

The W P F Alert

Patron

The Honourable Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO

October 2014

Women's Plans Foundation started at a frontier twelve years ago, because family planning was considered 'controversial'. Until the 1960s the word 'contraception' could not be used on Australian radio. Patriarchies have not been good at recognising the benefits of reproductive health for women and all who depend on women. And who doesn't depend on women?

The world's population is still doubling, currently every two to three generations. Limitation of climate change is still being delayed by vested interests. In the midst of this, women can make a key difference in managing fertility in the human family, breaking the poverty cycle where women have access to contraception. Both health and population pressures improve.

WELCOME

Pauline Markwell, our skilled and very helpful supporter, has joined Women's Plans Foundation as Development Consultant.

Pauline's career has embraced various marketing, executive search, importing and wholesaling roles in the private sector. She is a mentor in professional and volunteer capacities and has served on community and not for profit boards and committees.



In 2003, Pauline was awarded a Centenary Medal for her contribution to Australian society in the area of Business Leadership.

Pauline's involvement with Women's Plans Foundation combines her commitment to help and support women, and her concern about global population and environmental sustainability.

NEW FIELDS for WPF Grants

CARE – Timor Leste

Save the Children – Laos

ChildFund – Vietnam, Myanmar

Marie Stopes International Australia – PNG, Cambodia

CHRISTMAS COCKTAIL PARTY Dr Angelina Low on Celebration through food

Thursday, December 4th, 6 to 9 p.m.

94A Sutherland Street, Paddington

[see page 6 or www.womensplans.org]

CONTROVERSY

As far back as the age of Cleopatra, who used gold pellets to prevent pregnancy, women have sought ways to plan the number and timing of their children. But critics of that idea go back just as far, and contraception remains controversial to this day.

A woman who wants two children will, on average, spend about five years of her life trying to become pregnant, being pregnant or recovering from pregnancy — and about 35 years trying to avoid pregnancy. Contraception makes that possible. Some 39,000 girls under 18 are married off daily and often become pregnant immediately, leaving school and abandoning their personal dreams. Using contraceptives can allow women and girls to plan their lives and demand the education, training and work that will benefit society.

If half the population is able to avoid unplanned pregnancy after unplanned pregnancy and is free to be more productive, local and national economies cannot help but benefit. Smaller families compete less for resources, which can help ease a country's political tensions and move us all toward a more sustainable world.

For every dollar invested in family planning, at least \$6 is saved for other uses. Families with fewer children can invest more of their income in each child as well as in improving their personal lives and communities with additional education, vocational training, farming, land and housing, or business ventures.

New technologies like long-acting reversible contraceptives, vaginal microbicide rings and one-size diaphragms are assisting in the prevention of unintended pregnancy, as well as sexually transmitted infections. Global partnerships such as are also paving the way for women and girls to decide freely — and for themselves — whether, when and how many children they want.

[from Women Deliver, e-bulletin #MDG456Live, 27/9/14]

Family planning is a family value.

SYMPOSIUM

Midwifery and Family Planning Make Great Bedfellows on September 18, 2014

How hard can it be to persuade men in power that women deserve health care and a voice? Three speakers took us behind the lines, into women's predicaments in PNG, Afghanistan and Sierra Leone. The speakers' experiences blended in recommending: education for women is key; family planning liberates women; women are transformative.



Symposium group Photos by Angeline Low



Caroline Homer



Aminata Conteh

Caroline Homer is Professor of Midwifery at UTS, with research projects funded for PNG by the Australian Government. Caroline took us to Port Moresby, a wild place with enormous potential. She said, "the people who struggle most are the women, with very little power and little capacity to make things change."

Caroline works to get a midwife and a community worker in centres, so that women will come to give birth. Her teaching is changing practices which have kept women away, such as hitting women to progress their labour.

"We have been asking why women didn't go to a health facility to give birth. Sadly, many of the health facilities are very disrespectful of women, treating them really badly. There are ramifications to women being abused in labour – they stay at home. Why would you go somewhere you are treated badly?" Also, wives are reasonably expendable, so husbands may not take them or let them drive.

"Myths must be dispelled, such as the claim that contraceptives make women troublesome, weird and difficult. The substances in contraceptives just do not do that."

"Educating women is absolutely critical; then they can become health providers. Education lets them go and be doctors, midwives and community health workers. Until then, they can't do that." Caroline Homer

The other two speakers came from countries where women are endangered because they are women. Sabera spoke about the barriers to education and family planning. "Afghan women are extremely controlled by culture, tradition and religion; still there is no real sense for women's empowerment in Afghanistan. Gender inequalities give

more power to men as gatekeepers not allowing women out of the home.

Sabera mentioned that Islam itself is not against family planning, but misinterpretation of Islamic rules by opposition from religious and community leaders is a big issue, and it is risky in most areas of Afghanistan for women to promote family planning. The danger to women is great, just for wanting to survive their fertility. For ten years the Taliban prevented the education of women who could have been part of health and economic development, causing a lost generation of women who could provide midwifery and other health care. But since 2002, girls have been taught to read, write and then train as midwives, and now more than four thousand midwives have been trained to help women in rural and underserved areas of Afghanistan.

Aminata Conteh was kidnapped by rebels in Sierra Leone and held as a sex slave and human shield for five months. She came as a refugee to Australia and now is an Ambassador for UNHCR. Aminata is now becoming a force for women in Sierra Leone, with a signature program: women can charge mobile phones for free; see a video about nutrition; find a safe environment for children to play. Women can come to the centre and find a way to communicate with each other and learn. The men will not say 'no' because they're getting the charging for free.

The purpose is "not just to build another clinic but to provide what is going wrong with them. If you do not have money, the doctor will not treat you. We can give pregnant women a mobile phone, back up with ambulance to take them to hospital. Women will learn to trust that they will be treated."

Aminata was encouraged to hear Caroline say that striking women and using abusive language to hurry labour was not normal advised practice, as she had always assumed it was.

Each of these speakers is dedicated to bringing good health care to women, urging education, wise pregnancy, midwifery and family planning services. Women are well suited to providing health care services for women. Those of us at the Symposium realised how much must change before women in places like PNG, Afghanistan and Sierra Leone can meet openly as we did in Ros Espie's welcoming home, for coffee, cake, and to reach out to share with women around the world.

WPF GRANTS FOR 2014-15

A benefit of recurrent WPF grants is that they enable overseas aid organisations to continue inclusion and expansion of family planning as an important expression of their outreach. An additional benefit is that WPF can develop understanding through the various methodologies measuring effectiveness of programs in differing and difficult environments. WPF appreciates the inspiring work and our relationships with these dedicated overseas aid organisations. WPF's work is ever more important in the light of our Government's shifting of funding from overseas aid to war efforts.

Marie Stopes International will continue its valuable work in PNG with our support of \$5,000. MSI has also invited WPF's involvement in Cambodia where our grant of \$30,000 will provide equipment for training and supply of long acting contraceptives (IUDs, implants and voluntary surgical contraception). This will build the capacity of public health providers and avert an estimated 3,444 pregnancies and 565 maternal deaths. Cambodia wide, MSIC will have a target this year of 257,162 'Couple Years of Protection' at a cost of AUD\$22.24 each couple. In a country where a quarter of the people live in poverty, family planning will make a great difference.

MSIC outreach services mean that people who cannot easily travel to clinics can access crucial sexual and reproductive health services. Eighty percent of Cambodia's population live in remote regions. Young people account for fifty-six percent of the people in Cambodia and remain particularly vulnerable to unplanned pregnancies, STI's and HIV/AIDS.

WPF Investment of \$30,000 will be used to:

Purchase materials used during practical training sessions for long-term family planning (IUD and implant insertion/removal)

- Purchase materials used during follow-up quality assurance visits for long-term family planning
- Purchase small scale pieces of equipment and

CARE receives \$5,000 for the Safe Motherhood Project, focused on decreasing maternal mortality by improving reproductive and maternal health behaviours and increasing access, usage and provision of quality services.

CARE's Research:

A Gender and Power Analysis recently undertaken by CITL found that women in Timor-Leste lack control over their bodies and are under pressure from their husbands and parents-in-law to have children. They are at risk of violence or abandonment if they fail to have children or want to limit the number of children they have. CARE is pursuing a partnership with actors in gender-based violence to work to address this issue. The Safe Motherhood project will work with the Ministry of Health, District Health Services, civil society partners, and local community leaders to help ensure the project's activities are effective and sustainable.

Project Aims and Activities:

Build the capacity of health providers in RMH to promote better quality care that is patient centred and effective.

materials used during MSIC's mobile outreach services (voluntary surgical contraception, implants and IUDs) The trainings, quality assurance follow-up visits, and outreach services are conducted in nine provinces. The training builds the capacity of public health providers in 572 health centres and 38 referral hospitals. The funds will help support and expand the activities of a USAID-funded grant, to which MSIC is a sub-awardee.



Photo courtesy of MSIA

This includes facilitating spaces for negotiation and dialogue between communities, health providers and government to develop care systems which remove barriers to RMH services for the remote rural communities.

Annual Family Health Day activities which engage the broader community reinforcing positive health behaviours and focus on providing RMH education around safe family planning.

Bring together communities, service providers and local government to identify RMH service access, usage and provision challenges, mutually establish solutions and then work together to implement and track the progress. Safe Motherhood project is aligned with the Government of Timor-Leste's National Reproductive Health Strategy (2004-2015) which supports healthy birth behaviours using family planning services and men's involvement in fertility management and commits to ensuring all pregnant women can access maternal care. CITL is currently supporting the development of the new strategy

Save the Children receives \$10,000 from WPF, for mobile clinics in the Primary Health Care Project. In the Primary Health Care Project in Luang Prabang and Sayaboury, on average in 2013-14, Women's Plans Foundation funding enabled the provision of family planning services to just over 8,756 women in remote and rural villages in northern Laos.

Increasing contraceptive prevalence

Contraceptive prevalence continues to increase in the new districts to which the Women's Plans Foundation's funding contributes.



Mobile clinic in Pak Ou District – note the needle for injectable Depo-Provera in the hand of the nurse. Also note the queue of women to the right of the photo – the woman in orange has her sleeve pulled up, readying for the injectable.

[photo not included here because of email size, posted on www.womensplans.org]

Mobile clinic in the same village in Pak Ou District –the mobile team does health education in the evening before the clinical services. This evening, the family planning DVD is playing and attention is rapt. Note the number of both young men and women watching the DVD. Photos courtesy of Save the Children.

ChildFund Australia received a \$10,000 grant from WPF, of which \$7,000 will continue to support family planning education and services in Vietnam, and \$3,000 will go to a Women's Health Project in Myanmar.

ChildFund's program in Myanmar began in 2012 following extensive consultation with local partners and communities to determine both best practice model to implement programs and also a thorough assessment of community needs. ChildFund's partner, Precious Stones, is a small and dynamic local NGO, working alongside the urban poor to help them transform their lives, situations and neighbourhoods in Myanmar. Precious Stones works to provide families, communities and children with access to education, health and microfinance.

WPF's contribution of \$3,000 towards this program will enable ChildFund and our partner, Precious Stones, to:

- Conduct reproductive health training sessions for women in the local community including awareness raising of contraceptive methods
- Provide training and information materials for birth spacing in order to reduce child and maternal mortality rates.

The proposed project, Women's Health in Yangon addresses the need to provide supportive environments and information for women and mothers regarding reproductive health and parenting skills. Many women in this area lack access to reproductive health services due to high levels of poverty. Child spacing, contraception options, support during pregnancy and childbirth are all areas where women have little access to information and support. Through this project women are supported during pregnancy and child birth with health education.

SOIRÉE – CHAMPIONS OF THE '20s

Live music, delicious food and wines added to the gaiety of the WPF Soiree, celebrating family planning pioneers in '20s style. Guests in '20s costumes enjoyed this lively and informative presentation of a crucial campaign in family planning.

Dr Diana Wyndham presented vignettes of the struggle to establish acceptability and clinics for family planning. Here are excerpts of her research which show that the same issues we face in third world countries existed in the Western world less than a hundred years ago. Diana wrote *Norman Haire and the Study of Sex*. Dr. Norman Haire was an Australian catalyst for the acceptance of contraceptives and understanding of sexuality. Haire was an associate of Alfred Kinsey, Marie Stopes, Margaret Sanger and Dora Russell. Haire himself was a controversial figure. With Dr. Stefania Siedlecky, emeritus Trustee of WPF, Diana Wyndham wrote *Populate and Perish: Australian Women's Fight for Birth Control*.



The cast of Champions of the 1920s



Jewels at the Soiree

"Havelock Ellis resolved to spend his life 'making clear the problems of sex' and, in 1901 published the first volume of pioneering epic: *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*. An Australian teenager chanced to find this sexology opus 20 years later in Sydney's Public Library and, in gratitude to Havelock Ellis, decided that he too would spend his life saving people from sexual misery. He was Norman Haire who, later in London, was a key figure in encouraging clinical services in contraception.

"In London, The Malthusians, led by Charles and Bessie Drysdale and Marie Stopes, helped Margaret Sanger when she fled to Britain in 1915 to avoid arrest for distributing obscene publications. Three years later, Sanger was sent to jail for distributing contraceptives to immigrant women from her New York clinic.

"In 1918 Marie Stopes' sensational book *Married Love* became the world's first sex manual best-seller. An admirer wrote 'You have done more to promote the happiness and welfare of humanity than all the priests, prophets, philosophers and social reformers in history'. An opponent wrote: "The book advocated the adoption of practices which are direct incentives to immorality without fear of resultant consequences'."

Diana Wyndham led us through shocking moments in the struggle to bring human rights and medical knowledge benefits to women and their families.

"Haire prophesied in 1927 that in future 'contraception will be universally practised by all normal people. The best advice on this subject will be obtained by all from doctors' although 'the methods of contraception most commonly

used are untrustworthy and even harmful. There are trustworthy and harmless methods, but the public finds it difficult to learn them' either because of doctors' religious or social prejudices or because they lack contraception training and literally cannot help. Although parents carefully educate their children and supervise what they eat, they try to keep them ignorant about sex matters, 'a very insecure foundation on which to build a happy marriage'."

"There *are* trustworthy and harmless methods, but the public finds it difficult to learn them either because of doctors' religious or social prejudices or because they lack contraception training and literally *cannot* help. Although parents carefully educate their children and supervise what they eat, they try to keep them ignorant about sex matters and this was a very insecure foundation on which to build a happy marriage." Norman Haire

Diana Wyndham revealed that Drs Margaret Raphael, Dorothy Nolan and Stefania Siedlecky had to acquire most of their family planning skills after they graduated. Margaret Raphael remembered the lecture given in the 1940s by Dr [later Sir] Herbert Schlink who was single, elderly and Catholic. When he strode up to the rostrum every student waited with their pens poised. He said in a very portentous voice: "Today the subject is contraception. I don't believe in it. We will now proceed with the next topic'.

There was much laughter, and a lingering feeling that there is much yet to be done in the world to bring enlightened responsibility, both medical and social.

EVENTS

CHRISTMAS COCKTAIL PARTY *Celebration through food*

Thursday, December 4th, 6 to 9 p.m.

94A Sutherland Street, Paddington

\$90 R.S.V.P by Nov. 27 to Pauline Markwell

Autumn Antiques Luncheon 20 March 2015

at John Williams' historic Glebe estate, 'The Retreat'. Guests are invited to bring antiques for our favourite auctioneer to value. A prize will be awarded for the most outstanding item. Further details in the new year.

FAREWELL

Liz Lloyd, Trustee since 2007, retired in June, having contributed nearly eight years in various roles. Liz has been a valued Trustee, and served both as Secretary and Legal Officer while having children and returning to work. We thank Liz greatly for her dedication, and wish her well in her current and future endeavours.

FINANCIAL MILESTONE

The Trust Fund passed the one million mark in 2014. The WPF Annual Report will be available from Oct. 23rd.

THANKS TO DONORS

Thanks to the many donors who have generously contributed to the Trust Fund, providing the power of recurrent income for WPF grants for family planning. Special thanks to the Council of Sexual Health & Family Planning Australia for the welcome donation of the Janet MacInnes Arnott Fund, to continue focus on family planning in overseas aid.

Appreciation to Dick Smith for his understanding of global population issues and his very thoughtful donation.

FP2020 *email report, August 14, 2014*

The global family planning community is working to ensure that more women around the world have access to contraceptive options and family planning services and information. As part of this global effort, a group of organisations collaborated to make contraceptive implants—a previously less accessible family planning option—more available to women in the world's poorest countries. Since the launch of the Implant Access Program (IAP) in 2013, tremendous progress has been made toward expanding contraceptive access and options and strengthening global family planning systems overall. [www.familyplanning2020.org]

Donations build the Trust Fund, enabling recurring grants for continuing programs. Grants are made to Australian-registered international NGOs (see pages 3,4) for the inclusion of family planning in their program delivery structure. Your donation will make an incremental difference for generations.

Donations form: post to WPF, 3 Madeline St., Hunter's Hill, NSW 2110, tel. (02)9817-5175

www.womensplans.org website with PayPal facility

A tax receipt will be posted

Donation (a tax deductible receipt will be sent): _____ Event (an entrée receipt will be sent): _____

Name: _____ Total: _____

Address: _____

Telephone & email: _____

Card: Expiry: /

Mastercard / Visa Name as on Card: _____

Signature: _____

Patron: The Honourable Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO

Trustees: Carolyn Blanden, Joanne Epp PhD, Dr. Ellie Freedman, Alice Oppen OAM, Helen Sheffer.

Events Committee: Miranda Baker, Linda Cameron, Jenny Hall, Marjorie James OAM, Margaret Milne, Alice Oppen OAM, Trish Procter, Helen Sheffer.

Development Consultant: Pauline Markwell. Pro Bono: Siobhan Sellick of Prosperity Advisers Pty. Ltd. provides accounting services; Stuart Cameron of UBS assists with investment for the Trust Fund; Baker & McKenzie are our Pro Bono legal adviser; Nina Krstic for CBA; Julian, Felix and Kate Oppen contribute design and website; Bel Smith provides administrative support.

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