dinner held in the 1960s where

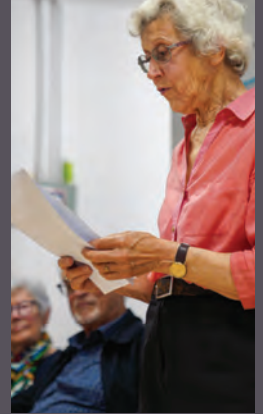
only some guests received food, in order to shine a light on poverty. Group records show that the idea "went down like a lead balloon" and Cathie agreed with a laugh: "No one tried to do that again!"

Cathie would love to see future generations become involved in in-person volunteering.

"My generation found joy in volunteering and making a commitment to this group," she said. "We learned so much — not just about Oxfam, but about each other."

Though the Diamond Valley group's meetings have ended, the legacy they have created will live on around the world, because we all know that "diamonds are forever".

Images: Melbourne, Australia: Diamond Valley group members gathered for their final meeting. Oxfam's Head of Philanthropy, Sabine Reiser was thrilled to be there to commemorate more than 60 years of service. All photos: Heidi Demond/Oxfam.





The future is equal



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Voices is printed with vegetable inks on an unbleached, uncoated paper that is made from 100% recycled post-consumer waste and is carbon neutral.

Vanuatu: Oxfam's partner organisation, the Vanuatu Climate Action Network, led a clean-up campaign of local beaches. Photo: Ivan Utahenua/Oxfam. Oxfam acknowledges the support of the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).