

# Island nation or global citizen? 2003



**Reporting on Australia's attitudes  
and actions towards solving global poverty**

“Between the great things we cannot do and the small things we will not do, the danger is that we shall do nothing”

**Adolph Monod**, pastor and theologian



Five-year-old Elina plays with the first globe she has seen. Life has been tough for her family in Malawi where the southern African food crisis has threatened the lives of millions of people in the last year. School is not an option for Elina who works all day helping her family get enough food. Her life need not be like this. Over 250,000 Australians have already helped change the lives of thousands of children like Elina.

# Island Nation or Global Citizen?

**This is the second report in World Vision Australia's 'Island Nation or Global Citizen?' series.**

The first report, released in 2001, noted that at the dawn of the new millennium, Australia stood at a crossroads. As a nation, we could choose to become inwardly focused and concentrate solely on domestic issues, or take a bold step toward becoming an active participant in the global community. This would involve becoming more engaged in the biggest issue facing our world, that of global poverty.

Since 2001, the world has become a very different place. Internationally, terrorism has rocked economies. Here in Australia, refugee crises divided the nation and live war footage in our lounge rooms led many to question the motives of global leaders.

In this second report, we comment on how Australian society, at all its levels, has responded to these and other events.

We also draw attention to some of the significant changes, both positive and negative, in poverty around the world and their impact on communities, families and especially children.

The report concludes with a series of challenges to the nation, outlining what it would really take for Australia to become a true global citizen.

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Many social commentators are saying that, in response to global crises and uncertainty, the Australian people have become more inwardly focused and xenophobic. The truth is very different.



# Summary

**It's been said that in this world, the only constant is that of change. But change doesn't simply happen. It's people who make it. And it's people who decide how we react to it. This is how history is made.**

In recent times, it seems that the pace of change has accelerated, and the outcomes of our reactions to it are more immediately apparent. In the same way, it is now very clear that globalisation has the potential to have both negative and positive effects.

Today, global markets respond to each other in fractions of seconds. Pollution in Europe affects weather patterns in Ethiopia.<sup>1</sup> Terrorist attacks on the United States bring about corporate collapses in other countries. And 'unethical' shopping choices affect the lives of child labourers in the developing world.

Likewise, the decision to wipe off unpayable debts by one nation, can enable millions of children to start school and receive healthcare in another. And a small increase in charitable giving in a relatively small population like that of Australia can result in a million people getting a better chance in life.

So, how has Australia responded to change since 2001?

## One Country, Two Responses

What has become apparent, is that the idea of a 'united' Australian response to global issues is not an easy reality. This is because we seem to live in one country with two very different sets of responses.

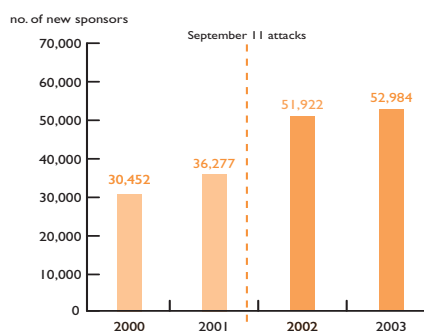
Individuals in Australia have reacted in one way, whilst the institutions of Australian society have reacted in another.

## The Australian People

Many social commentators are saying that in response to global crises and uncertainty, the Australian people have become more inwardly focused and xenophobic. The truth is very different.

The hard facts and figures - from World Vision and independent research - provide proof that rather than hiding away from what's happening in the world around us, many Australians are choosing to become more actively engaged in the global community. They are choosing to tackle the biggest global crisis of them all - that of global poverty. It's not just sentiment. It's being backed up by concrete actions.

## Australians Becoming World Vision Child Sponsors



World Vision is well placed to comment, as the nation's largest charitable organisation, receiving around half of all private Australian donations for overseas aid. Any significant change in the public's response to World Vision's cause is likely to be a good barometer of change in the public mood. And the change has been significant.

Around 250,000 Australians now make regular monthly contributions towards World Vision's work around the world. Remarkably, over 100,000 or 40% of these people made a commitment to do so in the two years following the September 11 attacks in 2001.

Is this simply reflective of an increase in charitable giving overall? The facts say 'no'. In 2001, giving to domestic charities increased by 6.5%.<sup>2</sup> In the same period, giving to address global poverty increased by a staggering 15%.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, World Vision subscribes to independent public opinion tracking research which shows that the proportion of Australians who agree with statements like 'Charities can make a long term difference in the lives of the poor' and 'Everyday people like me can change the lives of poor people overseas' has increased dramatically - by up to 26% in the past three years.

Correspondingly, research indicates that the concerns of young Australians are increasingly focused globally, while their confidence in local institutions meeting these needs is consistently low.

Indicators suggest the institutions of Australian society appear to have gone in one direction while the people have gone in another.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.abc.net.au/news/scitech/2002/06/item20020613073807\\_1.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/news/scitech/2002/06/item20020613073807_1.htm), August 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Givewell Research Centre data, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Australian Council for Overseas Aid annual report, 2003.

## Summary

### Australian Institutions

In a democracy, the institutions of society exist to represent and enact the collective will of that society's individuals. In many cases, this does not hold true in Australia.

Whilst seeming to reflect the public's concern for the world's poor by agreeing to international covenants to reduce global poverty, the Australian government continues to reduce, in real terms, their commitment to Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) year by year. The government's commitment is now half of that of the 1970's.

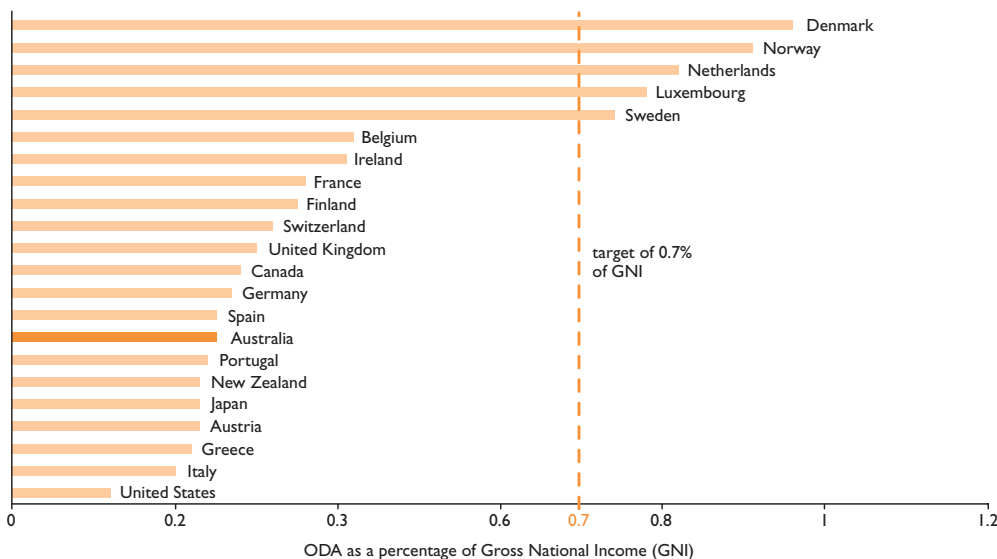
Ranked against other economically wealthy countries with ODA commitments, Australia has fallen a further two places this year to 14<sup>th</sup>, behind the likes of Finland, Ireland and Belgium.<sup>5</sup> Judging from the commitments made by other wealthy countries to date, we are likely to fall even further behind.



Orphaned by HIV/AIDS, this little boy is being raised by his 93-year-old grandma.

Additionally, Australia is one of the few wealthiest countries not contributing to the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, despite a rhetorical commitment to fighting these diseases. Australia is also among those countries that are yet to begin action plans to fulfil commitments made in 2000 to the Millennium Development Goals.

### Australia Ranked Against Other Countries with ODA Commitments



Australia currently ranks 14<sup>th</sup> out of 22 countries with ODA commitments. Many other nations have committed to increasing their ODA, so unless Australia begins to fulfil its obligation, we are expected to rank 20<sup>th</sup> by 2006.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> DAC-OECD and statements by governments. NB: The chart above uses the Australia government's reported commitment of 0.25%. World Vision believes the actual commitment is closer to 0.24% of Gross National Income (GNI), due to the inclusion of non-aid spending in the government's aid budget. The chart uses reported figures so has been un-edited for overall accuracy.

<sup>5</sup> [www.acfoa.asn.au/campaigns/aid/budget\\_analysis2003-04.pdf](http://www.acfoa.asn.au/campaigns/aid/budget_analysis2003-04.pdf), August 2003.

## Millennium Development Goals

**The Millennium Development Goals are a key statement of the commitments of world leaders to address significant issues of poverty and inequality by 2015.**

- 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**
  - Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day
  - Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger
- 2. Achieve universal primary education**
  - Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling
- 3. Promote gender equality and empower women**
  - Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015
- 4. Reduce child mortality**
  - Reduce by two-thirds the mortality rate among children under five

### 5. Improve maternal health

- Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio

### 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

- Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
- Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

### 7. Ensure environmental sustainability

- Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources
- Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water
- Achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020

### 8. Develop a global partnership for development

The Australian government's role in addressing global poverty is broader than just overseas aid. Reform of international trading rules, debt relief and greater support for international initiatives are also vital in achieving development goals. Back in September 2000, world leaders came together at the Millennium Summit and committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It is an agenda that includes a realistic framework to halve global poverty by 2015. And yet after three years, many member countries including Australia have not begun action plans to fulfil their commitment.

In the Australian business sector, more corporations are now demonstrating their commitment to social responsibility and triple bottom line reporting. While this is encouraging, research suggests that corporate giving has actually reduced in dollar terms over the last few years.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile, there appears to be a mismatch in the stated values and actions of our church-goers. Whilst an encouraging 41% of individual church-goers state they are already acting to help the poor, research indicates some disparity between the actions and beliefs of the broader Christian community.<sup>7</sup>

## Robbing Australia of an Opportunity

This fragmentation between the different sectors of society is robbing Australia of an opportunity for global leadership. The good news is that if the wealthiest countries choose to, they have the global resources and know-how to remove poverty from our world.

It would only cost \$15 per year from each person from the richest countries to provide basic education and primary healthcare to twenty of the poorest countries in Africa. Another \$15 per year from each person from the wealthiest countries would finance the struggle against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in developing countries, enough to build infrastructure and provide training to change attitudes and practices.<sup>8</sup>

We can be sure there is a collective shift for individual Australians towards becoming global citizens and extending the ideal of 'a fair go in life for everyone' beyond our shores. But the 'global citizen status' of our institutions is not so certain.

For Australia to become a true global citizen, we need to act as a nation. The path to becoming a global citizen must be taken together by the people and those with the power to lead and influence – in the same direction.

<sup>6</sup> www.corporategoodworks.com.au/report/2003, August 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Christian Responsibility Towards People in Developing Countries, National Church Life Survey, December 2002.

<sup>8</sup> www.datadata.org, August 2003.

# Global Poverty – Scale and Trends

**Around the world, three billion people – half the world's population – are living on less than \$3 per day.<sup>9</sup> They do not only suffer from income poverty, but poverties of healthcare, education, access to housing, and disempowerment resulting in lack of control over their own lives.**

Poverty is complex partly because it is not a static condition, but is constantly changing and affecting people in different ways. For instance, the majority of the world's poor currently lives in rural areas, but this is changing as migration and population growth swells the cities – largely a result of people in search of work. Currently, 928 million people live in urban slums, with this figure growing rapidly.<sup>10</sup>

It is also important to realise that global poverty is not a single problem, but the result of many inter-related issues. When a multi-layered, coherent and interlinked approach is applied to the issues, major progress can be made in solving the problem of global poverty.

In this report, we highlight four main areas of concern: children in developing countries, the burden of debt, HIV/AIDS and global instability.

## Children in Developing Countries

If poor countries are to develop adequately, it is vital to address the needs of children. Every generation of children allowed to grow up malnourished, poorly educated and traumatised by violence puts their country further and further behind. No amount of assistance can compensate for these lost years.

Girls are often particularly vulnerable due to systemic discrimination against women and girls. They have higher rates of illiteracy, poverty and malnourishment and are at particular heightened risk of sexual exploitation.



Three Vietnamese girls trafficked into Cambodia for sexual exploitation.

## The Reality

- Every year, more than 10 million children – a staggering 30,000 children a day – die of illnesses that are either preventable or can be easily cured.<sup>11</sup>
- An estimated 250 million children aged between 5 and 14 are involved in some form of labour. Over 120 million work full-time<sup>12</sup>, sometimes up to 19 hours a day.<sup>13</sup>
- One million children in Asia are estimated to work in the commercial sex trade.<sup>14</sup> Girls make up the majority of those involved.
- Over 113 million children (60% of whom are girls) do not have the opportunity to attend primary school.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>9</sup> World Bank, 2003.

<sup>10</sup> UN-HABITAT, The Challenge of Slums: Global Report on Human Settlements 2003.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations Development Program 2003.

<sup>12</sup> International Labour Organisation 2002.

<sup>13</sup> [www.cleanclothes.org/publications/unst6.htm](http://www.cleanclothes.org/publications/unst6.htm), August 2003.

<sup>14</sup> A Safe World for Children, edited by M. Gow. World Vision International, USA, 2001.

<sup>15</sup> United Nations Development Program 2003.





One million children in Asia are estimated to work in the commercial sex trade. Girls make up the majority of those involved.

## Positive Change

### The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child

- This is the first international agreement for the protection of child rights. Since it came into force in 1989, 192 countries have ratified it including Australia. With only two UN member countries yet to ratify, it is one of the most universally accepted international agreements ever. When a country ratifies a Convention, this means that it agrees to be bound by the text of the Convention.
- To strengthen the provisions of the Convention, 105 countries, including Australia, have signed an optional protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. To date, only 60 have ratified the protocol.<sup>16</sup>

- A second optional protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict has been signed by 111 countries, including Australia, and ratified by 54 countries.<sup>17</sup> Australia is yet to ratify either protocol.

### Sexual Exploitation of Children

- At the Yokohama Second World Congress on the Sexual Exploitation of Children in December 2001, 159 States committed to the Yokohama Global Commitment which reaffirms the interests and right of children to be protected from all forms of sexual exploitation. This was 35 more States than at the previous Congress in 1996.<sup>18</sup>
- In October 2003, the Australian government announced a \$20 million package of anti-trafficking measures across four years. This involves the commitment to ratify the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children.

<sup>16</sup> [www.unicef.org/crc/introduction.htm](http://www.unicef.org/crc/introduction.htm), August 2003.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> [www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat\\_inter/projects/monitoring/WC2.asp](http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat_inter/projects/monitoring/WC2.asp), August 2003.

Over 120 million children work full-time, sometimes up to 19 hours a day.

In Cambodia alone, there are up to 15,000 children who work or beg in the streets.<sup>19</sup> Many like this young girl end up at the garbage dump collecting scraps to sell.



<sup>19</sup> Children at Risk, World Vision International, 2003.

## Positive Change...

### Primary Education

There are 113 million children of primary school age in developing countries who are not in school.<sup>20</sup> Achieving universal primary education for all boys and girls by 2015 is one of the Millennium Development Goals.<sup>21</sup> Some positive developments have been made towards this target:

- The regions of East Asia and the Pacific (97% enrolment), and Latin America and the Caribbean (94% enrolment), are very close to achieving universal primary education.<sup>22</sup>
- By 2000, developing countries as a whole had achieved over 80% enrolment for primary education.<sup>23</sup>
- In 2000, more than half of the world's adult population had attended primary school.<sup>24</sup>

### Child Survival

Every year, nearly 11 million children die before their fifth birthday, mainly from preventable illnesses. Remarkably, this number is down from 15 million in 1980.<sup>25</sup> One of the Millennium Development Goals is to reduce the mortality rate for this age group by two-thirds by 2015.

- Thanks to extensive immunisation programs, more than 175 countries are now free of polio. Reported cases have dropped from 350,000 in 1988 to less than 1,919 in 2002. Fewer new cases are reported each year and polio is now endemic in only 10 countries, down from 125 in 1988.<sup>26</sup>
- Deaths due to diarrhoea, which is largely caused by drinking unsafe water, have also been reduced by 50%. An estimated 1.5 million children died from diarrhoea related illness in 2000, down from 3 million in 1990. However, despite excellent progress, diarrhoea remains one of the major causes of death among children.<sup>27</sup>

## Solutions

- At the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on Children in May 2002, governments of UN member states reached an agreement and adopted a draft resolution entitled 'A World Fit For Children'. The resolution commits member states to achieving a set of priorities by 2010:

- Promoting healthy lives
- Providing quality education
- Protecting against abuse, exploitation and violence
- Combating HIV/AIDS

To meet these objectives by the end of the decade, all governments, including ours, should make specific, time-bound commitments to children's rights.

- All governments, including the Australian government, should ratify both the optional protocols on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.



This little girl pictured is named 'Dr Ana' after the doctor who saved her life. Dr Ana receives a polio vaccination from the real Dr Ana.

<sup>20</sup> United Nations Development Program 2003.

<sup>21</sup> [www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org), August 2003.

<sup>22</sup> [www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org) Facts and Figures, August 2003.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> [www.developmentgoals.org/Child\\_Mortality.htm](http://www.developmentgoals.org/Child_Mortality.htm), August 2003.

<sup>26</sup> [www.who.int](http://www.who.int), August 2003.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

## The Burden of Debt

**Suffering and loss of life continue in most of the world's poorest countries because their governments are forced to use much of their very limited budgets to repay debts to wealthy creditor countries and institutions.**

As a result, they are starved of funds to spend on basic welfare services. Some countries are forced to spend more to pay off debts than they spend on their people's basic needs like healthcare and education. Many continue to repay more in debt than they receive in aid.

### The Reality

- Each year, more money comes out of Africa as debt repayments (\$21 billion), than goes in as aid (\$18.4 billion).<sup>28</sup>
- The Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative was set up by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1996. It aims to reduce the debt burden of some of the poorest countries, known as Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC). However, like all current frameworks for providing debt relief, it is unfair as it is dominated by the interests of the creditors.
- Life expectancy in many of the poorest countries has plummeted because of HIV/AIDS. In Zambia, for example, it has fallen from 43 to 33 years.<sup>29</sup> Teachers are dying of HIV/AIDS faster than new teachers can be trained. Despite all this, Zambia has had debt relief suspended because it is supposedly 'off-track'<sup>30</sup> in reforms required under the HIPC program.<sup>31</sup> HIV/AIDS and falling commodity prices continue to further weaken the capacity of HIPCs to repay debts.<sup>32</sup>
- Major creditors, the World Bank and the IMF, continue to focus more on enabling debt repayments than fulfilling their very public commitment to halving world poverty through the Millennium Development Goals. Their



Children in Ghana celebrate education.

insistence, through the HIPC Initiative, on using exports to measure debt sustainability<sup>33</sup> (the measure of what level of debt a country can 'afford' to pay) conflicts with their commitments to deliver on the Millennium Development Goals.

- Also, despite committing to carry their fair share of debt relief like all other creditors<sup>34</sup>, the IMF and the World Bank refuse to do so.<sup>35</sup>

**Each year, more money comes out of Africa as debt repayments, than goes in as aid.**

<sup>28</sup> [www.datadata.org](http://www.datadata.org), August 2003.

<sup>29</sup> In Australia (as in most wealthy countries) life expectancy is about 80 years, and continues to rise.

<sup>30</sup> Nine other HIPCs are also supposedly 'off-track'.

<sup>31</sup> According to strict but little-known World Bank/IMF rules. See The 'Real Progress Report on HIPC', Jubilee Research, September 2003.

<sup>32</sup> The 'Real Progress Report on HIPC', Jubilee Research, September 2003.

<sup>33</sup> The key ratio currently used to measure debt sustainability, which is the central goal of the HIPC debt relief initiative, is the debt to export ratio. However, this ratio does not take account of what poor countries need to budget in order to combat poverty.

<sup>34</sup> 'Can the World Bank and IMF cancel 100% of poor country debts', Jubilee Research, September 2003. Full text available <http://www.jubileeresearch.org/>

<sup>35</sup> The 'Real Progress Report on HIPC' (Jubilee Research, September 2003).





With debt relief, Tanzania was able to increase spending on education. This brought around 1.6 million additional children into the classroom.

### Positive Change

- Because of lower debt repayments, the 27 countries in the HIPC program are paying an average of \$1.8 billion less a year compared with payments made in 1989-99.<sup>36</sup> Eight countries (Benin, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda) have completed the program and received a partial debt write-off.
- Tanzania is paying about \$50 million less each year in debt servicing. Some of this has been used to fund increases in educational spending. As a result, an estimated 1.6 million additional children are now attending school.<sup>37</sup> However, this debt relief is short-lived and repayments are expected to rise sharply in 2004 and 2005.
- With debt relief, Mozambique was able to increase health spending by \$20 million. Half a million children were vaccinated against tetanus, whooping cough and diphtheria in the last two years. About \$14 million was spent on rural schools and hospitals. Around \$5 million was used to put more girls in school, and scores of new primary schools have been built.<sup>38</sup>
- The Australian government has stopped collecting debt from two countries (Ethiopia and Nicaragua) of the three HIPCs that owe Australia about \$20 million in debt. However, the debts from Ethiopia and Nicaragua are still on the books and will not be cancelled until both countries 'graduate' from the HIPC program.<sup>39</sup>

### Solutions

- Wealthy countries, including Australia, should increase debt relief to countries struggling to free themselves of extreme poverty. So far, only \$37.7 billion in debt has been cancelled for 27 HIPC countries, which is just 19% of these countries' total debt stocks before cancellation began.<sup>40</sup> Cancelling all debts owed to Australia by HIPCs would be the first step in leadership to call on other creditors – governments, the IMF and the World Bank – to do likewise.
- The Australian government should use its representation in the IMF, the World Bank and the UN to advance two key issues:
  - Move the measurement of a poor country's debt sustainability from a narrow focus on exports (often of commodities such as tea or coffee whose prices fluctuate) towards measuring what is needed for debt relief to meet the Millennium Development Goals, such as spending on food, health and education.<sup>41</sup>
  - Promote the development of an international insolvency framework for debt which is transparent, independent and accountable to global taxpayers in both the northern and southern hemispheres.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>36</sup> [www.worldbank.org/hipc/hipc-review/Fact\\_Sheet\\_mar03\\_.pdf](http://www.worldbank.org/hipc/hipc-review/Fact_Sheet_mar03_.pdf), August 2003.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> [www.jubilee2000.org.au/525\\_jubilee\\_aust\\_credit\\_nat.php](http://www.jubilee2000.org.au/525_jubilee_aust_credit_nat.php), August 2003.

<sup>40</sup> In NPV (Net Present Value) terms. NPV is a measure of the overall value of a stream of payments over time. In effect, it represents the amount that would need to be invested at a commercial interest rate at the beginning of a period in order to meet all payments including accumulated interest as they fall due.

<sup>41</sup> Specific proposals which deserve attention have been made in 'Real Progress Report on HIPC' and 'Debt and the Millennium Development Goals' (September 2003) [www.globalpolicy.org/soecon/develop/debt/2003/09debtmdgs.htm](http://www.globalpolicy.org/soecon/develop/debt/2003/09debtmdgs.htm), August 2003.

<sup>42</sup> Proposals include Pettifor, A. 'Resolving International Debt Crises Fairly' in *Ethics & International Affairs*, Volume 17, No. 2 (Fall 2003) and Buckley, R.P. 'The Impact on the Poor of the Weaknesses in the International Financial System', October 2003, [www.fdc.org.au](http://www.fdc.org.au).

## HIV/AIDS

It is now beyond any doubt that HIV/AIDS is the most devastating crisis the world has ever experienced.

“Despite millennia of epidemics, war and famine, never before in history have death rates of this magnitude been seen among young adults of both sexes and from all walks of life.”<sup>43</sup>

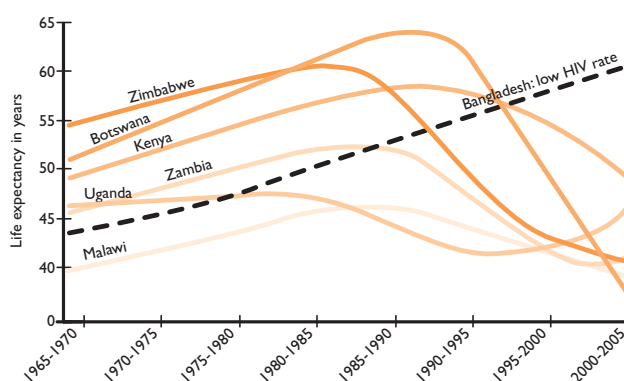
Twenty-eight million people have now died of AIDS related illnesses and at the end of 2002, 42 million people, mainly in Africa, are now living with HIV/AIDS. Every day, a further 8,000 people die – mothers, fathers, sons and daughters, leaving behind relatives, friends and orphaned children.

Unfortunately, this global crisis has yet to reach its peak. Two future generations will continue to suffer the consequences of our lack of action to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and care for those who are affected and infected.

### The Reality

- Over 14 million children have been left orphaned after losing one or both parents to AIDS related diseases.<sup>44</sup> By the year 2020, it is estimated that this number will grow to over 25 million children who have no parents or primary carer.<sup>45</sup>
- HIV/AIDS has become a disease of the young, fuelled by poverty, gender inequality and a severe lack of information and services for prevention.<sup>46</sup> Half of all new HIV infections occur in people aged 15 to 24. Yet only a small percentage know they are infected, and the majority of young people are ignorant about how HIV is transmitted.<sup>47</sup>
- HIV/AIDS is killing the most productive people in society – those between 15-49 years of age. The southern African food crisis was exacerbated by HIV/AIDS because people who should have been growing food were sick or dying and those that should have helped were too busy caring for the sick and dying.

### HIV/AIDS is Reversing Gains in Life Expectancy



- HIV/AIDS has a disproportionate impact on women. In 2002, over one million women died of HIV related diseases. About twice as many young women as men are infected in sub-Saharan Africa overall.<sup>48</sup>
- Six years after the introduction of anti-retroviral drugs (ARV) in Europe and the United States, deaths caused by HIV/AIDS reduced by more than 70%.<sup>49</sup>
- In Australia, people who have HIV/AIDS and a Medicare card can access medical treatment. In sub-Saharan Africa, where 2.4 million people died of AIDS related diseases in 2002, only 2% of those diagnosed with HIV/AIDS received treatment. During the same period, in Asia and the Pacific, only 9% of the 485,000 people who died of AIDS related diseases had any treatment.<sup>50</sup>
- As of May 2003, the least expensive brand name combination of anti-retroviral drug therapy recommended by the World Health Organisation for low-income countries was approximately \$978 per person per year. The generic version costs about \$434 per person per year.<sup>51</sup> However, most people who are living with HIV/AIDS cannot even afford the generic drug combination. The world's poorest nations have only 24 cents per person per day to spend on vital public services including healthcare.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>43</sup> AIDS in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

<sup>44</sup> [www.unaids.org/whatsnew/speeches/eng/2002/fahlen180302monterey.html](http://www.unaids.org/whatsnew/speeches/eng/2002/fahlen180302monterey.html), August 2003.

<sup>45</sup> The United Nations Population Fund, 2003.

<sup>46</sup> The State of the World's Population Report, 2003.

<sup>47</sup> [www.unfpa.org](http://www.unfpa.org) State of the World's Population 2003.

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.unaids.org/Unaid/EN/media/fact+sheets.asp> UNAIDS, August 2003. The main mode of transmission is heterosexual sex and in such intercourse, there is biologically a higher rate of transmission from male to

female, than from female to male. Women and girls are also particularly vulnerable to infection due to their lower social, political and economic status. In African countries with generalised epidemics, up to 80% of women aged 15-24 years old lack sufficient knowledge about HIV/AIDS.

<sup>49</sup> [www.unaids.org/fact\\_sheets/FS\\_Care\\_0703\\_en.html](http://www.unaids.org/fact_sheets/FS_Care_0703_en.html), August 2003.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

### Positive Change

- The Treatment Action Campaign, which sued the South African government to force them to provide anti-retroviral therapies to people living with HIV/AIDS, won its case. In a country like South Africa where almost 20% of the population have HIV/AIDS, this is a huge step in the right direction.
- In 2002, the Australian government pledged to commit \$200 million over six years to combat HIV/AIDS in the Asia Pacific region.
- In Brazil, ARVs manufactured by the country's own pharmaceutical industry has kept costs low and has allowed more people to access life-prolonging treatment. As a result, HIV/AIDS mortality rates have been reduced by 51% and infection rates have stabilised.<sup>53</sup>
- Earlier this year, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared that the failure to deliver HIV/AIDS medicines to those who need them was a global emergency. Only 5% of those in the developing world who require ARVs are getting them. Of the 5-6 million people in need, just 300,000 are on ARVs. WHO has launched the '3 by 5 Campaign' which will get anti-retroviral therapies to 3 million people by 2005.
- In September 2003, the member states of the World Trade Organisation reached an agreement to allow poor countries to import cheap generic drugs, including those used to fight HIV/AIDS. Governments need to work towards the implementation of this agreement to ensure that the drugs reach those who need them.

**HIV/AIDS is killing the most productive people in society – those between 15-49 years of age.**

Crisis	Death toll <sup>54</sup>
SARS	916
Ebola Virus	1,000
Holocaust	6,000,000
World War I	10,000,000
Spanish Flu	22,000,000
Bubonic Plague	25,000,000
World War II	61,000,000
<b>HIV/AIDS</b>	<b>28,000,000 lives claimed</b>

Figures in the table should not be looked at as direct comparisons. However, what the figures do indicate is that HIV/AIDS is emerging as the greatest global catastrophe, man-made or health related, that our world has ever seen.

<sup>53</sup> [www.unaids.org/fact\\_sheets/FS\\_Care\\_0703\\_en.html](http://www.unaids.org/fact_sheets/FS_Care_0703_en.html), August 2003.

<sup>54</sup> [www.who.int/csr/sars/country/en/country2003\\_08\\_15.pdf](http://www.who.int/csr/sars/country/en/country2003_08_15.pdf) (SARS); DFID Developments, First Quarter 2002, pp. 5 (Ebola); [www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0001286.html](http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0001286.html) (Holocaust); [www.infoplease.com/ce6/history/A0862007.html](http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/history/A0862007.html) (WWI); [www.thebody.com/encyclo/epidemics.html](http://www.thebody.com/encyclo/epidemics.html) (Spanish Flu and Bubonic Plague); [www.unaids.org/whatsnew/speeches/eng/2002/fahlen180302monterey.html](http://www.unaids.org/whatsnew/speeches/eng/2002/fahlen180302monterey.html) (HIV/AIDS); [www.paralumun.com/warworldwartwodeaths.htm](http://www.paralumun.com/warworldwartwodeaths.htm) (WWII), August 2003.

### HIV/AIDS - Solutions

**Although the statistics which represent so many people's lives can be overwhelming, much can be done to stop the further spread and impact of HIV/AIDS.**

- The Australian government was one of many nations who signed the Declaration of Commitment for HIV/AIDS. This called for all governments to increase their responses to combat the crisis. As a result of this Declaration, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria was established.<sup>55</sup> However, the Fund is now seriously under-resourced and Australia is one of the few wealthiest countries not contributing to the Fund. According to the equitable contribution calculations, Australia should provide 1.2 % of the Fund budget, or approximately \$110 million for 2002-2004.
- It is estimated that global expenditure on HIV/AIDS prevention programs will fall below by \$3.5 billion of the amount needed by 2005. Adequate funding, however, could prevent two-thirds of the projected 45 million new cases this decade.<sup>56</sup>
- Primary healthcare must be strengthened through increased resourcing and skills training of health workers. Anti-retroviral therapies must be available for all people who need them, not just people who can afford these drugs.
- Global recognition of the particular needs of orphans and vulnerable children affected by HIV/AIDS needs to be heightened. Governments, donors and international institutions can help to reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS on these children through the implementation of the 2001 HIV/AIDS UNGASS Declaration of Commitments.
- Many of the world's more marginalised countries need greater long-term international cooperation and financial support. Fairer investment and trade flows can help ensure that global economic progress also profits the world's poor. Higher levels of ODA are needed to support poverty-reduction strategies and improve social services. Since 1990, ODA provided to the 28 countries with the highest adult HIV prevalence rates (more than 4%) has fallen by a third.<sup>57</sup>
- The World Bank and IMF must recognise that developing countries ravaged by HIV/AIDS need special economic assistance. A new, tailored set of financial criteria reflecting today's economic realities needs to be drawn, instead of using dated conditions from decades ago.
- While an estimated \$14.4 - \$21 billion a year is needed to turn the situation around, sub-Saharan Africa alone pays almost \$14.4 billion in repaying debts to wealthy nations every year. If all debts were cancelled, poor countries would be able to use the money to pay for essential health services needed for HIV/AIDS.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>55</sup> The Fund allows countries to access funding for programs such as treatment which are rare under bilateral funding schemes.

<sup>56</sup> UNAIDS, 2003.

<sup>57</sup> UNAIDS.

<sup>58</sup> [www.jubileeaustralia.org/511\\_jubilee\\_why\\_drop.php](http://www.jubileeaustralia.org/511_jubilee_why_drop.php), August 2003.



## Global Instability

**All around the world, global stability is threatened both by war, conflict and terrorism. The real effects of war are on civilians. Ninety per cent of the victims of modern wars are non-combatants, with women and children particularly vulnerable.**

Both international and civil conflicts cause widespread suffering and poverty among innocent men, women and children. By displacing people and destroying societies, conflicts affect the security of people's lives: their ability to have enough to eat, to live in their community without fear of injury or death, to carry out their livelihood and to have access to basic services like clean water and healthcare.

The security of people is also affected by the vast amounts of funds that go into military spending, both through maintaining a military in times of peace and the increased costs associated with fighting a war.

Hundreds of billions of dollars are spent every year on military forces around the world, while very little goes towards proactive peace-building initiatives. The huge sums involved mean that even a modest reduction in global military spending would provide enough funds to significantly reduce worldwide poverty.

Terrorism has emerged as a serious threat to global stability. The worldwide effects of terrorism and its links to poverty mean that global poverty is an issue that all nations must address to ensure the security of all people.

**Terrorism has emerged as a serious threat to global stability.**



Afghanistan has suffered 20 years of political instability and conflict. Millions of Afghans have become refugees or displaced people in their own country.

### The Reality

- At the start of 2002, there were nearly 20 million people, the equivalent of Australia's population, who were either refugees, asylum seekers or displaced people within their own country.<sup>59</sup> Nearly half of them were children under 18.<sup>60</sup>
- Nearly 3.3 million people, almost the equivalent of Melbourne's population, have been killed during half a decade of prolonged civil conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Most of these people died from malnutrition or disease as a result of the conflict.<sup>61</sup> This has resulted in a substantial shift in the country's demographics. Almost 50% of its population now are aged under 15 years.<sup>62</sup>
- As many as 300,000 children under 18 are forced to serve as child soldiers in countries affected by armed conflicts. Some are as young as eight years old.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>59</sup> www.unhcr.ch, August 2003.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> [http://web.amnesty.org/pages/cod-040803-background\\_1-eng](http://web.amnesty.org/pages/cod-040803-background_1-eng), August 2003.

<sup>62</sup> www.undp.org/hdr2003, August 2003.

<sup>63</sup> www.hrw.org/campaigns/crp/facts.htm, August 2003.

TOOLS FOR LIFE <sup>64</sup>	COST	TOOLS FOR WAR <sup>65</sup>
Stock 204,500 clinics around the world for a year	<b>\$409 million</b>	Three tests of missile defence system
Build wells to provide clean water in Africa for 65 million people	<b>\$520 million</b>	Cost of six Trident II missiles
Immunise over 134 million children worldwide against deadly diseases such as measles, typhoid and tuberculosis	<b>\$3.1 billion</b>	Price of one Stealth bomber

### Positive Change

- On 1 July 2002, Australia ratified the agreement which established the International Criminal Court (ICC). The establishment of the ICC is an important step to end the gross violations of international humanitarian law, particularly war crimes which still continue in many places today.
- As of 26 September 2003, 150 governments have signed and 139, including Australia, have ratified the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty, which prohibits the production, transfer or use of anti-personnel landmines.<sup>66</sup> It also requires that stockpiles be destroyed within the first four years of a country signing the treaty, and that mines already in the ground be destroyed within ten years.

- Non-government organisations are facilitating peace-building programs in areas of unrest around the world. For instance, in 2000, World Vision partnered with an Indonesian aid organisation, the Salawaku Maluku Foundation, in the Ambon Rehabilitation Project. The aim was to help with peace-building, education and trauma counselling for internally displaced people amidst religious tension between Muslims and Christians, with a specific focus on children under 13.

### Solutions

- World Vision encourages the Australian government to increase the funding of peace-building initiatives. Even a small reduction of the overwhelming amount allocated to war and military exercises could have a significant impact as aid for the poorest countries.
- The Australian government has contributed \$100 million in the decade ending 2005 for rehabilitation of landmine victims and the removal of and education about landmines in our region. A further \$150 million over the next decade is needed to continue this work.



Young people in Gikongoro, Rwanda, perform a reconciliation dance telling the story of Rwanda - from peace to a horrific genocide and the after trauma, to young people today looking towards a peaceful future.

<sup>64</sup> World Vision, 2003.

<sup>65</sup> [www.warregisters.org/piechart.htm](http://www.warregisters.org/piechart.htm), August 2003 (based on expenses of the United States government).

<sup>66</sup> [www.icbl.org](http://www.icbl.org), August 2003.

# The Challenge for Australia

## General Public

**Contrary to popular belief, Australians are not suffering from 'compassion fatigue' or retreating inwards as a response to increased media exposure to war and other global crises.**

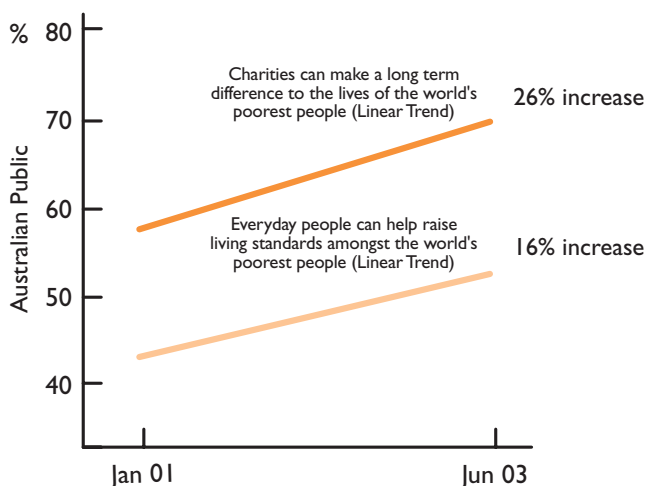
In fact, research shows that more Australians are becoming a part of the global community by actively helping to change lives beyond our shores. More individuals than ever before believe they can make a difference in the lives of people in poor countries.

## The Reality

- Australians are giving more than ever before:
  - Between 2001 and 2002, community donations to overseas aid organisations increased by 15%,<sup>67</sup> while giving to domestic charities increased by 6.5%.<sup>68</sup>
  - 81% of those who give to charities wish they could give a lot more.<sup>69</sup>
- The number of Australians who believe that everyday people can help raise standards amongst the world's poorest people has increased by 16%, from 45% in 2001 to 50.5% in 2003. Over the same period, the number of people who believe charities can make a long-term difference to the lives of the world's poorest people has also gone up significantly, from 53% to 65.8% - a 26% increase.<sup>70</sup>

- Individual Australians appear to be taking action into their own hands as their trust for institutions and government declines.<sup>71</sup>
  - There's a lack of public confidence in the effectiveness and impact of government aid, which is seen mostly as giving money to other governments, rather than getting it to the people in need.<sup>72</sup>
  - In general, Australia's public has a low confidence in institutions. We have the greatest confidence in the police (52%) and lawyers (28%), but the least in information gained from government departments (10%) or large companies (5%).<sup>73</sup>
- In general, Australians who give to charity have some similar demographic characteristics but are most clearly distinguished by common motivations and values:<sup>74</sup>
  - 95% give because they want to make at least some small difference
  - 91% believe that supporting charities teaches our children positive values
  - 88% believe we have to help others because we all belong to one human family
  - 83% believe giving to charity will make life better for future generations
  - 52% say that their main motivation for giving is to help build a better future for everyone.

## Public Attitude Trends



"It's easy to feel hopeless about the way the world is at the moment. The key is to focus on the things we can change and we can change lives by sponsoring a child through World Vision."  
- **Kate Hannan**, veterinarian and World Vision child sponsor.

<sup>67</sup> Australian Council for Overseas Aid annual report 2003.

<sup>68</sup> Givewell Research Centre data, 2003.

<sup>69</sup> World Vision Giver Research, MarketMetrics 2002.

<sup>70</sup> Roy Morgan Research, 2003.

<sup>71</sup> This mirrors global mistrust in institutions. A 2002 Gallup International poll disclosed very low levels of trust in institutions across the world.

<sup>72</sup> ODA Attitudinal Research, Quantum Market Research, 2002.

<sup>73</sup> AustraliaScan, Quantum Market Research, 2003.

<sup>74</sup> World Vision Giver Research, MarketMetrics, 2002.

## Young Australians

**The future of Australia as a global citizen rests on the shoulders on today's young people. The values and education they receive today, both at home and at school, will shape the nation's policies and directions of tomorrow.**

If more emphasis were placed on global issues at home and in the classroom, we can educate the next generation of Australian leaders to be more globally responsible.

The time to do so is now, as young people today are already regarding global poverty and conflict to be the greatest challenge facing our world today, even more so than environmental concerns.

While the concerns of young Australians are increasingly focused globally, their confidence in local institutions meeting these needs is consistently low.

### The Reality

- More young people believe that the biggest issues facing our world are:
  - War and terrorism (64% in 2003, up from 52% in 2002).<sup>75</sup>
  - Poverty and famine (35% in 2003, up from 34% in 2002).<sup>76</sup>
- More than half of young people surveyed say they have not studied global issues at school in the past year.<sup>77</sup> Only 30% have studied world poverty, hunger and global health topics.<sup>78</sup>
- More young people believe that our government is not doing enough to help solve global poverty:
  - 44% in 2003, up from 42% in 2002 (only 7% believe that our government is doing enough).<sup>79</sup>
- Trust in government is low:
  - Among the least-trusted sources of information for young people are politicians (7%), after advertising (5%).<sup>80</sup>



Each year thousands of secondary students attend World Vision's Youth Leadership Convention to learn about leadership skills and global issues.

- More young people believe that corporations are not doing enough to help solve global poverty:
  - 45% in 2003, and 38% in 2002 (only 6% believe that corporations are doing enough).<sup>81</sup>
- State schools are less likely to teach global issues than religious based schools. Young people who are studying poverty, hunger and health are more likely to attend Catholic (46%) or Christian schools (32%) rather than government schools (26%).<sup>82</sup>
- Studying global issues has an influence on young people:
  - Those who study poverty subjects are more likely to agree that aid organisations can be effective – 93% agree compared to 89% in the wider population. They are also more likely to agree that our government is not doing enough – 52% agreed compared with 44% in the broader youth population.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Quantum Research, July 2003.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.



- Who else is influencing young Australians?
  - Only 38% of adults believe they have a responsibility to help the world's poorest people.<sup>84</sup> Yet young people have most confidence in parents as leadership figures (72%).<sup>85</sup> For our young people to gain 'global citizen' values from both home and school, then it would be encouraging to see a shift in the number of adults who felt some global responsibility.

### Call to Action

- The more informed young Australians are on global issues, the more likely they will mature into global citizens. The values they embrace will have a significant bearing on the future state of the world. Parents, teachers and the wider community have the responsibility to guide our children to become responsible decision makers of tomorrow.
- Schools that wish to incorporate global issues into the curriculum can download teaching materials from the World Vision website, [worldvision.com.au/resources](http://worldvision.com.au/resources)
- For adults, action is the loudest voice. Make your views known in writing to your local Member of Parliament. If you have questions about global poverty, find out as much information as you can. The more you understand, the more you will see how change is possible.

**If more emphasis were placed on global issues at home and in the classroom, we can educate the next generation to be more globally responsible.**

### Case Study

To fill the void in the Victorian curriculum, Wantirna College in Melbourne has created its own Global Issues subject which includes an entire week dedicated to learning about global poverty. Students are encouraged to take part in efforts that help change the world. In the 40 Hour Famine of 2003, the school raised \$4,636.

Two Wantirna College students attended the 2003 World Vision Youth Leadership Convention to learn about global issues and values. Both students were short-listed and one has been accepted for this year's World Vision study tour which takes young leaders to visit a developing country.

The school also sent a teacher to attend the World Vision Global Education Conference 2003 which focused on equipping teachers to incorporate global perspectives and issues across the curriculum and within the classroom.



Wantirna College students and other Victorian representatives outside Parliament House after talking with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer. The visit was part of the World Vision Study Tour Summit.

<sup>84</sup> Roy Morgan Research, 2003.

<sup>85</sup> Quantum Market Research, 2003.

## Corporations

**Corporations are in a powerful position to create a positive or negative social impact through their commercial activities and interactions with the communities.**

In some instances, they can be more influential than governments. Out of the world's top 100 economies, 51 are actually corporations, not countries.<sup>86</sup> In recent years, there have been many positive movements in corporate social responsibility, but the overall trend is still slow.

### The Reality

- When it comes to corporate community giving, the trend sways in two directions. While there has been an increase in the number of companies who have long-term relationships with community programs, research suggests that there has been a drop in terms of the actual overall dollar amount given.
- Australia's top 100 public companies gave approximately \$112 million to community programs in 2001-02, a decline of 8% from \$121 million in the previous year. This drop was attributed largely to the global economic uncertainty after the events of September 11.<sup>87</sup> Interestingly, the public gave more to international and domestic charities at this time than the Australian corporations did – around \$1 billion.<sup>88</sup>
- 55 of the top 100 companies have community programs:<sup>89</sup>
  - 33 of them have a structured approach (up from 28 in 2002)
  - 35 of them focus on sustainability (up from 30 in 2002), showing commitment to support the programs over several years.
- 45 of the top 100 companies either do not support community causes or do not publicly report on them.<sup>90</sup>
- 60% of total funds from the top 100 companies allocated to community, social and environmental causes (which amounts to \$64 million) come from the top 10 public companies surveyed, including BHP Billiton, Telstra, Commonwealth Bank, Westpac, ANZ, National Australia Bank, and Rio Tinto.<sup>91</sup>

### Call to Action

An action list for corporations include:

- Increasing communication with community organisations for better development of social performance indicators.
- Developing long-term socially responsible programs in the communities where they operate.
- Increasing investment (financial and other) to work on eliminating the causes of poverty, both local and global.
- Making social responsibility part of the decision-making process.

### Case Study

- In a joint rehabilitation effort, World Vision is helping BHP Billiton and BHP Steel to have a positive impact on the society where they operate in India. When school re-opens later this year, the joint partnership will have built 85 classrooms for 3,000 children in 17 villages in earthquake-ravaged Gujarat, India.
- The Australian Football League (AFL) has teamed up with World Vision to launch the KickStart program for young Indigenous Australians living in remote communities such as Papunya and Epenarra in the Northern Territory. The program focuses on education, sport, healthy lifestyles and leadership. Three other major partners in this program are Network Ten, Medicines Australia and Trust Company.



KickStart Clinic, Epenarra, 2002.

<sup>86</sup> [www.ips-dc.org/reports/top200.htm](http://www.ips-dc.org/reports/top200.htm), August 2003.

<sup>87</sup> [www.corporategoodworks.com.au/report/2003](http://www.corporategoodworks.com.au/report/2003), August 2003.

<sup>88</sup> Givewell data, 2003 (gross revenue from fund raising of all charities surveyed).

<sup>89</sup> [www.corporategoodworks.com.au/report/2003](http://www.corporategoodworks.com.au/report/2003), August 2003.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

## Government

**With the government's actions seemingly out of step with public attitude on global issues, the responsibility to help poorer countries appears to have shifted to individuals, perhaps in a move towards 'a privatisation of caring'.**

A revival of commitment and action from and leadership by the Australian government is needed.

### The Reality

- The government's current approach to overseas assistance has been 'trade not aid' – suggesting that trade can better assist countries to develop and aid is unnecessary. Trade is essential for developing countries, however the government's approach ignores the essential role played by aid in helping poor countries to build infrastructure, well-functioning institutions and a healthy and educated population. It is only by developing these areas that governments can access the benefits that trade can bring.
- In 1971, as part of an agreement among UN member states, the Australian government committed to contributing 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) every year for Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). The commitment has not been kept. ODA contribution has declined from 0.5% of GNI in 1975 to a mere 0.24%<sup>92</sup> in 2003.<sup>93</sup>
- Australia's stated contribution to ODA in 2003-2004 stands at \$1.894 billion, an apparent increase of almost \$79 million from \$1.815 billion in 2002-2003.<sup>94</sup> However, this figure includes \$255.6 million budgeted to departments other than those responsible for overseas aid.<sup>95</sup> Of particular concern is aid budget money to be used for processing asylum seekers in Nauru and for the support of refugees in Australia. When these funds are not included, Australia's aid contribution has actually fallen to 0.24% of GNI.

### Total Overseas Development Assistance (ODA)

\$1.894 billion

### Of which . . .

\$255.6 million Budgeted by government departments other than the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, which jointly report as ODA.

### Within this . . .

\$87 million Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) for the costs of offshore processing of asylum seekers in Nauru.

\$48 million Previously unreported, goes to DIMIA for the support of refugees in Australia.

\$17 million Used to fund Defence Corporation activities.

\$103.6 million Used by other government departments outside of AusAID.

This table shows the breakdown of Australia's ODA and where it's been diverted away from its purpose of overseas aid, according to the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA).

<sup>92</sup> The Australian government's stated ODA is 0.25% of GNI. However World Vision analysis indicates that it is closer to 0.24% of GNI.

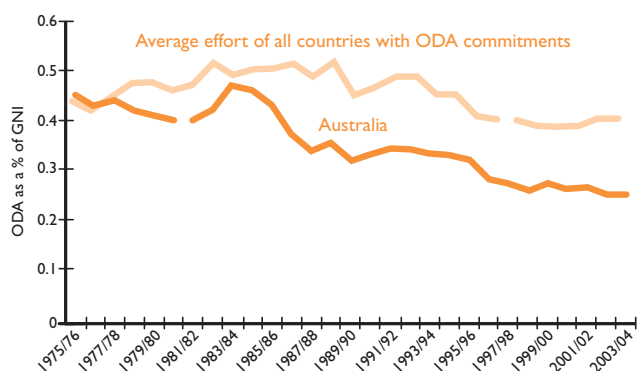
<sup>93</sup> www.undp.org/hdr2002, August 2003.

<sup>94</sup> www.ausaid.gov.au/makediff/howmuch.cfm, August 2003.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

- The Australian government's stated focus in development aid is on the Asia-Pacific region. However, 33 of the world's 49 least developed countries are in Africa.<sup>96</sup> Currently the Australian government gives only \$61 million per year in ODA to Africa. Public donations to Africa far exceed this. During 2002-2003, World Vision alone spent \$62.4 million on programs in Africa. As well as maintaining its commitment to the Asia-Pacific, the government needs to do more to assist the poorest of the poor in Africa. This could be achieved through an overall increase in Australia's ODA commitment.
- To meet all the Millennium Development Goals, \$130 to \$168 billion is needed as a combined total from all wealthy countries. It is achievable if each country contributes 0.7% of its GNI in ODA. Currently, the total is only \$81 billion for all signatories of Millennium Development Goals countries.<sup>97</sup> The World Bank has stated that developed countries need to double their aid contributions in order to achieve these goals.

### Australia's Falling Commitment to the World's Poor



Australia's ODA contribution has halved since the 1970s and is well below other countries with ODA commitments.

### Call to Action

- The Millennium Development Goals are a realistic, practical agenda for reducing global poverty. The lack of policy and action needs to be overcome in order to achieve the targets, most of which have been set for 2015. By raising the ODA percentage to 0.7% as agreed, the government would be able to play a bigger part in the Millennium Development Goals. But increasing ODA to 0.7% is only one of the steps. The government also needs to address the quality of aid and support policies to promote fairer trading rules that acknowledge the needs of developing countries.
- To counter poverty, we need to increase government aid levels and to deliver more aid to the poorest regions in Africa, in addition to those in Asia and the Pacific.
- The government must ensure that overseas aid focuses on addressing the needs of the poorest people, the causes of global poverty and its long-term elimination, rather than being allocated towards non-aid related items such as defence.
- Australia has also yet to ratify the two optional protocols on the Rights of the Child related to:
  - the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography
  - the involvement of children in armed conflict.
- Australia should cancel or reduce debt owed to us by poor countries who are sacrificing spending on basic services in order to repay their debts.
- Further government aid should be committed to fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS.
- Funding for peace-building initiatives should take precedence over increased military and defence expenditure.

<sup>96</sup> [www.unesco.org/ldc/list.htm](http://www.unesco.org/ldc/list.htm), August 2003.

<sup>97</sup> [www.undp.org/hdr2002](http://www.undp.org/hdr2002), August 2003.



### Case Study

Set up in 1996, the Alor Community Based Health Project in Indonesia was jointly funded by the governments of Indonesia and Australia and implemented through World Vision.

The aim of the project was to improve primary healthcare in the community. Some key issues identified were malaria, lack of clean water, and setting up of small businesses to help the communities afford their own healthcare.

The project has benefited over 30,000 people and can claim to have achieved all these objectives over a four-year period:

- Reduction in parasitic rates (malaria parasites in human bloodstreams) in most areas. Some areas recorded a drop in infections among infants from 18% to zero.
- Provision of almost 13,000 mosquito nets.
- Provision of water to over 17,000 people.
- Drop in infant deaths from a total of 76 to 4 in the target areas during the four-year period.
- Reduction in maternal deaths from a total of 14 to 2 in the target areas during the four-year period.
- Communities are beginning to run their own small businesses, with the aim of starting a co-operative.



Over 17,000 people in the Alor Community now have clean water for drinking, cooking and cleaning.

## Churches

According to recent research, matching faith with action is a key challenge facing Australia's most widespread religious body – the Christian Church.<sup>98</sup>

### The Reality

- 89% of church-goers say that helping people overseas is important to their faith. But only 41% have a current involvement in meeting the needs of people in developing countries. In fact, only 9% (not even one in ten people) say they are 'highly involved', with 32% saying they are 'a little involved'.<sup>99</sup> While 41% demonstrates significantly more action than the general public overall on this issue, it would be encouraging to see the gap between faith and action reduced among church-goers.
- Those who attend church more regularly, or have a leadership role, are more likely to be involved in helping others from developing countries:
  - Those who attend church more than once a week are 66% more likely than other church-goers to be involved.
  - Those who hold a leadership or ministry role are 57% more likely than other church-goers to be involved.
  - Those who attend church once a week are 41% more likely than other church-goers to be involved.<sup>100</sup>
- Major motivators for church-goers to become involved in helping others from developing countries include: hearing related preaching or teaching at church (32%), and meeting or listening to people from overseas (31%).<sup>101</sup>

### Call to Action

- It would be encouraging to see the gap between faith and action bridged among church-goers. Church leaders have a responsibility to inform their congregations on global issues and motivate them to take action.
- World Vision urges each denomination and local Church to develop action guidelines specific to global poverty issues.

### Case Study

Christian City Church in Whitehorse, Victoria, supports the Bamboo Shoots Children's Program in Cambodia through World Vision. The aim of the program is to get children who are sex workers, drug users, rubbish collectors or in other vulnerable situations off the streets into a caring situation where they can be educated and receive vocational training.

The church sends a group of supporters to visit the program each year, and has managed to raise about \$320,000 for the program over the last eight years.

It is said that "faith without works is dead".<sup>102</sup> The commitment and involvement from this church community over the years is a testament to the lives of Christians that matches their faith with action.

"It is because of our faith in Jesus Christ that we have the heart to support the Bamboo Shoots Program. Having the love of God in our hearts makes us want to bless others despite race, religion or political opinion," says Brenton Wandke, Mission Pastor of Christian City Church Whitehorse.



The Bamboo Shoots Children's Program is helping to keep children off the street and into the classroom.

<sup>98</sup> It is acknowledged that the Australian population is made up of many religions. However, for the purpose of this report, World Vision has only focused on the religion that makes up the largest percentage of the Australian population. According to the 2001 Australian Census, the breakdown of religions in Australia is: Christianity 68%; Buddhism 1.91%; Islam 1.5%; Judaism 0.45%; 15.48% no religion; and 10.16% not stated and other.

<sup>99</sup> Christian Responsibility Towards People in Developing Countries, National Church Life Survey, December 2002.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> The Bible, James 2:26.

# The Future

With compassion and generosity growing in the Australian people, we can make this country a beacon and inspiration for the rest of the world. We've demonstrated that poverty is a problem with viable solutions. We've also outlined the course of action that will take us a step further to the solution.

Poverty is not just about the actions of poor people – it's about what rich people do and don't do. How we rise to the challenge offered to us by global poverty will determine if this nation has the will and resolution to become a true global citizen.

“It is the greatest of all mistakes to do nothing because you can only do a little. Do what you can.”

**Sydney Smith,**  
English clergyman

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Habibo lost her husband and her home to the decade-long war in Somalia. With the help of agricultural training and the provision of seeds and tools through World Vision, Habibo and her children have rebuilt their lives.





**Island nation or global citizen?**  
Reporting on Australia's attitudes and actions towards  
solving global poverty.