

AV

Australian Volunteers International Magazine

Edition Two 2012



*"Education is the most powerful weapon
which you can use to change the world."*

– Nelson Mandela

The power of education

- > Empowering Ethiopian midwives through language
- > Learning life skills through drama
- > Educating future Pacific leaders
- > Strengthening civil society in Myanmar

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» Contents



The power of education

- 05 > **AVI launches Friends of AVI**
Strengthening AVI's connections.
- 06 > **Transforming millions of lives**
By Lindsay Rae, World Vision
Australia's Senior Strategic Adviser.
- 08 > **Educating future leaders – Pacific Style**
A collaborative effort delivers the University of South Pacific's first Diploma in Leadership, Governance and Human Rights.
- 11 > **Learning empathy through language**
Developing a deeper understanding through language training.
- 12 > **Singing and dancing their way to success**
A Solomon Island production of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat builds confidence and skills in Don Bosco's students.
- 14 > **The healing power of theatre**
Tackling the unspeakable in South Africa through storytelling.
- 16 > **Partnerships for learning**
Macquarie University's innovative global learning vision becomes a reality.
- 18 > **Getting to know you**
AVID volunteer Teacher Trainer Maureen McInroy adapts to a new working environment in her second home of Hue, Vietnam.
- 19 > **Waan Aelōn in Majel (Canoes of the Marshall Islands)**
Responding to the education needs of young people in the Marshall Islands.



21

Page 19 > Learn to sail, Waan Aelōn Majel style.
Photo > Courtesy Waan Aelōn Majel
Page 21 > Oodnadatta Elder - Aged Care resident.
Photo > Kylie Harrington / AVI

- 20 > **AVI in Myanmar**
AVI joins international efforts to support Myanmar's vision of democratisation.
- 21 > **Supporting a community vision**
A collaborate effort rolls out the first Aboriginal Volunteer Program in Oodnadatta.
- 22 > **Sweet dreams**
A PACTAM contribution to rebuilding Solomon Island's cocoa industry.
- 24 > **Stories of change**
How blog writing and camera training is giving a positive voice to Kenya's Maasai community.
- 26 > **In the best interests of the child**
AVI's work to create safe environments for children to live and learn.
- 28 > **A window to reach in**
AVI evaluates 10 years of program activity in the Middle East.
- 29 > **Telling a good yarn**
From Newcastle to Albany, returned volunteers shared their inspirational stories to local communities around regional Australia as part of AVID's Volunteer Stories.

Regulars

- 03 > **CEO's Comment**
- 04 > **In brief**
- 29 > **Dates to remember**
- 30 > **Fundraising appeal**
- 31 > **Photo Gallery**
A Solomon's celebration



19

Australian Volunteers International connects people and organisations internationally to learn from each other and achieve shared goals.

AVI enables Australians to join in global efforts to reduce poverty; promote human rights, good governance and gender equality; enhance health and education services; and protect the environment.

AVI is a member of the International FORUM on Development Service and the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID).



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Cover > (l-r) Yin Min Thu (Monastic Education Development Group staff), Andrea Flew (AVID volunteer) and students at Thone Htet Monastic Education School, Yangon, Myanmar. In 2012 AVI recruited its first volunteers as part of its Myanmar Country Program to work in areas of education, governance and civil society. This was done with the support of AusAID, through the Australian Volunteers for International Development program, an Australian Government initiative.

Photo > Harjono Djoyobisono / AVI

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» Comment



Above > AVI CEO Dimity Fifer with Australian Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Pacific Island Affairs, the Hon Richard Marles MP, at the Friends of AVI launch at ANZ Docklands on 22 November 2012.

Photo > Bree Manley / AVI

» This year it has been inspiring to see the recognition of the importance of people-to-people links entering into our national discourse. And how people-centred development builds deep connections between global communities, addresses issues facing developing countries and increases participation of all elements of society in activities of international cooperation.

In the Australian Government's *Australia in the Asian Century White Paper*, launched by the Gillard Government in October 2012, it is positive to see the paper exploring how our communities, unions and private and public sector institutions can increase their engagement with this dynamic region. It is a true indication that, as a nation, we know that our international connections involve every one, and should not be entirely driven or be the responsibility of government and the business community.

The *White Paper* has acknowledged that our nation's future relationship with the Asian region will be "transformative" and highly values the role of people-to-people links in fostering stronger connections. The *White Paper* calls for the establishment of partnerships and relationships across our communities that have more breadth and depth.

AVI has always advocated that deep and broad relationships based on reciprocity and mutuality are the hallmarks to successful partnerships and sustainable and positive change in communities and across communities. After 60 years of experience working through global partnerships, we know this is only achieved through investing in strong people-to-people links.

Our commitment to people-centred development was recognised in the *White Paper* and acknowledged AVI as a leader in Australia in this field. Our determination to continually strive to facilitate global connections between all facets of society was noted in this acknowledgment.

For the past six decades we have worked alongside AusAID to ensure that a people-centred approach is an integral part of Australia's aid program, we have worked in partnership with Macquarie University to embed the values of people-to-people links in their global program, Participation and Community Engagement (PACE International); and we have piloted an innovative staff development program, Super Regional Volunteers, with ANZ Bank, based on our approach to development.

The *White Paper* acknowledges that people-to-people links do deliver a deeper understanding of each other and strengthens relationships. However, the true success of people-to-people links are based on a true commitment to partnership, recognising the value of global citizenship or a global perspective and to developing a deeper understanding of the different contexts of how people around the globe live, work and learn.

This vision of how we approach global citizenship is also a central theme in the launch of our new initiative, Friends of AVI. For the past six decades we have had the privilege of having a range of people, communities and partner organisations throwing their support behind our work. We are now calling for our supporters to officially become a Friend of AVI. By strengthening our connections with our Friends we hope to provide an avenue for people to engage with

Our Board

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- > Aboriginal Volunteer Program - Oodnadatta
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- > AVI / ANZ Partnership
- > AVI / VSO Partnership
- > AVI Worldwide
- > Cambodian Midwives Project
- > Children of the Rainbow Serpent Documentary Project
- > Friends of AVI
- > Lawyers Beyond Borders
- > Macquarie University PACE International
- > Pacific Technical Assistance Mechanism

AVI, to participate in discussions around people-centred development, and support our efforts to continually innovate and improve how we work with our partners overseas. You can find out more on page five of this edition of *AV Magazine* or visit

www.australianvolunteers.com/friendsofavi.

Warmest regards and in peace,

Dimity Fifer
Chief Executive Officer

» In Brief

50 years of Indonesian study at Monash

2012 marked 50 years of the study of Indonesian at Monash University in Melbourne, Victoria. AVI was proud to support a one-day event to mark the occasion. This included a range of panel discussions and involvement of over 25 former students and staff members to reflect about Indonesian and Malay studies in the past, present and future. An evening event followed, with a dinner and performances by celebrated Yogyakarta actor, composer, musician, puppeteer and performer Sujiwo Tejo. The audience also enjoyed a performance by Paul Grabowsky, Director of the Australian Art Orchestra and the Adelaide Festival. AVI's volunteer network, particularly those that participated in the Volunteer Graduate Scheme, has a long history of studying and working at Monash's Centre for Indonesian Studies.

A leader in people-centred development



The Australian Government recently launched its *Australia in the Asian Century White Paper*. This document, which outlines a roadmap of Australia's engagement with the Asian region,

has emphasised the significant role people-to-people links play in deepening and broadening our nation's relationships in the region at all levels of society. Within *Chapter nine: Deeper and Broader Relations* of the paper, the Government has recognised AVI's leadership role, commitment and contribution to people-centred development for the past 60 years. AVI's approach to people-centred development connects individuals, communities, organisations and nations globally. AVI has a long-term and sustainable vision of people-to-people links, as these connections are based on mutual respect, shared goals and partnership. AVI values the opportunity to share our experiences, knowledge and expertise in people-centred development to achieve positive engagement and change in communities around the globe.

More information at
<http://asiancentury.dpmc.gov.au>

Building recognition

AVI returned volunteer Jeremy Mather recently acknowledged the impact of his volunteer experience when winning the 2012 Residential Architecture People's Choice Award from the Australian Capital Territory Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects. From 2006 to 2007, Jeremy was on a volunteer assignment as an Architect with the Ministry of Public Works and Utilities in Kiribati. Jeremy recently set up his own architectural practice, with his first undertaking being a pro bono project designing the Red Beach War Memorial Park in Tarawa, Kiribati to mark the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Tarawa during World War II in 1943.

Celebrating 60 years, Timor style

AVI's Timor-Leste office celebrated AVI's 60th anniversary with current and returned volunteers, supporters and local partners at Dili's Discovery Inn Hotel in October 2012. In speeches by Timor-Leste's Minister of Social Solidarity, Mrs Isabel Guterres; Australian Government representative - Deputy Head of Mission, Toby Lendon, AVI Executive, Bruce Campbell; AVID volunteers Jon Moores and Annie Keogh; and outgoing Timor-Leste Country Manager, Martina Shanahan, the occasion reflected on the strong partnerships established between AVI, the volunteers and local organisations since the country program started in 1999. This opportunity to work with the people of Timor has seen AVI recruit over 480 volunteers to work throughout the nation, with the ongoing support of the Australian Government and many Australian Partner Organisations and communities. The Timor program also provided the Australian Timorese community the chance to return to their homeland and support the rebuilding of their nation following independence in 1999.



Above > Hundreds of people with a disability take to the streets of Mokhotlong, Lesotho in the name of inclusive education.

Photo > Courtesy Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled

T-shirts for Equal Education

AVI and AusAID have thrown their support behind Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled's (LNFOD) T-shirts for Equal Education campaign. LNFOD, an AVI overseas partner organisation, is promoting inclusive education as part of International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPwD) on 3 December 2012. LNFOD has designed a range of t-shirts and aims to use funds raised by the 'T-shirts for Equal Education' to purchase classroom assistive aids and devices for learners with disabilities. Students from Lesotho's *Thuso e Tla Tsoa Kae* in Butha-Buthe, Phelisanong Village in Leribe and St Bernadette's Resource Centre for the Blind in Maseru are set to benefit from assistive devices purchased through this activity, with the purchase of Braille slates and stylus' for the visually impaired, mobility aids, and communication devices including speech recording and output tools for children with severe disabilities. AVID volunteers, Communications Officer May Ng and Advocacy Officer Alexis Stergakis are working closely with their LNFOD colleagues to roll out the campaign.

Find out more at www.infod.org.ls/tshirts or about IDPwD at www.idpwd.com.au <



Above > (l-r) AVI Timor-Leste Program Officer Emila Soares de Silva, with past and present AVI Timor-Leste Country Managers Martina Shanahan, Cathy Molnar and Glenda Lasslett and AVI Timor-Leste Program Officer Ajo Martins.

Photo > Courtesy Ajo Martins / AVI

Become a Friend of AVI



The recent launch of *Friends of AVI* is providing more opportunities for more people, communities and organisations to engage with Australian Volunteers International (AVI) and international volunteering.



» With the support of Australia's Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs and for Pacific Island Affairs The Hon Richard Marles MP and Federal Member for Higgins, Ms Kelly O'Dwyer MP, AVI proudly launched the Friends of AVI program at ANZ Docklands in Melbourne on 22 November 2012. Also speaking on the evening was the trustee Planet Wheeler Foundation and Cubit Family Foundation, Mark Cubit; and ANZ's Group Head of Financial Inclusion, Jane Nash.

The night brought together returned volunteers, potential volunteers, past and present staff and Board Members, AVI Life Members, donors, Australian Partner and Overseas Organisation representatives and supporters of AVI.



Through this new initiative, AVI plans to strengthen its connection with friends, networks and communities to actively promote global citizenship; and create a learning environment that contributes to discussions on global issues, sustainable development and international volunteering. Activities will include hosting a range of events and networking opportunities in each state of Australia. This will provide an avenue for Friends to engage with the activities of AVI and our many associated partners and networks including our Annual Development Forum and Annual General Meeting. All Friends will have access to some great discounts, which are listed online at www.australianvolunteers.com/friendsofavi.

Sign Up

Sign up and become a Friend of AVI:
www.australianvolunteers.com/friendsofavi

For more information about Friends of AVI please email friends@australianvolunteers.com or contact our tollfree number (within Australia) 1800 331 292 or +61 3 9279 1788.



Top > (l-r) AVI's Senior Manager - International Services, Peter Britton and Small Projects Coordinator Fiona Elliott with Planet Wheeler Foundation and Cubit Family Foundation trustee Mark Cubit. **Middle >** The Hon Richard Marles MP and The Hon Kelly O'Dwyer MP literally signing up to Friends of AVI with AVI Chair Justice Richard Refshauge. **Bottom >** (r-l) AVI CEO Dimity Fifer and the Hon Kelly O'Dwyer MP

Photos > Bree Manley / AVI

Power of Education

Education offers not just economic opportunities, but a range of benefits from political empowerment to better health outcomes. For women and girls especially, school can transform lives.

Transforming millions of lives

World Vision Australia's Senior Strategic Adviser, Lindsay Rae reviews the global struggle of achieving universal access to primary education and takes a look beyond the 2015 deadline of the Millennium Development Goals.

» Few things change lives like education. The chance of an education is prized by children and parents the world over. School offers a pathway to better lives for themselves and their communities. Education offers not just economic opportunities, but a range of benefits from political empowerment to better health outcomes. For women and girls especially, school can transform lives. Educated women have higher incomes, are more likely to exercise choice in having children, more likely access to health care, and are more likely to ensure their own children get educational opportunities. The power of girls' education is surely reflected in the vehemence and violence with which it is opposed by minorities who feel threatened by its challenge to old structures of power.

So universal access to primary education was an obvious choice to be included in the Millennium Development Goals, agreed in 2000. In fact, many people are surprised to discover that universal primary education has been on the international agenda for much longer – it was first adopted as an aspirational goal by the League of Nations as long ago as 1934!

The long duration of the struggle towards education for all has sometimes given rise to pessimism and doubt – it has been called 'the ever-receding goal'. In fact impressive progress has been recorded over the past

few decades, especially since debt relief and a policy shift has enabled school fees to be abolished or reduced in many countries. Progress towards gender parity has also been encouraging, and has in fact been achieved in countries like Bangladesh. Nonetheless, tens of millions of children of primary school age remain out of school, with South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa accounting for the greatest proportion.

But beyond the basic question of access, governments and citizens alike are increasingly focusing on quality issues in education. For example, enrolment figures alone can mask low levels of attendance. With economic development, new opportunities and changing aspirations, more attention is being paid to student retention, and on the number of students who progress beyond primary school in secondary, vocational and higher education.

Attainment – the nature and extent of knowledge, skills and personal attributes students acquire through schooling – is also in the spotlight. In developing and developed countries alike, there are dilemmas and debates about curriculum and assessment. This should not be a surprise, indeed it is difficult to identify any country where these are not hot-button issues. Educators sometimes struggle to balance systems that are inclusive and appropriate to a diverse group of learners with mechanisms that promote rigour and high achievement. Some countries have had to



work hard to develop curriculum approaches relevant to contemporary needs, and to overcome the legacy of colonial-era systems.

At the school level, many developing countries have also struggled to maintain an adequate teacher workforce. This is particularly true in countries that have experienced rapid social change, such as dramatic urbanisation or the advent of a youth bulge in their demographic structure, as well as countries impacted by conflict or natural disasters that have led to wide-scale internal displacement. Conditions vary, but some countries still have insufficient capacity for teacher education and training. In some places teacher availability is impacted by systemic problems with teacher pay (which might be at an uncompetitive level but more significantly may not always be paid on time), and provision of essentials such as teacher housing, especially in rural areas.

Scaling up education systems, both quantitatively and qualitatively, is necessarily a drawn-out process. Higher budget priority is important, and official development assistance has played an extremely useful role. Australian taxpayers should be very proud of the role that Australian support for Indonesian schools has played – building or extending up to 2000 schools, and extending schooling to 300,000 children over the past five years who would otherwise have missed out.

However, greater financial investment, and better school infrastructure, will not on their own guarantee the kind of transformation in quality that is increasingly being recognised and demanded as a legitimate aspiration by citizens in developing nations. There remains a critical demand to grow the capacity of teachers, teacher educators and educational

leaders of all kinds. The scope for international cooperation is vast and goes well beyond traditional official aid. Over the next few years we will see more innovative partnerships including peer-to-peer links between schools across national boundaries, and new forms of collaboration, often powered by technology and social media.

Almost 80 years on from that first international consensus that every child should have the right to school, we are challenged to go the next step, and dramatically raise the bar on quality. Every government, every development agency and every volunteer and interested citizen should be committing themselves to a quality agenda beyond the MDG targets. Realising this agenda will be complicated and messy, and there will be mis-steps and setbacks along the way. But the benefits will be transformative for millions of people in fast-evolving societies. <



About Lindsay Rae

Lindsay Rae taught Politics at La Trobe University from 1991 to 2000 and worked in management and strategy roles in the education and international development sectors, and as a political adviser. He joined World Vision's advocacy team in 2005, where he has been head of advocacy, and manager of research and education. He was the lead author of *Global Perspectives: a framework for Global Education in Australian Schools* (2nd edition, Curriculum Corporation, 2009), and co-author of *World Poverty for Dummies* (John Wiley, 2008).

Top > School children at a primary school near Siem Reap, Cambodia.

Photo > Christine Crosby / AVI

Left > World Vision Australia Senior Strategic Adviser, Lindsay Rae.

Photow > Courtesy Lindsay Rae

Educating future leaders – Pacific style

A true collaborative effort will see the first human rights-focused curriculum delivered in the Pacific, through the [University of the South Pacific \(USP\)](#) in 2013. The development of the Diploma in Leadership, Governance and Human Rights is a joint project of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community Regional Rights Resource Team (SPC RRRT) and USP. The project aims to inspire and teach the region's future leaders and has brought together [SPC RRRT](#) and [USP staff](#), [Transparency International Fiji](#), [AusAID's Pacific Leadership Program](#), [Australian Volunteers for International Development \(AVID\) volunteers](#) and [future students](#). Here are five perspectives on the value of the Diploma.

» The development of the new Diploma in Leadership, Governance and Human Rights is responding to the learning needs of people of the Pacific. The Diploma will be delivered at the undergraduate level and can be taken full-time or part-time. It will be offered by distance education so that people throughout the South Pacific region can enrol. AusAID's Pacific Leadership Program is providing financial support, including scholarships, and preference in awarding them will be given to under-represented groups – women, minorities, remote island residents, rural residents and those with disabilities.

It is expected that the Diploma will be of strong interest to people working or volunteering in roles with a community or social development focus – whether with a civil society organisation or with government.

Here, five people write about what it means to them to be a part of the development and delivery of the Diploma. >



Right > (l-r) Sandra Bernklau, Program Manager, SPC RRRT and Elenoa Kaisau, Project Officer, Fiji Disabled Persons Federation.

Photo > Sean Hobbs

1. A volunteer's perspective

By Greg Lyons, AVID volunteer Human Rights Curriculum Adviser, Secretariat of the Pacific Community Regional Rights Resource Team, Fiji

The Diploma is a joint project by USP and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community Regional Rights Resource Team (SPC RRRT). The Regional Rights Resource Team is the Secretariat's human rights program.

Three AVID volunteers, recruited through AVI, have been closely involved with the development of a new diploma at the University of the South Pacific. It is hoped the Diploma in Leadership, Governance and Human Rights – to be offered from early 2013 – will provide relevant knowledge and skills to many of the next generation of Pacific leaders.

Since arriving in Suva in October 2011 with my wife (also an AVID volunteer), my role has involved various negotiations with USP, course design and the development of teaching materials. Due to tight deadlines for the development of teaching materials, Kerry Barker – an AVID volunteer with Transparency International Fiji – has been able to spare some time to provide invaluable assistance.

In the early days of the Diploma project, Kathryn Choules made significant progress as an AVID volunteer working with SPC RRRT (September 2009 to July 2010).

From my perspective as a volunteer, it has been a privilege to work with many great people on a project designed to increase, amongst future leaders, levels of knowledge and understanding about good leadership, good governance and human rights.

Below > (l-r) Greg Lyons, AVI volunteer; Natasha Khan, Coordinator of the Diploma and Professor Vijay Naidu, Head of USP's School of Government, Development and International Affairs.

Photo > Sean Hobbs

"I would prefer to study the Diploma on a part-time basis so I can work as well. Whatever I learned through the Diploma can be practised in our organisation. That way my organisation can also grow and I would hope other people with disabilities would be able to study as well."



2. The launching-pad

By Sandra Bernklau, Program Manager, Secretariat of the Pacific Community Regional Rights Resource Team, Fiji

RRRT started a Community Paralegal (CP) training program in 1995. It was eight weeks of training – legal literacy, human rights and gender equality. The CP program grew to cover eight Pacific Island countries and over a 10 year period, the program trained about 400 people in the region. But the program came to an end for several reasons, including that the time had come to try and broaden the program and ensure sustainability by embedding it in a regional institution.

The experience of the CP program has informed the development of the Diploma. About five years ago, we started exploring with USP whether a Diploma could be offered through its Regional Centre for Continuing and Community Education. A wonderful AVID volunteer, Kathryn Choules, assisted us and developed great teaching Units, based on the CP experience. But the proposed course did not fit comfortably with the Regional Centre

and Kathryn's placement ended before we could advance negotiations with USP.

We continued to persevere but our biggest hurdle was understanding the University system. We engaged a former USP manager, Eileen Tuimaleali'ifano, to assist. Eileen recommended an approach to USP's School of Government, Development and International Affairs (SGDIA) to see if the planned Diploma could be located there. About this time, we were very fortunate to have another AVID volunteer, Greg Lyons, join us to assist with course design and our dealings with USP SGDIA – headed by Professor Vijay Naidu – proved receptive to the idea and since then, the project has progressed very well. It has been fantastic to see a community-level training course on access to justice and legal literacy grow into a broader university Diploma.

The Pacific Leadership Program (PLP), an initiative of AusAID, has played a very important role in the development of the Diploma. PLP came to us as they saw that the curriculum we were working on was a really good basis for building leadership in the region and having that embedded in a university. So they supported us in our negotiations with USP and have provided lots of great ideas and materials for the leadership components. Most importantly, PLP/AusAID have provided initial funding for the Diploma, including for scholarships. So PLP has played a very active role in supporting the Diploma project and seeing it to the stage where it will soon be launched.

Continued over page >

3. An academic's perspective

By Professor Vijay Naidu, Head of the School of Government, Development and International Affairs, University of the South Pacific, Fiji

The Diploma will meet a recognised need for knowledgeable people in the areas of leadership, governance and human rights.

There are gaps at local, district, provincial, national and regional levels in leadership as well as in various sectors – government, non-government, business, education, agriculture, and so on.

Governance is not well understood and the tension and conflict between customary forms of governance and the “Western” institutions of governance cause confusion, and even

political instability. Likewise there are numerous issues relating to human rights and the changing nature of Pacific Island societies. The rights of women, young people, commoners, ethnic and sexual minorities – as well as people with disabilities – are all matters of concern that will be addressed by the Diploma, as well as the tensions between custom and modern outlooks relating to human rights.

AVI [through AusAID's Australian Volunteers for International Development program] has provided skilled volunteers. This specialist

knowledge was critical in both the processes to obtain approval by the University of the Diploma and also the writing of the course materials. The School is most grateful for this assistance as during this period there was a severe shortfall in staff. Indeed for the three specialist leadership, governance and human rights courses, the School has been largely reliant on this expertise. The volunteer has been most helpful and facilitative. This is a very good example of effective aid.

4. The potential student's perspective

By Elenoa Kaisau, Project Officer, Fiji Disabled Persons Federation, Fiji

I am really interested in studying the Diploma. I feel it is the first time opportunities have been given to people with disabilities as a priority. The Diploma is very related to the work I do – human rights and the areas of leadership and governance. Our disabled persons' organisation (DPO) is growing and we need to have the capacity to coordinate our activities. The Diploma will give me that capacity – to be able to coordinate activities.

Next year we are starting the Asia-Pacific Decade for Disability, so a lot of focus will be on disability. People with disabilities are able to identify their issues but the capacity to be at the table and to put issues on the table – that is lacking. This is where the Diploma

will fill the gap. We need to change attitudes and look at people with disabilities using the rights-based approach.

I would prefer to study the Diploma on a part-time basis so I can work as well. Whatever I learned through the Diploma can be practised in our organisation. That way my organisation can also grow and I would hope other people with disabilities would be able to study as well.

A lot of people are not really aware of what human rights are. If I study this, I will be better able to design our programs and engage people with disabilities. Basically the rights-based approach for disability is about changing the environment instead of changing

the person – working out what can be done at the community level and even at the government level.

I am interested in working with people in the disability community. We have a United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which looks at the rights-based approach. In Fiji we are working towards ratifying the Convention. The Diploma will be an opportunity to build my capacity and when it comes to reporting under the Convention, I will be able to assist my organisation.

The Fiji Disabled Persons Federation is an umbrella disabled persons' organisation (DPO) based in Suva, Fiji.

5. The Coordinator's perspective

By Natasha Khan, Coordinator of the Diploma, University of the South Pacific, Fiji

I was very excited when I saw the advertisement for a Lecturer for the Diploma. This meant that USP was finally offering a program in the area of human rights, which I have always felt was very much needed in the Pacific Island countries. While our larger neighbours Australia and New Zealand offer programs on these issues, and USP has postgraduate studies on governance, there were no programs for people interested in leadership and human rights issues, particularly at the undergraduate level. The Diploma is timely and needed and it will be very accessible as it will be offered via

distance education, giving students opportunities to study from their own countries as well as at USP's main campus in Suva.

I have always been passionate about human rights and development. I also love interacting with adults in a teaching environment as well as conducting research in these fields, but my utmost interest has always been to return to Fiji and give back to my own country. This Diploma has given me an opportunity to combine all these elements together.

Also, sometimes people say that human rights are not compatible with our religion, culture, tradition, and values. In teaching the Diploma, I want to challenge that view. At a personal level, I am a visible practising Muslim, but totally at ease with human rights values and I hope to convey this message to students who are sceptical of human rights.

Natasha is completing a PhD from the University of York which focuses on human rights issues in Fiji.



Learning empathy through language

The objectives of *AVID* volunteer, Sandra Johannessen's, *English Language Tutor - Maternal Health* assignment was to provide language training support for degree level midwifery students from rural Ethiopia. Sandra reflects on how early on in her assignment at *Ethiopia's Hamlin Fistula Hospital*, she realised 'support' should entail a much broader range of strategies.

» While Ethiopia has been increasing its number of trained health professionals, a lack of motivation and corresponding lack of empathy from health professionals for clients is cited as a significant issue. Students studying health not by choice, face an ongoing lack of basic equipment, drugs and support and have to work in isolated areas far from family. Living far from one's culture and mother tongue are all contributing factors to this lack of motivation.

Ethiopia is a country of isolated and widely diverse people groups. Many Ethiopians have not had the opportunity to travel much within their own country. Therefore this displacement in one's working location is almost the equivalent of moving countries with the accompanying issues of not being aware of, let alone empathetic, of another's perspective and differing lifestyles.

How can four hours of English per week contribute to alleviating these issues? Perhaps the provision of exposure to different experiences through language, such as lifestyles, relationships, and looking at those in light of the students' personal and community's situation can help to give a

different perspective. Certainly the most enjoyable aspect of providing this exposure has been witnessing the students' experiencing other people's stories in the form of books; fiction, true stories, biographies, etc. The majority of students have never read whole books in any language. In fact, it is not uncommon for students to express the sentiment that reading a book, unless a textbook, is a waste of time and does not contribute to 'education'.

However, compulsory reading during the semester saw some of these same students eagerly recounting their shock and horror at the exploits and consequences of the actions of *Frankenstein* and his monster, their admiration for the young true life heroine *Grace Darling* who saved the lives of many, their identification with the issues surrounding marriage, family choices, and need for financial security seen in *Jane Austen's Persuasion*; their wonder of other people's lives in other places and times.



As it turns out, these students require little help from their English tutor with their medical vocabulary and procedures, but to assist them in relating to someone else's experience across time and location will, I hope, have long-lasting effects for their future clients.

Above Right > (l-r) AVI Country Manager - Tanzania, Musa Naroro and CEO Dimity Fifer with Hamlin College of Midwifery Director Annette Bennett and Jacqueline Bernhard, Dean Hamlin Midwifery College at the second Hamlin College graduation in Ethiopia.

Above > Fistula Hospital founder Dr Catherine Hamlin congratulates two graduates from the Hamlin Midwifery College in Ethiopia.

Photos > Sandra Johannessen



Singing and dancing their way to success

An education is made up of more than just facts and figures. At *Don Bosco Technical Institute*, Solomon Islands, the students are encouraged to work on themselves and not just their skills. *AVID* volunteer *English, Drama and Communications Teacher Penny Chiltern* writes how drama is helping with the development of students in Solomon Islands.

» The first challenging step was introducing drama to the students at Don Bosco. This happened as part of the 11th Festival of Pacific Arts held in Solomon Islands in 2012. I worked with the Don Bosco students to perform the play *Stori Taem*. Due to the success of the performance this laid a good foundation for the project my employer had been hoping for since the end of last year, a full-scale production of Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice's *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. It was the first full-scale, legal staging of this production since the internal tensions that divided the Solomon Islands from 2000 – 2003.

Although I have directed many productions before as a Drama Teacher in New South Wales, Australia, the challenges associated

with mounting a large-scale production in a developing country have been intense! Luckily, the students and staff have been helping every step of the way. From the carpentry staff and students who built the set; to the electrical students and teachers who made, rigged and operated the lights; the life skills department who made the costumes that took us to Canaan and ancient Egypt; the automotive students who supervised the carpark on the performance day; and the many students doing extra hours in rehearsals in order to stage something very special – the production was definitely a whole of school effort.

We even had the support of the broader community – with neighbouring 'pikininis' coming to help sing, a Music Teacher from

another school helping to play the difficult score, and of course support from the audience.

The talent displayed by the musicians and actors was both amazing and humbling. As a teacher, my personal highlight was seeing the students involved in the many aspects of the production become more committed and involved at school.

It was especially exciting to see the girls involved, becoming so confident in a place where women and girls often hold back due to social expectations. Stephen Maetora, a Don Bosco Automotive student who played the lead role of Joseph said, "I wish there were more programs like this that give young people something positive to be involved in."

"I wish there were more programs like this that give young people something positive to be involved in."

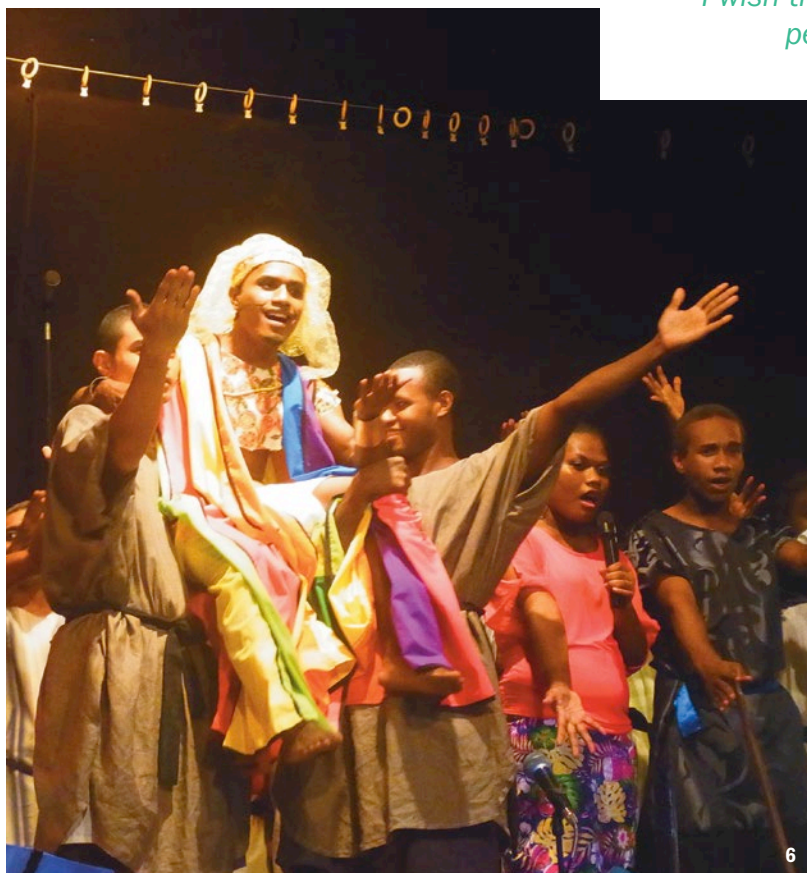


Photo 1 - Dress Rehearsal

We did a dress rehearsal on the night before the big show. It was the first time we had put together all the elements of staging, costumes, sound, lights, make-up and a small audience of other students from the school and the neighbouring children who kept creeping closer and closer to the stage.

Photo 2 - Girls from the cast

The girls who performed all the female roles in the musical had to overcome significant shyness for the most part. It is a big deal for a Solomons woman to stand up and demand attention – but these talented young women did it and did it beautifully. For many it was their first time to perform outside of a family “sing-sing” or church context, or their first time to wear make-up, and they did a fabulous job.

Photo 3 - Performance day

We started the performance at 5pm, to allow people who had to travel a long way to get home safely. The audience grew exponentially throughout the performance and was made up of many friends and family members of the students, people from the school community and a large number of interested people from around Honiara.



Photo 4 - Special guests

Just to add to the pressure we had some very special guests for the performance including an Archbishop, a High Commissioner and a Prime Minister!

(l-r) Camari Bainivalu (Principal of Don Bosco Technical Institute), the Honourable Mr. Gordon Darcy Lilo (Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands), Dr John Roughan (member of the school board), his grace, Archbishop Adrian Smith (Honiara Diocese), Father Ambrose Pereira, (Director of Don Bosco Technical Institute).

Photo 5 - Lighting operation

The lights were designed and operated by students and staff from the Don Bosco Electrical department.

Photo 6 - The finale

It's exciting when it all comes together – and it certainly did in the finale. Here is Joseph being held up as his family reunites and peace is established – finally. The choreography, costumes and lights all worked in unison!

Photo 7 - Thank you

After the performance the Don Bosca Life Skills Department and Principal Camari Bainivalu surprised my chief helpers, Leodrina



Williams and Jennie Nadu and me with some beautiful flowers to say thank you. (l-r) Penny Chilton (AVID), Leodrina Williams (Mahitahi) and Jennie Nadu.

Photo 8 - Poster

Doing things in accordance with copyright law was a big change for the Solomon Islands (which has no laws involving intellectual property). We were lucky to be given a discount by the license holders for *Joseph*, and the school administration learned a great deal about staging a performance in accordance with a contract.

Photo 9 - The Joseph Band

The band for *Joseph* had the incredibly challenging task of playing the entire score of the musical (about 90 minutes worth of songs). This challenge was considerably increased because none of the local students could read music, meaning that they had to play by ear and learn some new chords; because the equipment was old and struggling; and because they had to learn to follow a conductor (me). They were assisted and organised by Leodrina Williams and Jennie Nadu on the keyboards and absolutely rocked it!



The healing power of theatre

AVID volunteer Organisational Development Officer, Pamela Whitman has worked closely with her colleagues at Khulumani Support Group to provide an avenue for South African communities to heal, express and discuss the “unspeakable”. Pamela writes about how a social intervention tool called Forum Theatre is transforming community member’s lives.

» I have been talking with communities in Africa for four years now. I have over the years learnt much about the importance of a good storytelling in capturing people’s attention. The special feeling of people coming together, listening and learning from each other, healing and expressing, discussing and debating is a great thing.

I work in an organisation called Khulumani (“speak out” in Zulu) Support Group. We have a long history of giving a voice to those stories that were once so hard to speak of and too dangerous to express. Khulumani members are victims of years and years of stress and trauma experienced during the Apartheid period and during this time people were not able to articulate or make sense of what was happening to them. Khulumani Support Group is about healing and reconciliation through speaking out. Even today Khulumani are getting people to talk about important things in their community that they cannot easily express.

*Above > Acting the joker to a group of children at a Forum Theatre performance in South Africa.
Opposite Top > A Khulumani Support Group’ Forum Theatre performance in East Soweto, South Africa.
Opposite Bottom > AVID volunteer Pamela Whitman sits with the audience and watches a Khulumani Support Group’ Forum Theatre performance, in South Africa.
Photos > Courtesy Pamela Whitman*



“We have a long history of giving a voice to those stories that were once so hard to speak of and too dangerous to express.”

I was inspired by Forum Theater when I went to a conference on “Drama for Life” at Witswatersrand University, Johannesburg in 2010. There I met many practitioners from all over Africa who were using theatre and drama in some form or another to empower, heal or inspire individuals and communities.

I began to understand that some forms of theatre were powerful enough to get audiences from just observing something, to actually get them to act on something. Most of all I was inspired by Mouhamadou Diol, a Forum Theatre specialist, who I met at the conference. He had achieved some positive changes in his community in Dakar, Senegal.

From this conference an idea was formulated and two years later, the Khulumani Forum Theatre Group was formed. It is made up of 25 young people from Soweto who came together in May 2012 for three months intensive training with Diol in Forum Theatre. Some individuals in the group had a history of being community activists, and Forum Theatre was to be a tool for them to continue their community development work. Some of the group had experienced Apartheid-era trauma first-hand, while others had varying experience with the creative arts. Everyone was interested in getting more skills and the theatre provided a chance to develop a livelihood, to do something useful within their



community. The initial training of the group was funded by AusAID’s Australia Africa Small Grant Scheme. Diol travelled from Senegal to South Africa through sponsorship of Arts Move Africa.

How it works

Forum Theatre, developed in the 1980s by Brazilian Augusto Boal, works to galvanize action in oppressed societies. Forum Theatre presents to communities instances of oppression that generate in the audience a sense of recognition, and a feeling of disquiet as they look upon the action. A Forum Theatre production introduces any scenario that reflects an instance of oppression. The “spectators” in the audience are invited to join in the action and drive the narrative. They can come on stage and ask questions or debate with any actor who must remain in character. As Forum Theatre never outwardly has a position or a solution, the audience members are the people that we learn from. Every opinion is accepted, and the open discussion or forum aspect of

the play can be most informative and engaging.

Do people always say the “right” thing? Does our hidden message always come across? That is the joy of Forum Theatre, you are never quite sure how things will work out. The best occasions are when opinions fly! Our group have been instructed in skills around open discussions, active listening, and encouraging groups to tease out issues and get them thinking and talking in ways that might not have occurred to them. Our repertoire of performances is culturally and socially controversial. Topics include HIV testing and stigma; xenophobic attacks on other Africans in South Africa; internalized oppression where people who have been oppressed previously, act oppressively to others.

In our rehearsals we have argued, and debated these topics so thoroughly, that opinions from the audience are often recurring themes. But in the end we strive to put on entertaining, clever, provocative performances, and provide an avenue for the community to take action and seek their answers.

To read community stories of action and change through Forum Theatre visit the Khulumani Forum Theatre Group’s Facebook page or www.khulumani.net <

This is a position of Australian Volunteers for International (AVID), an Australian Government, AusAID initiative. AVI is working in partnership with AusAID to deliver AVID.

Partnerships for learning



An innovative approach to partnership and global learning, has seen **14 overseas partner organisations**, across **10 countries**, working with **250 Macquarie University students** on **34 projects**, to address issues of law and justice, health, the environment, education and child rights. **AVI Media and Communications Coordinator Fran Noonan** writes about the success of **PACE International**.

» **P**ACE International, is a globally unique program developed through an innovative partnership between Macquarie University and Australian Volunteers International (AVI). This innovative program, which embraces AVI's people-centred approach to development, is responding to the learning needs of Macquarie University students; the needs of overseas communities; and the global learning vision of a university.

Working in partnership with organisations overseas to achieve locally identified priorities, the program allows students the opportunity to apply their course skills practically in the field and attain credit towards their degree.

According to Vice Chancellor Professor Bruce Downton, PACE enriches the lives of both students and staff.

"We believe that every single Macquarie University student should have the opportunity for meaningful community engagement, and not just their education, but their preparation under our stewardship or custodianship, to become active, lifelong participants in the communities that they will ultimately serve," Professor Downton said.

"PACE also gives Macquarie students the chance to contribute their academic learning, enthusiasm and fresh perspective to the professional workplace." >



Restless Development, India

Restless Development in India aims to empower young people to take up leading roles in decision-making processes, and give them a voice regarding primary and sexual health and improved livelihood opportunities.

PACE International supports these strategic objectives through its short-term projects. Projects typically run between four and 11 weeks with the partner organisation and students benefiting from the project outcomes.

Working alongside Indian national volunteers, PACE participants have delivered the *Dance 4 Life* HIV/AIDS awareness campaign across schools in northern Tamil Nadu. Tackling sexual and reproductive health issues, the spread of



HIV/AIDS and dealing with the stigma attached to those living with the disease, *Dance 4 Life* builds confidence, career guidance and links young suffers to additional service providers.

With Restless Development, Macquarie students conducted a number of non-formal educational workshops for youth clubs and after school groups from both the private and government school sector, across five Indian states. Children have been taught basic water, sanitation and hygiene skills, reading and computer literacy skills.

Students also designed, developed and delivered a series of youth career fairs in Tamil Nadu aimed to increase school retention rates and provide information on a diverse range of employment options for youth.



Bahay Tuluyan, Philippines

Bahay Tuluyan is an NGO working to promote, respect and protect children's rights in the Philippines. In supporting the best interest of the child, Bahay Tuluyan offers programs and services in emergency and residential shelter, independent living skills, mobile health and education units, drop-in centres, children's rights education and advocacy.

The PACE initiative supports these programs and with Macquarie University students, have made significant contributions to Bahay Tuluyan and their response to preventing child abuse, exploitation and neglect.

Since 2009 students have assisted in the development of a child protection policy for social enterprise projects, established a drop in play group for young children in Manila, and assisted Bahay Tuluyan staff with monitoring the health of children in residential shelters.

In addition to this, Macquarie students have also planned and run a children's congress for 60 children, the results of which were later presented to local government representatives. These important projects give students a unique opportunity to apply their studies in a practical setting, and to learn more about the complex issues they will face in the development sector.

Above and left > PACE International participant Iori Ha (centre) involved in a Restless Development Dance 4 Life activity in Tamil Nadu, India.

Left > Two National Peer Educator volunteers from India show off a Restless Development Dance 4 Life sign.

Photos > Rine Holmesen and Iori Ha

Top left > Bahay Tuluyan (BT) Development Manager Cath Scerri reads to children in BT's Playclub Drop-In Centre in Manila, Philippines.

Photo > Courtesy Bahay Tuluyan

Top right > A high five moment for PACE International participant Samantha Poulles at Bahay Tuluyan in Manila, Philippines.

Photo > Jane Cousins

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Getting to know you

*Maureen McInroy returned to Hue, Vietnam in May 2012 to start her third assignment in the region as a **Teacher Trainer** with the **Thua Thien Hue Department of Education and Training**. She reflects on how some work and cultural challenges had her feeling a little anxious on her return to a place that she knew so well.*

» **M**y first two assignments, each of two years, had been with Hue University College of Foreign Languages. Over the spread of eight semesters I had taught over a thousand students. I really loved the work and admired the sheer courage of the students as they struggled to master English, a language radically different from their native Vietnamese.

Returning to Hue was almost as familiar to me as returning to my home town of Canberra. So why was I a little anxious?

The answer lies in the fact that I am a westerner. We westerners have all learned to set goals and objectives, to break these down into actions and to focus on outcomes. Even my AVI Assignment Plan had an objective, four major activities and four desired outcomes or performance indicators.

In contrast, Vietnamese value relationships over outcomes. Vietnam is a family based society and uses kinship terms to address and greet people. The society is respectful of teachers, older people and those who hold senior positions.



As an older person, a teacher and a native English speaker I had at least those three things in my favour. I knew that many criticisms were being levelled at the English language abilities of many of the people I would be working with. At the same time I was also aware that teachers are respected community members in a Confucian society that values education and learning so it was



very important to retain that respect while admitting and dealing with any lack of ability. When you don't speak the local language well, as I don't, it can be difficult to find and tread this fine line.

So I thought carefully about strategies I could use. Vietnamese names don't sound like they look so I carried a notebook and wrote down their names and asked each one to say his/her name for me so that I got it right. This showed that I was serious about getting to know people. I also insisted on having a desk in an office shared with five Vietnamese staff rather than an office of my own.

To a westerner, time spent establishing good relationships might feel like time wasted as assignments are limited, the clock keeps ticking. But once good relationships were established, everything else seemed to fall quickly in to place - teachers attended the workshops I had arranged; I had ready access to schools and teachers and found the school principals were keen to meet me and show me around their schools.

So if you are coming to Vietnam to work, learn to relax and take your time. Once you're



accepted as part of the workplace family it's amazing how quickly and easily other things happen, even the parts of the program you feared might take ages. <

Top > As part of a district primary school visit, AVID volunteer Maureen McInroy met local Grade 5 teacher Ms Kim Luong at Tu Ha 2 school in Hue, Vietnam.

Above > AVID volunteer Maureen McInroy (right) at the HUCFL ceremony with her students, graduates Lien and Thien.

Left > AVID volunteer Maureen McInroy with HUCFL colleague Mr Le Ngo at his 60th birthday party.

Photos > Courtesy Maureen McInroy

This is a position of the Australian Volunteers for International Development program, an Australian Government, AusAID initiative.

Waan Aelōñ in Majel

(Canoes of the Marshall Islands)

Waan Aelōñ Majel (WAM), a training and life skills organisation based in the Marshall Islands, has identified how an Australian volunteer can help them achieve their national education vision. WAM Associate Director, Kathy Hutton writes how volunteer expertise will empower local young men and women through education.



» For the past 21 years, WAM has delivered vocational and life-skills training to respond to the needs of at-risk youth in the Marshall Islands. Many of the young people the WAM staff and volunteers are working with, live in an environment of high suicide rates, alcohol use and unemployment.

WAM is committed to creating an environment that empowers young people, gives a sense of identity, skills and a connection to their local culture.

This has been achieved by developing training programs and outreach services that embraces both traditional Marshallese culture and contemporary needs. This includes the delivery of training in traditional and contemporary boat and canoe building, sailing and navigation, woodworking, wood carving and weaving. WAM has also integrated counseling services into the vocational training program.

The outcomes of these programs have been an overwhelming success in the region, including reinvigorating the local canoe building sector and increasing employment

opportunities. The programs have also demonstrated how skills and cultural development play a key role in strengthening self-identity and contributes to nation-building.

WAM is continually responding to the local learning needs of the community and recently introduced maths and English to its curriculum. These programs were previously delivered on a volunteer basis. Now WAM is looking at formalising this curriculum with the establishment of a General Education Development (GED), or similar program and expanding the delivery of the training.

Recently AVID volunteer Jane Evans arrived in Majuro to take on the role of Teacher Trainer. This is an exciting development for WAM as Jane has the expertise to work with WAM teachers to set up the GED program, as well as train them to deliver the programs.

This will also support WAM's vision to have a structured maths and English learning opportunities through the GED, or similar program accessible to more young people in Majuro and Ebeye in Kwajalein Atoll. <



Top left > Learn to sail, Waan Aelōñ Majel style.
Photo > Courtesy Waan Aelōñ Majel

Top left > Waan Aelōñ Majel students in the Ebeye Program (RMI) showing their building skills.

Top > Waan Aelōñ Majel students learning wood working skills.

Photos > Alson Kelen

This is a position of the Australian Volunteers for International Development program, an Australian Government, AusAID initiative.



AVI in Myanmar

As Myanmar's government proceeds with its political reform agenda, the country's leaders are accepting offers of global support, so the nation can achieve its vision of democratisation. AVI Regional Manager Mark Deasey writes how international cooperation has opened up opportunities for AVI to work directly with Myanmar's government and civil society organisations.

» While Myanmar's political reform agenda was announced to the world during 2010, the nation's vision of democratisation is far from complete. From an international perspective, there is broad consensus across political groupings that to support these changes in Myanmar it is better for foreign engagement to be undertaken directly with government and civil society within the country. Enabling both government and non-government organisations to respond effectively to both long-standing and new challenges, is seen as the best contribution that international NGOs can make for democratic development in Myanmar.

In August 2012, AVI's first volunteers arrived in Myanmar as part of the Australian Government's Australian Volunteers for International Development (AVID) program. The AVID assignments build on 20 years of

AVI engagement with Burmese communities. This work has historically concentrated on supporting Myanmar's refugee population based on the Thai-Burma border. Since 1993, AVI has assigned 93 volunteers to work with 30 organisations based in the border camps to provide communities with essential services and programs.

As part of AVI's Myanmar program, AVI will respond to AusAID's priority to establish and grow the volunteer program within Myanmar. This is parallel to the expansion of Australia's development cooperation program in Myanmar. Australia has emerged as the second-largest bilateral donor to the country, with the Australian Government's multi-million dollar commitment to support Myanmar's political and social reforms. This commitment has identified strengthening the health, education and agriculture sectors, and supporting the development of civil society as key priorities.

As part of this commitment, AVI is expected to assign a total of 11 volunteers over the next year. During the 2013/14 financial year there are plans for the number of volunteer assignments to double.

Currently AVI is supporting two AVID volunteers in the field. Andrea Flew, who has over 17 years of experience in the education sector in Vietnam, is working as a Teacher Training Coordinator with the Monastic Education Centre in Yangon. Despite decades of poor funding and resourcing of the nation's

education system, the Buddhist monasteries played a vital role in providing access to free education to both girls and boys, irrespective of their religious backgrounds.

David Eizenberg, who has over 10 years prior experience working with the United Nations (UN) in several locations, has taken on the post of Coordination Officer in the office of the UN Resident Coordinator. With some continuing restrictions on bilateral engagement, the UN continues to play an unusually large role in both direct delivery as well as coordination of aid in Myanmar.

In line with AusAID priorities, AVI is seeking further assignments directly within government and government-linked bodies, with particular emphasis on those delivering health and education services, and those charged with fostering the continuing peace and reconciliation process, and development of democratic institutions. Support to local NGOs is a high priority for both AusAID and AVI, and we are exploring several important opportunities in the areas of environment, health and education. Progress here may be slower, as few of Myanmar's emerging NGOs have the necessary government registration to allow them to sponsor a volunteer's working visa.

It is certainly a privilege for AVI to lead on the development of Australia's international volunteer program in Myanmar after so many years in which the country was largely closed. It is expected that the unusual circumstances of the country now transitioning to democracy will offer AVI and volunteers some initial challenges of engagement, as well as a great deal of learning and value.

'Myanmar' is now accepted as the name of the country, this is now the term used by AVI in reference to this country program.



Top > Thone Htet Monastic Education School teacher Aung Koo Oo and students with AVID volunteer Andrea Flew in Yangon, Myanmar.

Above > Thone Htet Monastic Education School students. **Photos** > Harjono Djoyobisono / AVI

Supporting a community vision

*The dream of running the first Aboriginal volunteer pilot program in Oodnadatta has become a reality for **Volunteering SA & NT, South Australia's Aboriginal Reference Group and Australian Volunteers International (AVI). AVI Aboriginal Volunteer Program Project Coordinator Christina Jenkins**, writes about the work of two Aboriginal volunteers and community organisations in Oodnadatta, South Australia.*

» In July 2012, two Aboriginal volunteers, Kelli Bartlett from Echuca, Victoria and Dale Weeberg from Lalor, Victoria travelled to Oodnadatta with AVI Program Field Coordinator, Becky Last to participate in a 10-week volunteer project.

Working in conjunction with key Oodnadatta Aboriginal community members and organisations - the Oodnadatta Health Centre, the Oodnadatta Aboriginal School, the Dunjiba Community Council and the Bungala Home and Community Care (Aged-Care Facility) - the volunteers contributed to the following outcomes:

- > Students at the Oodnadatta Aboriginal School were supported to improve their literacy development.
- > Aged-Care residents were supported to grow and maintain their own individual vegetable gardens.
- > A welcoming garden at the Health Centre was planted with the active involvement of community members.
- > Community understanding about the value of volunteering was broadened.
- > Positive volunteering was enabled: increasing the active participation of

young Aboriginal volunteers in their own lives, their communities and beyond.

- > Inter-personal relationships were facilitated, as well as increased personal growth, resilience, self-confidence, and a stronger sense of one's place in the community.
- > Recognition came from Government and the wider community regarding the positive and sustainable outcomes of the Aboriginal Volunteer Program.



The program was based on an international community-based, youth led model, that sat within a culturally respectful framework appropriate for Aboriginal communities and youth volunteers. A major program achievement has been the positive response from the Oodnadatta community and growing interest in the initiative from other remote Aboriginal communities.

With the program achieving a range of outcomes and partners working together to respond to the lessons learned, community leaders have identified that this pilot program could lead to a potential future pathway for more skilled volunteering opportunities in Oodnadatta.



Future activities will continue to build on the key success factors of the pilot program. This includes recognising leadership from within the Aboriginal community to support and drive projects and ensure Aboriginal cultural respect remains the key guiding value of all program activities. A key ingredient to the program's success was the ability for Aboriginal volunteers to work together with Aboriginal communities. This approach supported the creation of an environment of trust, which enabled the volunteers to be accepted quickly by the community.

Steps are now underway by Volunteering SA&NT, the Aboriginal Reference Group, AVI and the Oodnadatta community to see the Aboriginal Volunteer Program continue in 2013 and beyond.

For more information contact Christina Jenkins at cjenkins@australianvolunteers.com

Top > Herb Mack from the SA&NT Aboriginal Reference Group in the main street of Oodnadatta.
Middle > Teacher and students planting citrus trees at Oodnadatta Aboriginal School.
Photos > Kylie Harrington / AVI
Above > Citrus tree planting at Oodnadatta Aboriginal School. **Photo** > David Morawetz
Bottom left > Aged Care portable vegetable gardens.
Photo > Kelli Bartlett





Sweet dreams

With a beaming smile and eyes glistening with hope, John Konam waves his hand over a quarantined plant room and proudly declares “the future of Solomon Island’s cocoa industry is here.” *AVI Marketing Coordinator, Jane Macdonald*, writes about the nation-changing opportunity that awaits Solomon Island’s rural cocoa farmers and how the monumental task of reinvigorating a flailing cocoa industry is in the hands of a sweet and humble team of quiet-achievers at the *Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL)* in Honiara.

» Within minutes of meeting PACTAM Cocoa Specialist Dr John Konam at the MAL offices, we’ve been won over by his warmth, boundless energy and enthusiasm for cocoa production. Only two months into his two year technical assistance assignment focused on maximising the potential of the Solomon Islands cocoa industry, John has made a tremendous impact already. Harnessing the enthusiasm and skills of his colleagues, John has forged an ambitious but achievable long-term strategy. If all goes according to plan, rural cocoa plantations will become the number one revenue earner for the island nation with profits going directly into the pockets of those that work hard for it; and need it most: subsistence farming communities.

“Solomon Islands is a country where food security is good. The real problem is cash; we are rich in food but not money,” John, a Papua New Guinean (PNG) citizen explains. John has extensive experience in similar projects in PNG, where genetic modification of plants was used to develop ‘purebred’ trees and honed to a genetic perfection where cocoa pods can flourish on the scientifically designed branches. During a car journey to the quarantine location, John excitedly expands on the work they are doing:

“After the tensions [conflict between the Malaitans and Guadalcanalese from 2000-2003], all of the data and research on plant material quality was lost when the Ministry of Agriculture research station burnt

Above > MAL Senior Researcher Officer, Raymond Vava showing off local cocoa trees with PACTAM Cocoa Adviser John Konam.

Photos > Jane Macdonald / AVI



down. Cocoa plantations used to be 15 metres high. Not only were plants destroyed but so was the entire institutional memory. What's happening now is trees are being planted by the government and private sectors and they are coming from open-pollinated sources. Or in other words, we don't know who the mother is, who the father is, and how the children will behave. Will they grow tall or short? We do not know. By starting fresh with imported plants from PNG from a former project I worked on, we can assure the quality of the trees, and we'll have high quality yields in 48 months."

At this stage of the conversation, John's counterpart Raymond Vava, Services Research Officer at MAL helps paint the picture of the task ahead. "At present, the farmers are making about five dollars per kilo

"Cocoa [production] includes both husband and wife; for example we have a 65 year old female farmer, she's smart, she knows more about farming than some of our office staff!"

About PACTAM

The Pacific Technical Assistance Mechanism (PACTAM) is an Australian Government, AusAID initiative managed by AVI. This program responds to emerging or urgent technical assistance needs of Pacific Island governments, statutory authorities and regional organisations. PACTAM program participants extend from specialist medical and surgical roles in Vanuatu to infrastructure advisers in Solomon Islands or biomedical engineers in Nauru.

for their dry cocoa beans. The effort required to farm this quantity is minimal. But if they were to invest five dollars and good plant management practices, they could easily be making \$15 - \$20 per kilo for their cocoa beans, and have more money to support their families and community development. In my village, schooling comes at a cost, cocoa farming is an essential income generation model."

Upon reaching the quarantine plant, we meet other passionate team members of MAL. Max Koleubaloua, Quarantine Manager; believes in this project's potential to change lives because: "Money from cocoa goes straight to rural areas, not to the government or investors. Cocoa [production] includes both husband and wife; for example we have a 65-year-old female farmer, she's smart, she

knows more about farming than some of our office staff!"

One of my favourite statements of the day came from John, who said on the way back to the MAL offices "It's very easy to change a tree through genetic modification, but to change people's mindset is very difficult. It may take decades, but that's not to say people cannot change, they aren't made of stone, it can happen."

Throughout the day John regularly refers to his colleague Raymond and how he has an important career ahead of him at the MAL. Even Frank Wickham; Permanent Secretary of MAL smiles and stirs Raymond as he says "This is your chance Raymond, take in all this cocoa knowledge, a lot of livelihoods depend on cocoa farming in the provinces." John chimes in and says 'No pressure, although we mostly make all the pressure ourselves.'

When the final photo of the day was taken, I can't help but feel we've captured an important moment in time. With nation-wide change in their grasp, these three warm-hearted and genuinely lovely people have the potential to help Solomon Island farmers realise a sweet dream, and turn its cocoa industry around to what it was once before, and should have always been. <

Left > PACTAM Cocoa Adviser John Konam (centre left) with the MAL's Quarantine Manager, Max Koleubaloua, George and Senior Researcher Officer, Raymond Vava at a Solomon Islands' quarantine location. **Above right >** Senior Researcher Officer, Raymond Vava from the Solomon Islands' Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock. **Above left >** (l-r) John Konam; PACTAM's Cocoa Adviser with MAL's Helen Tsatsia; Director (Acting) Research and Senior Researcher Officer, Raymond Vava.

Photos > Jane Macdonald / AVI



Telling stories of change

The Road Less Travelled project staff in Kenya recently took part in communications training workshops run by Australian Volunteers International (AVI), to build their capacity as bloggers and visual story tellers. **AVI Communications Coordinator, Hannah Ford** writes about the workshops she delivered with **South African photographer, Matthew Willman** will give a voice to marginalised Samburu and Maasai communities.



» The Road Less Travelled is a partnership project committed to enhancing maternal and child health in nomadic pastoralist communities in Kenya and Ethiopia. Anglican Overseas Aid (AOA) manages the project and works with Mothers' Union to implement this project in Kenya, with support from the Nossal Institute for Global Health and AVI.

Throughout all project activities, the common thread is a participatory, strength-based approach to development. The project staff support locally-formed Community Development Committees to identify and address key development concerns faced. To improving quality and accessibility of health services, communities have highlighted a need for activities to focus on enhancing education and literacy, food security, and water and sanitation.

Project staff in Kenya are in a unique position to provide a voice for the marginalised people



The group learnt the basics of writing a blog article, and how to use photography as a communicative medium.



they work with. This was the momentum behind their participation in a workshop, which involved blog writing and photography sessions, took place in October 2012 in Kenya's Laikipia and Samburu districts. They supported the active engagement of staff in documenting the progress made by community-led development initiatives through written and visual storytelling.

There were 10 participants involved in the workshops, ranging from the project driver to project officers, each offered a different perspective or story to share. The group learnt

the basics of writing a blog article, and how to use photography as a communicative medium.

Practical assignments encouraged the team to identify potential stories, gather information objectively, explore the human condition, and use the camera as a change agent by recording an issue affecting someone.

You can follow project stories at *The Road Less Travelled* blog:

www.roadlesstravelled.net/blog

Anglican Overseas Aid

Anglican Overseas Aid is working in partnership with Mothers' Union (Kenya), Afar Pastoralist Development Association (Ethiopia), Nossal Institute for Global Health and Australian Volunteers International to deliver *The Road Less Travelled*. This project is supported by AusAID.

Top left > Maasai mothers exchange greetings near the village school as they wait for their children.

Above top > AVI Communications Coordinator, Hannah Ford, explains the basics of blogging to the team in Nanyuki, Kenya.

Above > Workshop participants try their hands at capturing an issue that affects the nomadic pastoralist community of Kenya.

Photos > Anglican Overseas Aid / Matthew Willman

Left > Photographer, Matthew Willman, provides guidance to workshop participant, Nancy Kitonga, during a practical assignment in Laikipia.

Photo > Anglican Overseas Aid / Per Arnsäter

In the best interests of the child

Australian Volunteers International (AVI) aims to promote the creation of safe environments for children and ensure – as an organisation - we are supporting activities that provide the best chances for children to develop to their fullest potential. AVI's Child Protection Coordinator Dr Mark Kavenagh writes how the best interests of the child should always be a priority.



» **A**VI's child protection policy outlines our approach to protecting the safety and wellbeing of children. But there is always a gap between the black and white world of policy and the real world – which is messy and made up of shades of grey.

Part of being a volunteer is coping with these greys, and the challenges to belief systems that new contexts can produce. In host communities, different attitudes towards children and their rights can be some of the biggest challenges that volunteers will face.

I met with Margaret Wright who returned recently from working on a volunteer assignment with a kindergarten for low income families in Fiji. When she began her assignment, discipline techniques tended to focus on shaming and excluding children from activities. Parents would use physical punishment at home, and even sometimes within the centre grounds.

It is recognised by early childhood professionals that these negative forms of discipline control children in the moment, but tend not to last. When adults simply issue consequences for behaviour, children don't learn to take responsibility for their own actions. Physical punishment also teaches children the lesson that violence is an OK way to respond when you are upset with someone else's behaviour.



Images > Children of Jakarta participating in Indonesian organisation's Sahabat Anak's two day annual Jamboree, which advocates for the rights of the child.
Photos > Nova Rubianti / AVI



“Every child is a unique and equally valuable human being, with the right not only to life and survival, but also to development to their fullest potential. A child rights-based approach understands that children offer the best understanding of anyone of their own situations and have essential experience to offer, and that they deserve to have their best interests met.”

– ChildHope (2005). *Child Protection Policies and Procedures Toolkit: How to Build a Child-Safe Organisation*

During her time in Fiji, Margaret explained how she had shifted the culture away from these negative discipline techniques. She told me that by the time she completed her assignment, the centre had stopped using shaming and exclusion, choosing to move towards positive discipline and she was “completely sure that this continued after I left.”

Margaret explained that one of the keys to her success was actively working alongside staff every day for two years.

Drawing on more than 30 years of experience in Australian early childhood education, Margaret was able to slowly explain the theory, and to model positive discipline techniques first-hand. Positive discipline is about building mutually respectful relationships with children, communicating

clear expectations and supporting them to take responsibility for their behaviours.

Margaret described that as time went by, the staff spoke more about the new techniques and were inspired to ask questions. Rather than a stand-alone training session that lacks support at the implementation stage, Margaret described that she was able to coach by taking opportunities to discuss the techniques as they arose.

“Staff would talk to me at lunchtime about how they had tried techniques with their own children and were noticing changes. I could focus on these real life examples that had succeeded.”

She believes that the timing of her assignment was also important as the government was implementing legislation to

ban corporal punishment in schools. She was able to support the wider community of parents whose children were attending the kindergarten to understand why this change was needed, and what to replace it with.

Margaret's work to shift the focus towards positive discipline is just one way AVI's volunteers are promoting the fundamental principle of “the best interests of the child”. Margaret says she even introduced that phrase to the staff in her work; “It became a mantra amongst the staff by the time I left!”

<

Margaret Wright's volunteer assignment was a position of the Australian Volunteers for International Development program, an Australian Government, AusAID initiative.



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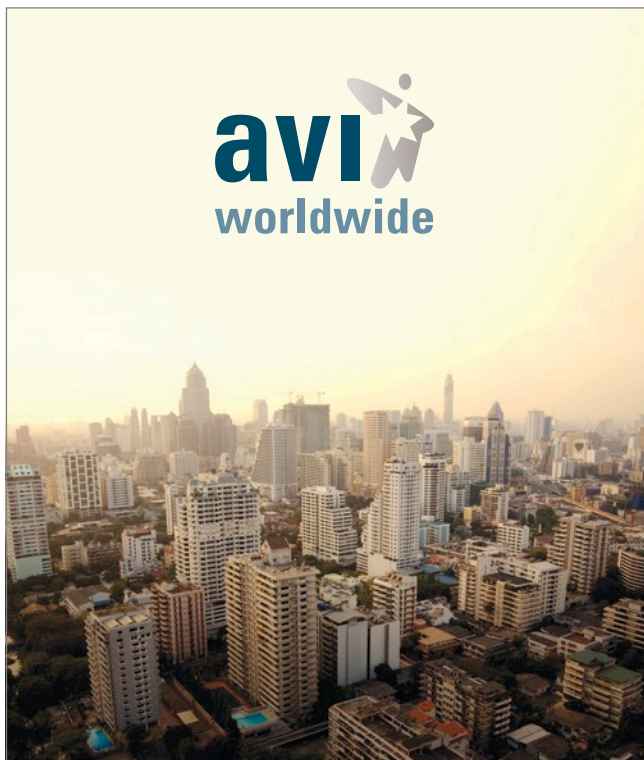
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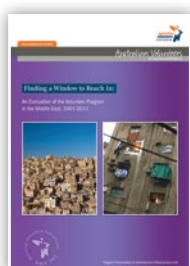
www.aviworldwide.com



A window to reach in

Australian Volunteers International (AVI) recently published the research paper *Finding a Window to Reach In: An Evaluation of the Volunteer Program in the Middle East; 2001-2011*. AVI Research and Evaluation Manager, Claire Layden writes about the project.

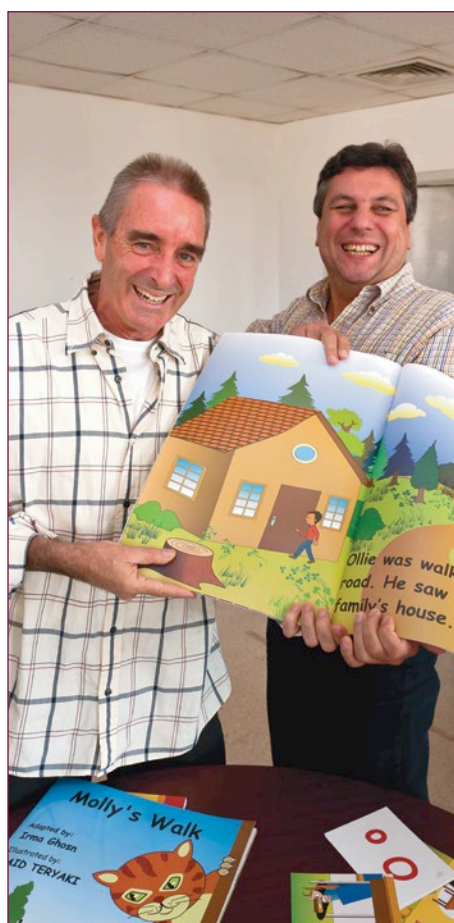
» In 2011 AVI initiated an evaluation of the Volunteer Program in the Middle East from 2001-2011; the 10 years preceding the 2012 opening of a program office in Amman, Jordan. During this period AVI, in partnership with the Australian Government, supported 54 volunteers to work with 20 host organisations in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.



AVI's review team conducted research with partner organisations, current and returned volunteers, and a desk review of program monitoring and evaluation.

The evaluation documented a number of significant and enduring outcomes from the work of volunteers with their host organisations:

- > A series of volunteers facilitated the development and adoption of a Disability Inclusion Strategy and Policy by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). With implementation support from a current volunteer this will positively impact disability inclusion across all three countries.
- > The program contributed to increased collaboration and networks amongst civil society and other actors, including areas such as gender-based violence in Syria and allied health in Lebanon.
- > A volunteer contributed to civil society efforts in Lebanon which successfully brought about changes in attitudes, and legislation to recognise non-ID (unregistered) Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.
- > Increased capacity of UNRWA Headquarters and Field Offices including: increased skills and ability to provide English Language Education for refugees (Lebanon); integrated patient-centred approach to health care and increased accountability and community participation (Jordan).



CASE STUDY: Understanding contributions to change

Australian volunteer English Language Supervisor, Rick Steele supported UNRWA Lebanon Field Office in developing English language textbooks. These are now being used in English classes across UNRWA schools for Palestinian children in Lebanon. This was possible due to a range of factors including a process of education reform underway at the time. This also included significant support from UNRWA, such as comprehensive engagement with the education team, head teachers and classroom teachers to support the adoption of the textbooks.

This example highlights that the impact of a volunteers' specific skills and the ability to catalyse change are maximised when assignments not only address host organisation priorities but when a desire for local change and a willingness to engage is present.

This position was part of the Australian Volunteer for International Development program, an Australian Government, AusAID initiative.

- > Increased youth leadership and employment, with young people taking ownership of a program introduced by two volunteers six years ago.
- > Following inputs from three allied health volunteers, one NGO in Lebanon adopted and championed a holistic, patient-centred approach to health within the sector.

The review identified enabling and inhibiting factors for volunteer effectiveness, and strengths and lessons learnt throughout the program cycle, making a range of recommendations to strengthen the Middle East program.

In November 2012 AVI held follow-up workshops with partner organisations and volunteers, gathering feedback on the report

and developing joint strategies for strengthening our work into the future.

Finding a Window to Reach In: An Evaluation of the Volunteer Program in the Middle East; 2001-2011 is now available at <http://www.australianvolunteers.com/about-us/publications/research.aspx>

Top > AVID volunteer English Language Supervisor Richard Steele (left) in Lebanon with UNRWA Education Team School Supervisor - Arts, Said Teriyaki displaying the new text books that were illustrated by Said. Photo > Alec Simpson / AVI

Telling a good yarn

Below > Returned volunteers Wally Ross and Denise McArthur with AVI Board member and wheelchair athlete Kurt Fearnley (centre) at a Volunteer Stories event in Newcastle. Photo > Tracy Collier / AVI

The traditional art of storytelling was alive and well throughout Australian Volunteers International's (AVI) returned volunteer network. **AVI Events Coordinator Tracy Collier** writes how some good volunteer yarns have inspired hundreds of Australians in eight regional centres of Australia.

With the support of AusAID, through Australian Volunteers for International Development (AVID) program, AVID core partners AVI, Australian Red Cross and Austraining International visited all corners of Australia from July to December 2012 as part of Volunteer Stories.

Newcastle residents heard AVI Board member and wheelchair athlete Kurt Fearnley talk about the life changing experience of connecting with communities and volunteers in Syria and Papua New Guinea. He was joined by volunteer Denise McArthur who shared her stories from Syria and Wally Ross told tradie tales from Namibia. In Devonport, Tasmania the audience shed tears over Natalie Cornish's stories of strong community connections in Syria and Lebanon. In Ballarat, the locals were taken on a midwifery journey in Ethiopia and heard stories of innovation and youth empowerment in Malawi.

AVI has held Volunteer Stories events in Ballarat, Noosa, Devonport, Albany, Alice Springs, Orange, Newcastle and Geelong. If you missed them, you can find some online Volunteer Stories at www.facebook.com/australianvolunteersinternational



Find us on Facebook

www.facebook.com/australianvolunteersinternational

Check us out on Facebook and keep in touch with news, views and invites to AVI dos. We will keep you up to date with the latest volunteer roles, international volunteering and program news and events. We'll also keep you connected with our volunteers and partners through their stories and photos.

Dates to Remember > 2013

February 2013

> Information Session Roadshow

Talk to AVI staff and returned volunteers. Includes sessions in Adelaide, Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney and Brisbane. Check the AVI website for dates and details.

9-12 February

> Sustainable Living Festival - Melbourne

Come visit us and many more amazing organisations and groups at SLF at Federation Square, Melbourne.

23 - 24 March

> Reinvent Your Career Expo - Brisbane

AVI is heading to the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, come and chat to us at our RYC stall. More information at www.reinventyourcareer.com.au

16 February - 11 March

> AVI Volunteer Recruitment Drive

Promoting over 100 overseas opportunities. More details at www.australianvolunteers.com

9 May - 21 June

> Human Rights Arts and Film Festival - Melbourne

AVI is proud to continue to support Australia's only human rights arts and film festival. Check out www.hrff.org.au for more info.

1 - 2 June

> Reinvent Your Career Expo - Melbourne

AVI is heading to the Melbourne Exhibition Centre in June, so make sure you visit us at our RYC stall. More information at www.reinventyourcareer.com.au

Please note: These dates are correct at the time of printing and may be subject to change.

Support Our Work

Dear Friend,

This will be my tenth year at Australian Volunteers International. It has been the most incredible journey watching people-to-people development continue to flourish including the stunning uptake we are seeing in partnerships with corporate and academia sectors (more on that in my letter to you). I'd like to wish you a very safe & happy new year, from behalf of the communities we work with around the world. I'd like to personally thank you for your encouragement, participation and contribution. Your support really makes a difference so please stay on board. We have many more partnerships we'd like to pursue, bringing more Australians on the journey to alleviating poverty around the globe.

Yours sincerely, Dimity Fifer



Above > AVI CEO, Dimity Fifer, visiting a primary school near Siem Reap, Cambodia.
Photo > Christine Crosby / AVI

Every community deserves a chance to reach their full potential.

Thanks to volunteers and supporters like you, people in developing communities around the globe have access to the two most valuable resources Australians can share: knowledge and confidence.

As a fellow global citizen and friend of AVI, I know you understand that building on the *existing strengths* in a community – like its people and its resources – is one of the most effective ways to make real headway toward alleviating poverty.

Unfortunately, it's all too often that I hear the misinformed opinion that governments are solely responsible for the wellbeing of their people.

Over the years, the communities we work with continually reaffirm for me that it takes all of society to create long-term change.

With your support and encouragement, AVI has been doing just this; expanding our partnerships to encourage participation in international development from a wider cross-section of Australian society.

Just some examples of our growth include a partnership with Macquarie University, where we are delivering a world-first global learning experience for its staff and students. Our partnership with ANZ Bank's Super Regional Volunteer initiative has given staff at ANZ a greater insight into working with communities in the Asia-Pacific. These unique partnerships have proven the mutual benefits for both organisations and community, as learnings and cultures are shared; and AVI's philosophy of global citizenship is passed on to people and sectors we haven't traditionally worked with before.

There is still so much more incredible work we could be doing. Nearing the end of another terrific year, I would like to ask you to please consider making a donation to Australian Volunteers International before the end of 2012.

By investing your support in AVI today, you will increase our capacity to include more Australians in the international volunteering movement. By helping us share our global citizen lens of the world with more of Australia's society; you will be answering the calls for development assistance from our international and local partners. You can ensure people in these communities are given the best chance to succeed by providing access to new skills, support and linkages with professionals in Australia.

I always find the festive season more meaningful when I'm supporting those who need it most. Please dig deep and throw your support behind AVI to help us grow our people-centred programs, making our globe a more peaceful and connected place.

With my warmest thanks and well wishes,

Dimity Fifer

CEO, Australian Volunteers International

» Photo Gallery

Want to share your photos? Send your high-resolution images and short captions to mystory@australianvolunteers.com

In November 2012 AVI Marketing Coordinator Jane Macdonald visited PACTAM deployees, AVID volunteers and local partners working with communities across a range of sectors in Solomon Islands. Here are some of the faces of this work.

Photos > Dianah Hou'au and Jane Macdonald



AVID volunteer Chief Veterinary Officer, Emma Rooke (centre right) with her colleagues from the Ministry of Agriculture Quarantine Department in Honiara, Solomon Islands.



PACTAM Transport Adviser Bruce Anderson (left) with Ministry of Infrastructure and Development Deputy Director, Transport, Policy and Planning Harry Rini.



PACTAM Cocoa Adviser (right) at the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock with AVI's PACTAM Program Coordinator Ian McDonald in Honiara.



National Referral Hospital Paediatric Registrar James Tewaani (left) with AVID Registrar, Paediatrician Lilian Downie monitoring the health of Alice Lydia's son Charles.



AVID volunteer Midwife Natalie Gray weighing a newborn at the National Referral Hospital in Honiara.



AVI Carpentry Instructor, Peter Cheers with employer, Don Bosco Technical Institute Director, Father Ambrose Pereira in Honiara.

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Post or fax form to AVI Melbourne office. Details on back page.

Australian Volunteers for International Development

Volunteering overseas:

AVID volunteer Sustainable Farming Mentor Geoff Dean
(right) with local farmer, Filipe Kau on Taveuni Island in Fiji.
Photo > Harjono Djayobisono / AVI



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- > Do you have skills, qualifications or experience to share?
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Volunteering overseas is a life changing and rewarding experience. Australian Volunteers International (AVI) has over 60 years experience sending skilled Australians to work with developing communities in Asia, the Pacific, Africa and the Middle East. Volunteers receive airfares, accommodation, a living allowance, insurance, ongoing support and more!

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Australian Volunteers for International Development is an Australian Government, AusAID initiative.



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AusAID, the Australian Government's overseas aid program, is proud to provide significant support for Australian volunteers who work in a development capacity overseas.

AVI WOULD LIKE TO GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE OUR AUSTRALIAN SUPPORTERS:

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