

Patron
The Honourable Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO

June, 2015

Symposium: Contraception & Overseas Projects

Dr Ellie Freedman, medical expertise

ChildFund, overseas program experience

Lily Meszaros, Rwandan born, founder ROAR charity

in the home of Pauline Markwell
94A Sutherland Street, Paddington

July 16th, 10:00 to noon
\$45 pre booked



The upstairs level at the WPF Bridge with a View



WPF Table at the UN Women International Women's Day Breakfast. The Australian National Cttee of UN Women is pleased to report that International Women's Day 2015 (IWD) events and campaigns raised \$425,000 for UN Women programs. Funds raised at IWD 2015 will be donated to support UN Women projects in Papua New Guinea and across the Pacific to accelerate gender equality.

How can your aid have its greatest impact?

The Perspective When Australian Aborigines first migrated to Australia some 40,000 years ago, there were about 3 million people spreading around the globe. By the time Sydney was settled by European migrants, the world population had passed the 1 billion mark. A few years ago we sped past 7 billion. Even though the rate of increase slows, each generation born is the largest ever, with 86% of future billions coming in third world countries struggling with poverty, oppression --- and population rise.

The Problem 222 million couples lack access to contraception, and 63 million unintended pregnancies a year result. Some cultures continue to regard women as subordinate beings who exist to bear limitless numbers of children, inequitably limiting women's health, development and roles. Rising refugee numbers are causing great grief, challenging humanitarian responses. There are no more 'new worlds' to take the human overflow.

The Incremental Solution Let's go to the source. Women know how many children they can nurture. Women's Plans Foundation reaches out across the Asia Pacific to make contraception accessible, to ease population pressures, and to increase respect for women's lives. Family planning is a vital component of overseas aid. Where would we be without this capacity? Join us in sharing the benefits of family planning so that women everywhere can contribute to decision-making for a sustainable and humane world.

Research Insights in Tonga

At the NSW State Library on April 1, Ned Winn-Dix spoke about his recent work in Tonga, taking us into a culture in which it has been unquestioned that young women would have children soon after marriage.



Ned presented insights about how receptive people would be in Tonga to a very practical new method of contraception, the implant. Scare-myths heard in some parts of the world, about contraceptives being linked to being invaded by the devil, do not present a problem in Tonga, and education can distinguish between possible side-effects and unrelated coincidental health ailments.

For modest young people, a long acting contraceptive is preferable because they don't have to go so often into clinics, thus revealing that they're having sex. A startling insight was that, for young people in an overwhelmingly Christian country, obtaining or carrying a condom is considered more dangerous than the sex itself, because having the condom is an admission of premeditation to have sex, no excuse of being carried away in the moment.

There was a roll of laughter at a nurse's quiz question, "Do you know what you call people who use the withdrawal method?" No. "Parents." Surveys found that a small stick inserted under the skin in the arm is more acceptable than an IUD, because it is above the waist.

Tonga comprises 171 islands, 70 inhabited, affected by geographic isolation and a fertility rate of 4.1, with contraceptive prevalence of use at 22%. Family planning programs, with regular supplies or Long Acting Methods of Contraception (LARCs) are very much needed. Pills and condoms have to be remembered faithfully, but implants are even more effective than having tubes tied.

Ned described an effective visual way of demonstrating results of large family size to men; take a piece of paper to represent a man's land, and then fold it in half to represent how much land each of two sons will inherit. Fold it again for four, fold again... and the amount of land for growing food can be seen to be not enough.

Ned Winn-Dix is committed to advancing comprehensive family planning through the use of better data to guide programs and influence donors. This passion has led him to previous positions in Tonga and Nigeria, and he is about to continue this work with Marie Stopes International in London, in the Management Information Team, to improve data capture and use.

Having accurate evaluation will help to safeguard programs from political trends, where funding can be affected by political pressures. There will be clear evidential cases for cost savings resulting from the health and social benefits of contraceptives.

WPF thanks Ned Winn-Dix for the generous gift of his understanding and enthusiasm, and for his promise to speak to us again when he returns from involvement with programs around the world. We thank Susan Hunt, Director of the NSW State Library Foundation for the superb venue.

A Good News Story

from Professor Shirley Randell AO, Founding Director,
Centre for Gender, Culture and Development, Kigali, Rwanda

Villages like Piplantri in the Rajasthan state of India have a story quite different from the more popular, abused and ill-treated Indian girl. Every time a girl child is born in the village, 111 trees are planted in celebration and taken care of. For the child, the villagers contribute a total sum of Rs 21,000 (£226), which is put aside along with a parental sum of Rs 10,000 (£108) in a fixed deposit in the bank. The sum is availed of when the girl turns 20. The parents sign an affidavit to provide the child with education and not marry her off before the legal age. A resident, Shyam Sundar Paliwal, who lost his daughter at a young age in 2007 started the practice. In six years, Piplantri people have planted over a quarter of a million trees, including 11 for each person who dies. The programme has had an impact on every part of the community of 8,000. The village is green, attitudes towards women have changed, crime has been reduced and the tree care has provided an economic opportunity. The villagers collectively nurture the trees and plant aloe vera plants to protect them from termites. The trees and plants are harvested for medicinal products.

Reaching out

Marie Stopes Australia International in PNG

MSPNG writes, “half our clients are first time users of family planning, directly contributing to an increased contraceptive prevalence rate.” The shock statistics continue: 44 percent of women of reproductive age have an unmet need for family planning; only one in five women is using a modern method of family planning and many women have never had access to contraception.” Our grant provides at a cost of \$42.41 per Couple Year of Protection (CYP), so every thousand dollars benefits 23 couples for a year. Join WPF in doing this.

Marie Stopes International Cambodia writes, “Enabling access to the 25 percent of women who have an unmet need for contraception is a key component of the Cambodian National Health Policy. MSIC is focussed on working with the government to build the public sector’s capacity to address these crucial goals.” “Young people (under 25) make up 56 percent of Cambodia’s population and remain particularly vulnerable to unplanned pregnancies.” WPF is new to Cambodia, and we look forward to evaluation.

Save the Children Australia in Laos

In June 2014, Women’s Plans Foundation donated \$10,000 towards Save the Children’s Primary Health Care Program to provide family planning activities within the mobile clinics in Luang Prabang Province.

With your support, our Primary Health Care Team provided:

- Mobile clinic outreach services to 126 remote villages in Nambak and Pak Ou districts. The Women’s Plans Foundation directly funded outreach to 50 of the villages across the two districts;
- Family planning services to 8,480 women in remote rural areas;
- Five-day family planning counselling training to 19 health centre midwives working in remote areas of five districts of Luang Prabang.

Care Australia in Timor Leste

CARE is valued for its advocacy role, campaigning for education and health for women, who bring others with them out of poverty. “Factors contributing to maternal mortality and morbidity of women in Timor Leste include:

- High fertility rates (5.7 births per woman) directly related to a low proportion of women using modern contraceptives (40 per cent from baseline data).
- Low proportion of births delivered by skilled providers (29.9 per cent from baseline data).
- Low proportion of births occurring at a health facility (22.1 per cent) due to a lack of access to services, and sometimes through personal choice.

Women in rural areas in Timor-Leste also suffer from a low life expectancy and pregnant women generally suffer from high malnutrition. With your help, CARE Australia is working hard alongside the Ministry of Health, civil society partners and local leaders to address all these barriers by delivering strategic activities outlined within the project that aim to improve reproductive and maternal health behaviours and strengthen access, utilisation and provision of quality reproductive maternal health services.”

ChildFund Australia in Myanmar

ChildFund through project partner “Precious Stones” has undertaken various activities for Women in Yangon Region, Myanmar. Many women in the project 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 have been supported with health education and support services.

“Funds which were kindly provided by Women’s Plans Foundation to this Health Project for Women in Yangon were applied to reproductive health awareness delivered to adolescents, training and support services for women in relation to birth spacing and sterilization options, maternal care and awareness for pregnant women, nutrition and medical support for pregnant women and support services for women in childbirth and post-natal. On behalf of the women and children of Vietnam and Myanmar, our sincere thanks to the Women’s Plans Foundation for your wonderful support.”



Mobile clinic outreach activity in Namduane Village, Nambak District

The Prospects for Overseas Aid

The 2015 Federal Budget: Overseas Aid funding has been reduced to the lowest level ever, this year's is the biggest single-year cut to foreign aid in Australia's history. In delivering [the 2015 Federal] Budget, Treasurer Joe Hockey revealed that \$1 billion, or 20 per cent of Australia's current foreign aid budget, would be cut, bringing the total cuts to the aid program since the Government was elected to \$11.3 billion.

World Vision CEO Tim Costello stated the Government has put both lives and stability in Australia's immediate region at risk with the record cut. "It seems incredible that we should be willing to undermine the stability and security of our own region, hitting the area of closest and most immediate need and undermining our chances for future prosperity," Costello said. [*Pro Bono Australia News*]

The Australian Council For International Development's analysis is that "the decision to make successive and substantial cuts to Australia's aid program was not reflective of any review of the needs it responds to, its impact on the region, or the opportunity cost of significantly reducing it. Independent evaluations at the national and international level have emphasised the effectiveness and efficiency of Australia's aid program in recent years. **Though the aid program is only around 1% of Federal expenditure, it has been the source of more than 25% of the Government's budget savings.**

What this ignores is the vital contribution Australia's aid program makes to solving the world's shared problems such as the effects of climate change, of increasing conflict and instability, of changing migration and refugee patterns, and global disease.... It is clear that the challenges facing the world are not confined to national

borders. We are, in short, all in it together. **This is particularly true for Australia as a prosperous nation surrounded by developing countries. Though we are in the top 20 wealthiest countries, we live in a region home to some of the world's poorest people.**

Australia benefits from being in a neighbourhood of stable and peaceful countries with strong institutions, and where people have access to healthcare, education and essential services. We want to see a safe and peaceful PNG, a Vanuatu that can withstand the effects of natural disasters, a Timor-Leste with employment opportunities for its growing youth population. A stable and prosperous region, free of poverty, with nations that can trade with us and invest alongside us is vital to our own future prosperity.

ACFID politely recognised Government's use of NGO delivery of programs, as the country programs will be cut by a proportionately 5% in 2015-16. ACFID reports aid to Pacific Island countries was largely quarantined from cuts, as well aid to Nepal and Cambodia. Aid to Timor and PNG was also relatively untouched, with cuts of approximately 5%.

The question is, should this be counted as aid, or is it payment for refugee accommodation?

ACNC: The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission has received funding until at least 2019 and does not feature on a list of Government Agencies to be abolished or merged. Joe Hockey's Budget Papers give the ACNC a glowing review: "*The ACNC delivers education, advice and support to the sector to improve its governance and compliance with the ACNC Act. This promotes the sustainability and effectiveness of the Not for Profit sector. The implementation of a 'report-once, use-often' general reporting framework is to reduce red tape and simplify the regulatory framework.*"

WPF wishes to thank Baker & McKenzie for excellent pro bono help in updating our Trust Deed and corporate structure to meet future standards. We are grateful to Prosperity Advisers for pro bono accountancy and to Stuart Cameron.

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

Patron: The Honourable Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO

Trustees: Carolyn Blanden, Joanne Epp PhD, Dr. Eleanor Freedman, Alice Oppen OAM, Helen Sheffer. Observer: Sally Garis.

Events Committee: Miranda Baker, Linda Cameron, Jenny Hall, Marjorie James OAM, Jeannette Kalek, Anni Macdougall, Margaret Milne, Alice Oppen OAM, Trish Procter, Helen Sheffer. Development Consultant: Pauline Markwell.

Women's Plans Foundation, ABN 64-823-197-874, 3 Madeline St. Hunter's Hill, NSW 2110. Ph. 9817-5175

Women'sPlansFoundation@bigpond.com, www.womensplans.org